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Endless twilight

a study of C. S. Lewis's language of beauty

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KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

ENDLESS TWILIGHT
A STUDY OF C.S. LEWIS'S LANGUAGE OF BEAUTY

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THEOLOGY

By
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Abstract

This thesis examines formerly disparate literary-theological motifs of C.S. Lewis's writing and suggests these themes to form a cohesive language of beauty. In particular, these motifs include: Northernness, Joy (Lewis's specialized term), *Sehnsucht*, the *numinous*, and beauty. Rather than utilizing a comparative approach to Lewis's use of beauty, this study aims to formulate a distinctive definition of Lewisian beauty by showing how the aforementioned elements reveal an aesthetic progression or experience germane to Lewis's writing. Furthermore, this study's analysis highlights Romanticism's strong influence on Lewis in how it defines and reveals the aesthetic threads found in these concepts thus showing Lewis's Romanticism as central in his expression of beauty as experience rather than mere Kantian judgment.

Unique to this analysis of Lewis's language of beauty is the concept of Northernness. Formerly, this Lewisian motif was seldom treated beyond a biographical footnote by Lewis scholars. This study offers first-of-its-kind research on the depth of Lewis's self described "Norse Complex." It shows, from a literary point of view, how Northernness not only contributes to Lewis's use of literary atmosphere but also, from a conceptual-theological point of view, how he counters the inherent hopelessness of Northernness, which stems from the Norse apocalypse, with the Christian notion of eucatastrophe—a term coined by his contemporary, colleague, and friend, J.R.R. Tolkien.

Finally, this analysis details Lewis's phenomenological approach to apologetics (what I term "rhetorical poetics") by showing how the *numinous* works within the literary beauty experience to enlarge imaginative capacity for the possibility of the Divine as the source of beauty. Thus, this thesis does not seek to show how beauty within Lewis's writing operates as a proof for God. Rather, this study reveals a Lewisian literary theology of beauty that operates as an imaginative gateway into religious experience with the Divine.

For my wife, Christine Willard

“By nature men desire the beautiful.”

—St. Basil the Great

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Abbreviations

- CLI C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, 1st ed, vol. 1, 3 vols. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004).
- CLII C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, 1st ed, vol. 2, 3 vols. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004).
- CLIII C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *Collected Letters. Vol. 3: Narnia, Cambridge and Joy: 1950 - 1963*, vol. 3, 3 vols. (London: HarperCollins, 2006).
- CSLP C. S. Lewis, *Poems*, A Harvest/HBJ Book (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977).
- DI Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).
- EC C. S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- EL C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*, ed. F.P. Wilson and Bonamy Dobree, Oxford History of English Literature, III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).
- II C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- LB C. S Lewis and Pauline Baynes, *The Last Battle / The Chronicles of Narnia / # 7* (New York: Macmillan, 1970).
- LWW C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (New York: Scholastic, 1987).
- M C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).
- MC C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity: Comprising The Case for Christianity, Christian Behaviour, and Beyond Personality* (New York: Touchstone, 1996).
- NP C. S. Lewis, *Narrative Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper, First (London: Geoffrey Bles, LTD, 1969).
- OW C.S. Lewis, *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Hooper, 1st Edition (London: Geoffery Bles, 1966).

- P C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra: A Novel*, 1st Scribner Classics ed (New York: Scribner Classics, 1996).
- PP C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).
- PPL C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: O.U.P., 1960).
- SC C.S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968).
- SLE C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *Selected Literary Essays* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- SW C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge; London: Cambridge U.P., 1967).
- TAM Clive Staples Lewis, *The Abolition of Man, or Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*, 1. Touchstone ed, A Touchstone Book (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).
- TST C. S. Lewis, *They Stand Together: The Letters of C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves (1914-1963)* (London: Collins, 1979).
- TWG “The Weight of Glory” in C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 1st HarperCollins ed., [rev.] (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).
- TWF C. S Lewis, *Till We Have Faces; a Myth Retold*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1957).
- VDT Clive Staples Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader: A Story for Children*, A Puffin Book (Harmondsworth: Puffin Books, 1975).
- WG C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 1st HarperCollins ed., [rev.] (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Through Immeasurable Forests

*“Desire shall teach me now. If this be sinning,
Good luck to it! O splendor long delayed,
Beautiful world of mine, O world arrayed
For bridal, flower and forest, wave and field,
I come to be your lover. Loveliest, yield!”*

—C.S. Lewis, “Dymer”¹

1.1 Introduction

One of the problems produced by the Enlightenment, what Charles Taylor describes as modern secularity, has been the rise of the autonomous self.² This problem manifests in epistemological and theological challenges.³ Problems of knowledge acquisition emerge as philosophers analyze their objects of inquiry from afar.⁴ That is to say, they look “at” it, rather than assessing it from within.⁵ This epistemological⁶ challenge crosses over into theology, where the modern mind reduces the biblical text to a mere object,⁷ thus removing its lived

¹ C.S. Lewis, “Dymer,” in C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *Narrative Poems* (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1994), 22 (hereafter *NP*).

² Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 9; 20; 299-300.

³ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 16-17; 23-25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵ Vanhoozer identifies C.S. Lewis’s reflection in “Meditation in a Toolshed” as an apt critique of modernism and postmodernism’s current threat on epistemology and theology. One might also apply Owen Barfield’s “Alpha Thinking” (looking at) and “Beta Thinking” (looking along) to this critique. See Owen Barfield, *Saving Appearances*, 42; 21.

⁶ It should be noted, that Richard Viladesau parses the study of theological aesthetics into two senses, the first being: “the epistemology of perception of the transcendent.” Though this current study deals primarily with Viladesau’s second sense of the term, “consideration of beauty and art in relation to God,” there are links into the epistemological considerations inherent in the second sense.

⁷ George Pattison, *Thinking About God in an Age of Technology*, 34.

phenomenological component. Furthermore, postmodernism has given rise to the milieu of reductionism—things are taken apart rather than evaluated.⁸ These challenges coalesce and pose a threat to modern theological aesthetics, in particular the concept of beauty.⁹

C.S. Lewis, known for his disdain for the effects of modernity,¹⁰ offers a substantial critique of this epistemological and theological shift.¹¹ Though Lewis is a product of and contributor to modern thought, particularly in the fields of literature and theology¹² he nonetheless asserts the need for modern thinkers to synthesize their mode of interpretation of reality to include both looking “at” an object and looking “along” it.¹³ In *The Abolition of Man* Lewis exposes the reductionist tendencies¹⁴ of the present age that work to abolish objective values,¹⁵ which, he asserts, leads to the abolition of man himself.¹⁶ Lewis notes, for example, how modern education impoverishes the minds of students by reducing

⁸ Vanhoozer, 19.

⁹ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 299. See also Howard Gardener, *Truth, Beauty, and Goodness Reframed*, 75; and Roger Scruton, *Beauty*, 156-161. The autonomous self, according to these writers, threatens to permanently undermine, indeed change, the traditional view of beauty and its inherent *value* or *quality*. Scruton describes this as the “postmodern desecration,” a form of reductionism, that removes the sacred in life and elevates the individual in terms of expression and epistemological autonomy. Scruton, however, offers optimistic commentary regarding beauty’s recovery; whereas Howard Gardener suggests the postmodern changes to beauty are here to stay.

¹⁰ Doris T. Myers, *C.S. Lewis in Context*, 115-116.

¹¹ Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 19-20. See also Wesley Kort, *C.S. Lewis: Then and Now*, 125. Kort asserts Lewis’s alternative to modern epistemology is inferred; coming to know something “is an event in which the nature and meaning of something and the person’s capacity to recognize or comprehend them arise mutually and simultaneously.”

¹² Alister McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*, 176-178

¹³ C.S. Lewis, “Mediation in a Toolshed” in *God in the Dock*, 212-215.

¹⁴ C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 82 (hereafter TAM).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

the objective value of beauty to personal sentiment¹⁷—a move precipitated in part by thinkers such as David Hume who, for example, regarded beauty as “nothing but a form, which produces pleasure.”¹⁸ This reduction illuminates the slow move of the interpretation of reality from dealing with the problem of “conforming the soul to reality” that was solved through knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue to the new problem of “how to subdue reality to the wishes of men.”¹⁹ Furthermore, Lewis offers his own program for aesthetic interpretation, specifically with regard to beauty.²⁰ Thus is the intention of this thesis: to analyze and synthesize Lewis’s program of beauty and show how his approach provides articulation for a phenomenological apologetic.

In what follows I make the case that although commentators discuss Lewis’s affinity for beauty, they fail to connect the aesthetic progression inherent in Lewis’s fiction and non-fiction with his apologetic enterprise. I aim to show how Lewis employs a “language of beauty” as a subtle contributor to his imaginative apologetic. As a result, I hope this thesis serves to recalibrate scholarly approaches to Lewis’s work so that there is less attention given to Lewis as “King of the Rational Argument” (my phrasing) and more towards Lewis as the lover and hunter of beauty. I will develop this assertion and intended outcome of this thesis further in section 1.4.

¹⁷ Ibid., 14-16.

¹⁸ “A Treatise of Human Nature, by David Hume: B2.1.8,” accessed September 24, 2016, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/hume/david/h92t/B2.1.8.html>.

¹⁹ TAM, 88. See also Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 43-47.

²⁰ Louis Markos, *Restoring Beauty*, 11-12.

Additionally, I hope to show how Northernness, examined here as a case study, frames Lewis's language of beauty thus emphasizing its importance in Lewis's work. First, Northernness runs through Lewis's development both as a man and as a writer, so we can see chronologically how it shaped his thought and how it aided his writing in general. Next, Northernness is present in Lewis's writing semantically. That is to say, it is in the way he describes landscape, it is embedded as language derived from Old Norse-Icelandic in certain works such as the cosmic trilogy,²¹ and it is one of his primary tools and influences in the way he creates literary atmosphere. Literary atmosphere and description contribute to the meaning derived from Lewis's use of language, thus giving Northernness a semantic significance. Finally, Northernness finds expression in Lewis's writing via conceptual-theological vein. This is, perhaps, the most dynamic influence of Northernness. I have, therefore, utilized each area of Lewisian Northernness as a primary area of research as a way to further uncover Lewis's language of beauty.

As stated above, I examine Northernness as a case study, but it is worth noting that Northernness, stemming from Lewis's self-described "Norse Complex," was not the only mythology to influence Lewis. Celtic mythology,²² as well as the work of Homer, Virgil and the classical myths of the Greco-Roman

²¹ Here I refer to Lewis's works: *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*.

²² C.S. Lewis, *Surprised By Joy*, 114. Lewis states: "There too I found Milton, and Yeats, and a book on Celtic mythology, which soon became, if not a rival, yet a humble companion, to Norse." And yet Lewis still emphasizes Northernness: "But the Northernness still came first..." One should also note Lewis's tragedy written during this time, *Loki bound*. Lewis describes it as Norse in subject but Greek in form, emphasizing once more the Northernness over the Greek, yet still noting the Greek's influence on the work. Lewis goes on to say, however, that the content is "significant" and that he never enjoyed anything more.

world—including the medieval planetary mythologies²³—also played roles in Lewis’s aesthetic development.²⁴ Though Lewis does eventually employ these various mythological influences in his works of fiction, I am emphasizing Northernness because Lewis himself gives it pride of place in his chronological thought development as revealed in his spiritual memoir *Surprised By Joy*, and because the constraints of this thesis prohibit in depth discussion on all the mythological influences Lewis displays in his writing.

In summary, I will show how the seemingly disparate elements of Lewis’s life and writing, such as the aforementioned Northernness, his unique conception of Joy, his notion of *Sehnsucht* (intense longing), and the *numinous* work as a cohesive language of beauty Lewis employs to incite literary delight thus producing a subtle phenomenological *apologia*.

In the following sections I aim to build an introduction to the proposed thesis by sketching, in section two, the context as it relates to aesthetics and theological aesthetics, followed by a brief word on my specific approach to this study, then, in section four, a suggestive consideration regarding a right reading of Lewis as lover and hunter of beauty rather than the traditional reading of Lewis as “King of the Rational Argument, followed by a discussion of comparative

²³ See Michael Ward, *Planet Narnia* for more on how the medieval cosmology influenced Lewis’s imaginative writing. See also Ward’s essay “Voyage to Venus: Lewis’s Imaginative Path to Perelandra” in *C.S. Lewis’s Perelandra: Reshaping the image of the Cosmos*. Here Ward emphasizes how Lewis gradually became enamored with the “personality of Venus during the years prior to his writing of *Perelandra*.”

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 114; 144-145. The “Great Bookham” time in Lewis’s early aesthetic shaping further opened his sensibilities to Greek and Celtic myth. It is a time Lewis remembers with fondness, and appreciation. See also, “Is Theology Poetry” in which Lewis compares the scientific outlook of the world drama the Norse influenced *Nibelung’s Ring*—the Norse giving him as much satisfaction and aesthetic pleasure as the former outlook.

literature and scope of this project, and concluding with a postscript detailing beauty's dual constitution.

1.2 Context

In this section I want sketch the context of my study by showing its relation to the field of aesthetics and theological aesthetics, a distinction I will detail below. By drawing these lines of context I hope to show how my study of Lewis's conception of beauty differs from current notions of modern aesthetics. I will, therefore, begin by giving a brief historical context of aesthetics, followed by what I perceive to be a cultural renaissance of beauty itself, then a brief word about the renaissance of natural theology, and, finally, a short analysis on theological aesthetics since my study falls closest to this discipline. My survey here should be viewed as suggestive, not exhaustive.

Aesthetics: Historical Context and Modern Nuance

The aesthetic tradition is generally accepted as beginning in the eighteenth century when Alexander Baumgarten, a German philosopher, conceived the term "aesthetics," introducing it in his dissertation (1735)²⁵ *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (translated "Philosophical considerations of some matters pertaining to the poem") to mean "a science of how things are to be

²⁵ It should be noted that Roger Scruton says that it "is difficult to date the rise of modern aesthetics precisely." See Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions 262 (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 22. Scruton points to the work of the third Earl of Shaftesbury in his *Characteristics* (1711), who "explained the peculiar features of the judgment of beauty in terms of the *disinterested* attitude of the judge." To be disinterested in beauty is to set all interest aside, so as to attend to the thing itself. Here we find anticipatory strands of Kant, who seems to pick up where Shaftesbury left off in his *The Critique of Judgment* (1795).

known by means of the senses.” Paul Guyer, in his essay “The Origins of Modern Aesthetics 1711-1735,” shows how Baumgarten augmented his first definition of aesthetics over the first decade to his final version that appeared in his monumental work *Aesthetica*: “Aesthetics (the theory of the liberal arts, lower gnoseology, the art of beautiful thinking, the art of the analogue of reason) is the science of sensitive cognition.”²⁶ Though the advent of aesthetics finds universal agreement among scholars, the composition of the discipline itself looks rather fragmented in modern scholarship.

The field of modern aesthetics has become highly nuanced and, at times, can be confusing.²⁷ Peter de Bolla acknowledges such confusion and admits that the word “aesthetics” may be used in a variety of ways. First, in the personal sense it can refer to someone’s own taste, which diminishes the full range of the term’s meaning. Second, when used by the artist it can refer to “the artist’s principles or particular program of making art.” Third, aesthetics can also refer to the history or philosophy of ideas pertaining to the so-called tradition of aesthetic thought. The aesthetic tradition, according to de Bolla, is not concerned with what makes something a piece of art or with the feelings triggered when a person encounters a work of art; it allows for broader discussions and connections made with aesthetics to fields such as ethics, for example.

²⁶ Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

²⁷ See James Shelley, “The Concept of the Aesthetic,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2013, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/aesthetic-concept/>. Here Shelley seems to agree with de Bolla’s overall critique of the field of aesthetics and suggests the confusion is due either to the problematic nature of the concept of “aesthetics” or that recent inquiry has done more to muddle the field than clarify it.

Furthermore, aesthetics can be used to refer to the “philosophy of art,” which seeks to answer theoretical questions regarding what does or does not make something a work of art. Many philosophers, as de Bolla suggests, find this line of inquiry ill-conceived and, therefore, distinguish between the “theory of art” and the “theory of aesthetics” approach to philosophical inquiry. “Philosophers who take this view see art as a vehicle for aesthetic experience and they typically formulate questions like, ‘What raises the sensation of beauty?’”²⁸ Finally, de Bolla suggests another strand of aesthetics known as “theory.” Aesthetic theory looks to Immanuel Kant as its prime thinker. There are, however, areas of confusion within this line of contemporary inquiry. “In some hands,” writes de Bolla, “a ‘theory of aesthetics’ is taken to be completely independent of any instances of art. Theory in this guise is uninterested in the specific works of art for which a ‘theory of aesthetics’ might initially have been thought to be useful. In its place one finds accounts of the concept’s historicity.”²⁹ In this configuration of aesthetic inquiry the historical baggage of “aesthetic” (i.e., the various delineations from the Kantian Enlightenment approach such as sublime, taste, moral sense theory, rhetoric, the fine arts, economics, etc.) pushes aside any notion that a pure “aesthetics” concept can exist. The intrusive ideologies of the artwork make it nearly impossible for a work of art to be understood in pure aesthetic inquiry. For de Bolla, these distinctions, nuances, and discrepancies create problems when one seeks to interpret aesthetic experience.

²⁸ De Bolla, *Art Matters*, 4-10.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

Therefore, rather than attempt to describe Lewis's work (both fiction and nonfiction) according to the varied definitions found in the field of aesthetics, I aim to interpret Lewis's vision of beauty by allowing his Romantic religion³⁰ to reveal itself through the program of his rhetoric, what I am calling his "language of beauty." In this regard my study falls more in line with the original conception of aesthetics, "the science of sensitive cognition," and yet this definition does not grasp the full sense of what I believe Lewis is doing with his language of beauty. To gain a better understanding of what I aim to accomplish, it will be helpful to show recent trends dealing with the topic of beauty itself, not the field of aesthetics in the way I have just outlined.

Renaissance of Beauty

Though my study on beauty in the works of C.S. Lewis as apologetic is unique in that very few scholars have treated beauty within Lewis's works,³¹ the broad study of beauty (and what several scholars refer to as the "experience of beauty") has recently experienced a healthy renewal.³² In a 2001 article in *Westminster Theological Journal*, for example, William Edgar suggests a renaissance of beauty. Indeed, since the 1960s, speaking of the beautiful, whether in people or things, fell out of vogue. He cites Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just* (1999) as suggestive of a movement of scholars who are discussing

³⁰ See Robert James Reilly, *Romantic Religion*, 5; 100.

³¹ See 1.5 for commentary on the state of Lewis scholarship as it relates to beauty. In my research I have encountered few works that offer rigorous commentary on the subject of beauty within the works of C.S. Lewis.

³² Richard Viladesau notes a resurgence in the interest of the aesthetic in a number of theological areas, namely: hermeneutics, theory of symbol, sacramental theology liturgy, and the history of religions. See Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 104.

beauty in medieval fashion. “There are insufficiencies in Scarry’s theory,” writes Edgar, “but the point here is simply that a resuscitation is going on, and the ancient wisdom which connects the beautiful to the good and the true is being revived by a most articulate advocate.”³³ Scarry’s concise book looks candidly at beauty. She draws from personal experience and a wide range of literature and philosophy to dissect and dismantle the modern political critiques of beauty, one being that our preoccupation with beauty “distracts attention from wrong social arrangements” and second, that “when we stare at something beautiful, make it an object of sustained regard, our act is destructive to the object.”³⁴ Edgar lauds Scarry’s work, along with Jeremy Begbie’s work in aesthetics and Calvin Seerveld’s ambitious project *Rainbows For a Fallen World*, showing how the beauty discussion thrives in secular channels as well as in theological circles. I agree with Edgar’s premise regarding a renaissance of beauty. However, I would offer a corrective to this new movement’s origin. Though Edgar aptly surveys a broad academic canvas, ranging from literary theorists, theologians, natural scientists, and physicists, he omits the work of Mary Mothersill, whose work *Beauty Restored* (1984) remains a classic twentieth-century work in aesthetic theory. Paul Guyer, in his *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* lauds Mothersill’s approach and assertion³⁵ that “philosophical aesthetics needs to return to the question of the nature of beauty.”³⁶

³³ William Edgar, “Beauty Avenged, Apologetics Enriched,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 63 (2001): 107–22.

³⁴ Scarry, *On Beauty*, 58.

³⁵ Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty*, 326.

³⁶ Mary Mothersill, “Beauty” in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, 51.

Mothersill's suggestion resonates with this study in two ways. First, I hope to add to the aforementioned emerging discussion regarding the renaissance of beauty. However, where the above scholars formulate different approaches to the interpretive difference between beauty and aesthetics (Seerveld, Begbie) from a theological point of view, I hope to, by analyzing Lewis's language of beauty, return to the question of the nature of beauty³⁷ and its significance.³⁸ In the subsequent chapters Lewis's thought (non-fiction) and art (fiction) will guide the beauty discussion, which, as we examine the nature of beauty, places him close to Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth of the British Romantic period in terms of how he interprets landscape and employs poetic language, the patristic theologian St. Augustine of Hippo, in terms of how he interpreted human longing, as well as Thomas Aquinas from the medieval epoch, in terms of how one interprets a thing of beauty (*Pulchrum est [dicitur] id quod visum placet*)³⁹ and, finally, Plato, in terms of the mimetic nature of beauty (archetypes).⁴⁰

Second, I believe questions of the nature of beauty continue to emerge in twentieth-first century academic discussions—philosophically and theologically—and that discussion enhances the significance of this study as well as reveals Lewis's language of beauty to be of relevance. For example, I find Elaine Scarry's

³⁷ Mothersill's "nature of beauty" resonates with Scarry and Starr's work in that it extends beyond mere questions of taste and judgment and into one's experience of beauty. In the subsequent chapters I hope to unfold this aspect of Lewis's language of beauty.

³⁸ I mention beauty's significance in reference to the concluding section of my conclusion in which I discuss beauty's demands upon humankind in light of its intrinsic import.

³⁹ Paul Gerard Horrigan, "Transcendental Beauty." See also Bruno Forte, *The Portal of Beauty*, 19. Forte summarizes Aquinas's view on beauty as dialectic, an "interplay of ends" where beauty enters into human life as a moment or event but pushes towards God (perfection) as the "final cause." In Aquinas's thought, beauty must be considered in both form and splendor.

⁴⁰ I mention these historical figures in order to provide an overarching context regarding Lewis's own thought on beauty, not to suggest that each figure will be analyzed in specific detail, though references will be made to their thought.

work, along with that of G. Gabrielle Starr and Peter de Bolla, to also be integral to my project. From an apologetics standpoint, these scholars continue to forge new thinking with regard to the aesthetic experience: Why do we respond to the beautiful physically? Can wonderment be traced to a specific hardwiring of the brain?⁴¹ These questions strengthen an apologetic of beauty by way of offering a scientific underpinning to what can be a more narrow philosophical discussion. Lewis himself speaks of *experiencing* beauty and longing, of reacting to images and landscapes and literature, of feeling a certain way when encountering the transcendent nature of beauty.⁴²

Consider, as an example, Peter de Bolla's description of what he calls "mutism" in his book *Art Matters*. In his introduction, de Bolla cites three works of art that caused him to stir emotionally: "My reasons for writing this book are deeply embedded in my desire to understand more about the practice of wondering or the poetics of wonderment," he admits. "My curiosity in this regard was prompted by recognition of a common feature in my initial encounters ... with the three works presented in the main body of the text. I call that feature 'mutism': being struck dumb."⁴³ De Bolla's mutism sounds similar to Lewis's own pangs of Joy⁴⁴ when experiencing the beautiful. Scarry, Starr, and de Bolla represent a strong and articulate set of scholars contributing to beauty's solo

⁴¹ See Andrew Newberg M.D. and Mark Robert Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings from a Leading Neuroscientist* and *A Beautiful Question: Finding Nature's Deep Design*.

⁴² I will develop this in 2.4, 2.5, 3.2, and 5.2, et al.

⁴³ Peter de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 3. More recent scholarship on the subject of "wonder" should be noted here. Sarah Tindal Kareem, in her recently published *Eighteenth-Century Fiction and the Reinvention of Wonder*, adopts de Bolla's assessment and definition of "wonder" and explores wonder's role in shaping novelistic fiction.

⁴⁴ C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*, 78 (hereafter *SBJ*).

resurgence in popular thought. I will use their research as an apologetic through-line, which will add strength to my own case for beauty as apologetic.

Renaissance of Natural Theology

Next, I want to note two things regarding this study's relation to natural theology. First, this thesis, by nature of its subject, joins the renaissance in the field.⁴⁵ Second, the imagination plays a vital role in how we formulate our theology.

Like beauty's recent resurgence, natural theology, heretofore, from an historical point of view, problematic,⁴⁶ has also experienced a renaissance due in part to theologian and apologist Alister McGrath's new theological schematic in *The Open Secret: A New Vision for Natural Theology*. In it McGrath, like William Edgar, highlights a resurgence with the theological discipline. McGrath, however, draws our attention to a resurgence in beauty's sister, the transcendent, which he cites is due to the philosophical inconsistencies in the postmodern west.⁴⁷

McGrath is not alone in his assertions regarding the transcendent. Richard Viladesau formulates his own theory of beauty's connection to natural theology via the transcendent; an approach that emphasizes "the phenomenology of the subject in the act of knowing."⁴⁸ Viladesau's theory resonates with McGrath's in that he positions beauty—the apprehension of beauty through experience—as a

⁴⁵ See above "Renaissance in Beauty" footnote 32.

⁴⁶ Alister E. McGrath, *The Open Secret*, 8. See also McGrath, *A Fine-Tuned Universe*, 40-41.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁸ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 104; 120-121.

“way” to God.⁴⁹ Furthermore, both Viladesau and McGrath support a natural theology that includes the analysis of beauty, considering its inherent ontological characteristics along with its implications for epistemology.⁵⁰ Viladesau also intimates the concept of “potential.” Viladesau sets forth his theory of potential theologically: God, being Ultimate Beauty, as the condition for the possibility of our apprehension of beauty.⁵¹ I mention the concept of potential here only to support a notion I mention further in this study,⁵² that of the experience of beauty to expand capacity or potential within a human being.

Returning to the resurgence of natural theology, McGrath defines this renewed natural theology like this: “A Christian natural theology is thus about seeing nature in a specific manner, which enables the truth, beauty, and goodness of God to be discerned, and which acknowledges nature as a legitimate, authorized, and limited pointer to the divine.”⁵³ In light of McGrath’s definition of a Christian natural theology, this dissertation will look at C.S. Lewis’s use of “the transcendent,” that is, the form of and experience of beauty as an aesthetic language employed by Lewis in his program of imaginative apologetics,⁵⁴ which

⁴⁹ Ibid., 103. See 1.6 of this thesis for more reflection on the “by-paths” to God.

⁵⁰ See Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 103-104 120 and McGrath, *A Fine Tuned Universe*, 216. McGrath states: “... there is no reason why an engagement with the quest for beauty in human culture, or the human longing for something unattainable, should not also be seen as integral aspects of natural theology.”

⁵¹ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 138.

⁵² See 8.1 of this thesis. See also Rowan Williams, *The Edge of Words*, 32. Williams also suggests that our epistemological encounter with the world suggests a dimension of knowing that is an “indeterminate yet intelligible hinterland.” In this space, what/who we encounter “triggers capacities for recognition and representation in our minds.”

⁵³ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁴ McGrath. *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*, 140.

leads to my second point: the importance of the imaginative enterprise in theology.

McGrath further notes that “a truly natural theology appeals to the human imagination, not simply the human reason.”⁵⁵ Lewis viewed the imagination of a person as a gateway whereby a story could enter and not only entertain, but also sow seeds for future theological illumination, thus moving the reader along a “What if?” scenario: suppose there really was something behind the stories that so resonate with your mind and stir your soul; suppose that “thing” behind the “thing” was the God of the universe. What then?⁵⁶ Lewis saw the imagination, especially a young person's imagination, as fertile ground for implanting small theological seeds. In his essay “Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What’s To Be Said,” Lewis ruminates on his own childhood and how his own inhibitions “paralysed much of my own religion in childhood.”⁵⁷ Lewis believed that religious obligation could impair true encounter with God. His idea was to wrap up all the things a young person was “supposed” to learn—the obligations of the faith—in an imaginary world, strip them of their “Sunday School associations,” and present them in all their real potency. “Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons?” Lewis asked. “I thought one could.”⁵⁸

The imagination, for Lewis, acts as a portal by which we seize something of the breadth and depth of God.⁵⁹ Lewis tips his hand with regard to his

⁵⁵ McGrath, *Secret*, 256.

⁵⁶ I will deal further with Lewis’s apologetic approach in Chapter 7 – Watchful Dragons.

⁵⁷ C. S. Lewis. *Of Other Worlds*, 37 (hereafter, *OW*).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

intentionality in using fiction as an apologetic tool. That is not to say he strategically planned every story ranging from his Cosmic Trilogy to every dialogue throughout his Narnia Chronicles. Indeed, Lewis himself admits to finding himself trailing the story, giving himself wholly to it and letting the mental images take him where they would.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Lewis was intentional in his use of fiction as an apologetic of the beautiful, and even in his popular nonfiction writings as well. “Do you think I am trying to weave a spell? Perhaps I am ...”⁶¹ he writes in “The Weight of Glory.” Even when discussing beauty in his non-fiction, Lewis employed the whimsical in his attempt to “woo” his readers into a place they perhaps had not visited in some time.

Natural theology, along with the concept of beauty (the transcendent), stands poised for a continuance in the renaissance currently in process. My project looks to further both by utilizing what John Calvin and philosopher Alvin Plantinga refer to as the *sensus divinitatis* (the innate ability to form beliefs based on experience). The *sensus divinitatis* finds presence, for example, in Lewis's theory of longing—we were made for heaven, therefore we will long for it. A person's encounter with beauty, the “mutism” moment as Peter de Bolla put it, is undeniable in the human experience. This undeniable experience finds itself the object of rigorous study apologetically, philosophically, theologically, and scientifically (neuroaesthetics), and this project hopes to add yet another layer.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 87. In this “informal conversation between Professor Lewis, Kingsley Amis, and Brian Aldiss” in Lewis's Magdalen College room at Oxford titled “Unreal Estates,” Lewis makes a comment about the starting point for his writing of *Perelandra*. As with all of his fiction, it began with a series of mental images of floating islands. Mr. Aldiss comments to Lewis, “But I am surprised that you put it this way round. I would have thought that you constructed *Perelandra* for the didactic purpose.” To which Lewis replies, “Yes, everyone thinks that. They are quite wrong.”

⁶¹ *TWG*, 7.

Theological Aesthetics

As we consider the context of this study with regard to its relationship with the field of aesthetics, along with its contribution to the field of natural theology, we must also consider the subfield of natural theology specifically, what is increasingly referred to as “theological aesthetics.”⁶² Next, I want to first define “theological aesthetics,” secondly, I want to offer a brief preface to the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar as a merely suggestive introduction to his thought and the field of theological aesthetics, and lastly I want to indicate the intent of this thesis with regard to Lewis’s own theological enterprise in distinction from Von Balthasar (and Barth).

First, Richard Viladesau defines theological aesthetics as that theological practice of considering “God, religion, and theology in relation to sensible knowledge (sensation, imagination, and feeling), the beautiful, and the arts.”⁶³ This definition is much broader than Hans Urs von Balthasar’s theological aesthetics which does not make “extra-biblical categories of worldly philosophical aesthetics (above all poetry)”⁶⁴ but rather “develops its theory of beauty from the data of revelation itself with genuinely theological methods.”⁶⁵ This project presupposes the former definition, and considers Balthasar’s definition too narrow simply because of the subject matter of Lewis’s work. Balthasar and the Swiss

⁶² Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 11.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Reformed theologian Karl Barth⁶⁶ have already laid major groundwork in the field of natural theology with regard to theological aesthetics, and though I will not interact with either in a major way, as this is not a comparative study, I consider their work helpful in forming and understanding of Lewis's language of beauty.

Second, inasmuch as I will not directly compare Balthasar's, or Barth's, theological aesthetics with Lewis's, I must preface my study with a brief reflection on Balthasar's work (along with comparative commentary regarding Barth) in order to further distinguish my own research on Lewis's language of beauty. It is nearly impossible to venture into any theological endeavor that examines beauty without considering the work of Balthasar and his theological trilogy *The Glory of the Lord*, which endures as a landmark in modern natural theology. Indeed, any study on the conception of beauty must engage, even at a minimal level, with Balthasar's thought on "seeing the form." Balthasar famously places beauty at the fore of theology. For him, beauty was not the end of a theological discussion but the beginning.⁶⁷ Theologians err, however, if they focus primarily on Balthasar's introductory volume. To do so misunderstands his intent.⁶⁸ Balthasar meant for the entire project to be read and interpreted as a triad because "revelation calls for further dimension of engagement that theological

⁶⁶ Ibid., 26-38. Viladesau notes the similarity between Balthasar's *Herrlichkeit* (*The Glory of the Lord*) and Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* and refers to Barth as Balthasar's "dialogue partner." Viladesau further suggests a clear reading of Balthasar is enhanced by comparing *Herrlichkeit* to Barth's conception of glory (beauty) in *Church Dogmatics*.

⁶⁷ Louis Roberts, *The Theological Aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 192-193. Roberts notes that Balthasar considers beauty to be the "reflected glance of the double countenance of the 'true' and the 'good.'" Further, Roberts notes that Balthasar considered the fate of the transcendentals to be oblivion due to the fragmented age of secularity where thoughtless data supersedes the beautiful. In this, I find slight resonance with Lewis's thought on modernism and the rise of the autonomous self.

⁶⁸ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 31.

aesthetics indicates, but does not directly deal with: ‘the manifestation of God, theophany, is only the prelude to the central event: the encounter, in creation and in history, between divine freedom and finite freedom.’⁶⁹ Beauty serves as Balthasar’s beginning not because of primacy or importance, per se. Rather, because it is the beginning of interpreting the revelatory progression.⁷⁰ So, Balthasar centers on the “beauty” and builds from there. He writes in *Volume I: Seeing The Form*:⁷¹

Beauty is the word that shall be our first. Beauty is the last thing which the thinking intellect dares to approach, since only it dances as an uncontained splendor around the double constellation of the true and the good and their inseparable relation to one another. Beauty is the disinterested one, without which the ancient world refused to understand itself, a word which both imperceptibly and yet unmistakably has bid farewell to our new world, a world of interests, leaving it to its own avarice and sadness.

Here, Balthasar laments beauty’s diminishing in the modern world and suggests the cultural reticence to more fully engage with beauty is due to the uncomfortable placement beauty shares with truth and goodness.⁷² Yet it is precisely within the so-called transcendentals that Balthasar situates his discussion as both a corrective to Barth⁷³ and as a way that permits him to develop a Christian theology “in light of beauty as ‘the third transcendental.’”⁷⁴ For my purposes, it is worth noting Balthasar’s two controlling elements in the beautiful.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, 18.

⁷² Roberts, *Balthasar*, 192.

⁷³ Ibid. 27-29.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30.

In his introduction, Balthasar distinguishes two controlling elements in the beautiful: species (*forma*) and *lumen* (splendor); or, quite simply, form and splendor.⁷⁵ Here, Balthasar's form is the material world; in this world the beautiful "can be materially graded and even subjected to numerical calculation as a relationship of numbers, harmony, and the laws of Being."⁷⁶ As such, form deals primarily with vision; or, seeing the form. The second element, splendor, then, deals with God's glory, particularly in the Incarnation. Balthasar suggests a proper theological aesthetics must be developed in two phases:

1. *The theory of vision* (of fundamental theology): "aesthetics" in the Kantian sense as a theory about the perception of the form of God's self-revelation.

2. *The theory of rapture* (or dogmatic theology): "aesthetics" as a theory about the incarnation of God's glory and the consequent elevation of man to participate in that glory.⁷⁷

With regard to the first phase, Balthasar notes the historical failing of Protestant theologians to fully realize its importance. These theologians, according to Balthasar, focus more on "the essence of beauty in the event in which the light irrupts."⁷⁸ That is to say, they focus on the rapture, the gleams of God's glory emanate through forms, thus evidencing his hand in their creation. Balthasar concedes an extant depth or fullness in the material world. He further parses this idea of depth as the union of two things: "It is the real presence of the depths, of

⁷⁵ Ibid., 115.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 115.

the whole of reality, *and* it is a real pointing beyond itself into those depths.”⁷⁹

The first part of this union joins itself to a kind of classical perfection, “*Vollendung*: the form which contains the depths,” with the second aligning with Romantic notions of “boundless, infinity”; the “*Unendlichkeit*: *the form that transcends itself by pointing beyond the depths.*”⁸⁰ Lewis does not set forth a Balthasarian theological aesthetics in that he does not employ the two phases. I believe Lewis focused primarily on what Balthasar calls a “theory of rapture.” Lewis’s language of beauty details what a person experiences when they encounter *Vollendung* and *Unendlichkeit*. I will, therefore, focus my study primarily on these Romantic notions of beauty, which I believe are clearly evidenced in Lewis’s thought.

Next, from Barth we receive a helpful understanding of the scriptural idea of *kabod* and *doxa*, the Old and New Testament terms for “glory.” Barth regards glory as “God’s freedom to love: it is the truth and power and act of His self-demonstration and therefore of His love.”⁸¹ Viladesau notes that it is not simply God’s self-sufficiency, meaning his being and position as the ultimate authority, but that it is also the fact that God is sufficient for man; that in God man lacks nothing. Thus the biblical symbols of light and radiance make sense in that “these symbols signify that God’s self-manifestation as the all-sufficient One does not operate in vain, but efficaciously reach God’s creatures in truth and power, turning them to God.”⁸²

⁷⁹ Ibid., 116.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 26.

⁸² Ibid.

The self-sufficiency aspect of God’s glory, according to Barth, indicates that God is “joyous in essence, and that in God creatures find their fulfillment and joy.”⁸³ Viladesau notes the similarity in Barth’s position here with Patristic thought in that man’s being is “ecstatic,”⁸⁴ or “centered outside themselves.”⁸⁵ For Barth, then, God’s glory manifests itself in the indwelling of joy that goes out from him—it communicates itself to man. Because joy connects in this way to glory, Viladesau states that it is insufficient to describe God’s glory as power, but, rather, beauty. God’s glory, according to Barth, then, works as a dynamic element of God himself. It goes out from him, communicates to man, and, therefore, draws man to it. It gives delight or joy, and that joy awakens desire.⁸⁶ I will come back to this concept later.

I have noted two primary theologians in the field of natural theology, within the narrower discipline of theological aesthetics. Both offer insight into my project, yet I find that Lewis is doing something different. Allow me to use Viladesau’s explanation of David Tracy’s divisions of theology to clarify my comment about Lewis. Tracy suggests three primary divisions of theology based upon their specific publics, or audiences: 1) Foundational, 2) Systematic, and 3) Practical. Because of space I want to only note the first two.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ See also Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classic Culture*, 286. Pelikan notes the patristics took the Genesis phrase, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” they intended use of “our” referred to Christ himself; thus, a “Trinitarian reference to the ‘living image.’” With regard to Viladesau’s point, the ecstatic nature of man’s being—that of beyond the self—also echoes with the notion that man’s being is centered on beauty—that of Christ himself.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 27.

First, there is “foundational” (or fundamental) theologies which are directed at the academy. “They provide arguments that all persons, whether religious or not, can recognize as reasonable.”⁸⁷ Its focus: honest, critical inquiry; its mode: metaphysical thinking; its discourse: dialectic. Second, the public for systematic theologies is the church. Its concern: critical fidelity and loyalty to the tradition; its emphasis: transcendental beauty as the manifestation of the truth of the holy; its mode: it utilizes poetics and rhetoric, and religious classics.⁸⁸

I aim to show how Lewis employs both a foundational and systematic theology in that he provides a broad swath of readers with arguments and dialectic in an effort to communicate truth, but that he also employs rhetoric and poetics as he weaves his art in such a way as to further invite readers into a quest for the source of transcendent beauty upon the earth.

1.3 Approach

Now that I have surveyed the broad field of aesthetics, the current renaissance of the theological study of beauty, and given a brief word about this project’s position in the field of natural theology, I want to briefly discuss my distinctive approach, or method of inquiry for this dissertation. My approach considers two aspects of inquiry. First, the act of reading (literature) itself, since this is the principal mode of interaction with the primary sources. Second, Lewis’s own view of critical theory, since this study embarks on such a task. Both aspects amalgamate into my distinct approach.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

First, we consider the act of reading. As I stated in the preface, when reading Lewis, often the reader finishes a work, either of fiction or non-fiction, with a keen sense that something else was occurring in the midst of the reading. Indeed, the act of reading itself “is an interventionist activity”—if the reader wishes to divine any meaning from the author he or she must realize “reading necessarily encompasses the making of meaning.”⁸⁹ Peter de Bolla suggests that the reading of and response to a text occur in lockstep. We draw meaning from a text as we read it, and thus respond aesthetically to it. It follows, therefore, that I should expect Lewis’s texts to exude some kind of “feeling” or experience during the research. This feeling, or aesthetic response to the reading, will not only aid in comprehending the story and in developing meaning from his texts, but it will also help me recognize thought patterns as I further endeavor to parse Lewis’s language of beauty.

De Bolla uses the term “aesthetic experience” to guide his study on how people experience art and I find his term helpful for my purposes here. He has appropriated the term “aesthetic” for his own purposes of interpretation and thus distinguishes it from the more general nuanced term we discussed earlier.⁹⁰ We must realize that to study Lewis is to study his literature as art and also to engage in his non-fiction reflections on the concept of beauty. We must, therefore, look at Lewis’s art and we must interpret his thoughts about beauty. This endeavor demands the use of reason, as we systematically analyze Lewis’s language of beauty. De Bolla says, “Judgment in the Kantian sense also refers to the way we

⁸⁹ Peter de Bolla, *Art Matters*, 95.

⁹⁰ See 1.2.

negotiate between understanding and reason. Its work is concerned with how we come to know things without any sense of value intruding.”⁹¹ We, therefore, will judge Lewis’s work in the sense that we will employ our understanding and reason—aesthetic judgment—to ferret out Lewis’s meaning and use of beauty. This does not mean, however, that Lewis himself used or even cared about Kantian aesthetics in his writing.⁹²

Second, we must consider Lewis’s own views of critical theory. How would Lewis feel about us dissecting his work in this manner? Lewis did not care for modern literary theory, evidenced by his own statement, “All art is itself, and not some other art.”⁹³ With regard to Lewis’s view on reading literature, philosopher Paul J. Holmer reminds us that, “Lewis would also have us read it remembering and relishing the extravaganza that it is.”⁹⁴ Lewis, according to Holmer, regarded literary theory with a wary eye. Though “Lewis does not deny that a line in a poem is germane and appropriate to the poet,”⁹⁵ he’d rather readers not look to the writer’s idiosyncrasies to determine literature’s worth or ultimate meaning. The piece of literature, for Lewis, must stand on its own. We, however, are not seeking hidden Freudian undercurrents woven into Lewis’s stories.

⁹¹ Ibid., 10.

⁹² It is worth noting that Lewis distinguishes between formal aesthetic experience and romantic experiences with beauty. Clearly Lewis understands the formal aesthetic arguments associated with different beauty experiences as we find him in various places in his non-fiction referencing Kant. Lewis, however, does not jump into a debate about judgments but rather parses his own romantic experience with beauty. See *SBJ*, 7.

⁹³ C. S Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism*, 28 (hereafter *EC*). See also Walter Hooper in “Preface” to *SLE*, xii-xiii. Hooper quotes *Lewis Papers*, vol. VIII, p. 71: “... taking art as an expression, it must be the expression of ‘something’ from the expression.” Lewis further evidences this notion in the essays “*De Descriptione Temporum*,” “Bluspels and Flalansferes,” and “High and Low Brow,” et al.

⁹⁴ Paul L. Holmer, *C.S. Lewis: The Shape of His Faith and Thought*, 33.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Rather, we are mining for a strand of Lewis's thought that might provide insights and expose his intent for his writing in general.

Furthermore, Gilbert Meilaender suggests the key to reading Lewis is "recognizing the degree to which he is focusing on things outside himself and trying to make sense of them for himself."⁹⁶ Meilaender here proposes that Lewis often uses his stories as a way to reflect theologically on his own questions about the world in which he lived. On this point, however, we must remain vigilant. It is one thing to extract Lewis's views about the world and even religious experience from his work, as this project seeks to accomplish via theological reflection. It is quite another to approach Lewis's work with the presupposition that the meaning and scope of his writing lay predetermined by his faith, or are wrapped up in his personal pathologies, or emanate from a Freudian reservoir deep within his subconscious. Harold Bloom, for example, criticizes Lewis in just this manner. His critique on *The Chronicles of Narnia* rails unabashedly on Lewis's so-called religious propagandizing. "Never have I encountered any other writer so dogmatic in temperament and in conviction as C. S. Lewis."⁹⁷ Bloom aims to discount Lewis's work by relegating it to mere propaganda. If, however, we judged all writers on the underpinnings that shape their worldview, be they atheistic or Islamic or Christian, we would be forced to dismiss all writers who hold any kind of ideology.

Though Lewis does show signs of developing specific intent with regard to his overt apologetic works and, to a certain degree, his fiction, he himself argues

⁹⁶ Gilbert Meilaender, *The Taste for the Other*, 6.

⁹⁷ Harold Bloom, *C.S. Lewis*, 2-3.

that all literature must be critiqued at face value. In his essay “Psycho-analysis and Literary Criticism” Lewis writes, “If it is true that all our enjoyment of the images, without remainder, can be explained in terms of infantile sexuality, then, I confess, our literary judgments are in ruins.”⁹⁸ Here Lewis responds to psychoanalysts in the Freudian tradition who suggest all images and symbols derive from a sexual origin in the human subconscious. In the same essay, Lewis responds to the Jungian notion that “there exists, in addition to the individual unconscious [Freud], a collective unconscious which is common to the whole human race.”⁹⁹ The Jungian implication, then, says writers write from universal images conceived by wounds or personal victories or some human experience. Lewis does not completely reject Jung’s assertion. On the contrary, he responds by using Jung’s thesis to justify his own writing endeavors. If everyone retains some primordial image deep within their subconscious and then, in the case of Lewis, writes from their reaction to that image, “why should I [Lewis] not be allowed to write in this vein as well as everyone else?”¹⁰⁰

We must, therefore, accept the person creating the work of art—in this case it is literary art—and by accepting them we then read and critique their work, understanding that everyone brings something to their work be it religious ideology, spiritual convictions, or a bad mood. Peter de Bolla grants the argument that “in holding to a sense of the ‘proper,’ one is mired within a set of expectations and beliefs—in ideological positions—to such an extent that any

⁹⁸ C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *Selected Literary Essays*, 293 (hereafter *SLE*).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 297.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 300.

reading can only reiterate the grounding ideology.”¹⁰¹ For de Bolla, however, propriety in reading a text does not necessarily give the reader complete freedom to interpret irrespective of the author’s intent. Rather, it “keeps the distinctiveness of the text firmly in view, which is to say that it helps me [de Bolla] return to what both prompts and contains my reading.”¹⁰² Lewis, I believe, would agree with de Bolla regarding a balanced propriety in reading. He believes that as critics we should interpret a text for what it is. He also concedes, to a certain extent, some critical devices such as the Jungian perspective—but not so much the Freudian.

Additionally, Lewis also allows for an anthropological approach to critical engagement with texts. These approaches to and theories about literary critique, however, ultimately fall flat for Lewis. He may understand the cultural milieu for critique but he does not concede the whole argument. “Until our own age,” writes Lewis, “readers accepted this world as the romancers’ ‘noble and joyous’ invention. It was not, to be sure, wholly unrelated to the real world. It was invented by and for men who felt the real world, in its rather different way, to be also cryptic, significant, full of voices and ‘the mystery of all life.’”¹⁰³ Lewis desires readers to discover the mystery within a text by allowing its inherent hiddenness to come alive through an honest reading. Though Lewis, in my opinion, would not have appreciated researchers and critics pulling apart his works and searching for strands of similar thought, major themes, and undercurrents, and even an overarching thesis for his writing in general, I must do

¹⁰¹ De Bolla, *Art Matters*, 97.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ “The Anthropological Approach,” in *SLE*, 310.

exactly that in this dissertation. There are certain rules, however, that I can follow in order to keep a healthy propriety in my reading.

Finally, I want to articulate the guiding rubric used in this study. In *A Preface to Paradise Lost* Lewis reminds his readers of the “first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship”: “to understand the object before you . . . what it is intended to do and how it is meant to be used.”¹⁰⁴ In light of Lewis’s exhortation, and the discussion above, as I developed Lewis’s language of beauty and how he employed it in his apologetic endeavors, I evaluated Lewis’s work as literature. In order to accomplish this I first, as Lewis suggested, determined the literature’s *Logos*—the story it seeks to tell, the emotion it incites, how it pleads, or how it evokes laughter.¹⁰⁵ I must also determine its *Poiema*—“it is an *objet d’art*, a thing shaped so as to give great satisfaction.”¹⁰⁶ In *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis*, Michael Ward provides, I believe, a guiding rubric for critical engagement. Ward’s critical work, which suggests “Lewis used images of the planets to order his Narnia chronicles and give them each what might be called a ‘Christological’ flavor,”¹⁰⁷ reveals two things worth noting for this dissertation as I look at both Lewis’s *Logos* and *Poiema*:

1) Lewis was meticulous, strategic, and conscious about the development of his literary form.

¹⁰⁴ C.S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, 1 (hereafter *PPL*).

¹⁰⁵ *EC*, 132.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Charles Ross, “Book Review: *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C. S. Lewis* by Michael Ward; *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* by Robert MacSwain; Michael Ward,” *Modern Philology* 110, no. 2 (November 2012): E131–E138.

2) Though Lewis admits an apologetic awareness in his fiction, we miss the beauty of his literary art if we simply dismiss all his writing as preconceived works of apologetics.

With regard to Lewis's awareness of his own choice [or use] of literary form Ward states, "Lewis actually declared himself to be interested in imaginative 'hiddenness,'" thus pointing to "The Kappa Element of Romance," which was the title of a lecture Lewis gave in 1940 to the Martlets literary society in Oxford.¹⁰⁸ This kappa element for Lewis was, as Ward suggests, "literary atmosphere." I will look into literary atmosphere within Lewis's work in greater detail further into this study,¹⁰⁹ but suffice it to say Lewis's thoughtfulness relating to literary atmosphere shows support for a Lewis who was keenly aware of and thoughtful about his his choice [or use] of literary form. Charles Ross supports the idea that Lewis's literary works run deeper than mere religious propaganda when he writes, "Lewis's leading character, Aslan the lion, does not directly mirror the Jesus of the annunciation, nativity, boyhood, and ascension as told in the Gospels. Rather he incorporates various aspects that medieval lore associated with the seven planets¹¹⁰ ..." We must, therefore, give Lewis the space to be himself, to write his literature free of propagandist presupposition, and yet we must also do the work and exhume remnants of his thought as they relate to this theological study.

Thus far I have situated this study within the current cultural context with regard to Lewis's critique of modernist autonomy. I have also sketched the context of this study as it relates to aesthetics, natural theology, and theological

¹⁰⁸ Michael Ward, *Planet Narnia*, 15-16.

¹⁰⁹ See 3.4 – 3.7 of this thesis.

¹¹⁰ Ross, "Book Review," E131.

aesthetics in addition to offering a word about my approach. Next, I want to suggest what I believe to be a natural outcome of such a study with regard to the importance of how we read Lewis in general.

1.4 A Reframing: The Importance of a Right Reading of Lewis

During my evaluation of beauty within the works of C.S. Lewis, it became evident that the popular view of Lewis as “King of the Rational Argument” (my phrasing) and children’s book author would not do. As the common thread of beauty crystalized I recognized how Lewis, when framed within the language of beauty, seemed to be drawing readers into a quest he himself was on. It is my view that when we develop Lewis’s language of beauty, the questing motif not only reveals an important aspect of Lewis’s literary and apologetic intent, but forces us to reevaluate how we read Lewis.

Do we read Lewis as the staunch rational apologist he is made out to be by so many twenty-first century readers? Or, do we read Lewis as the Oxford romantic; a poet disguised as a don, one enraptured in the wonder and beauty of a world made new to him after his conversion to Christianity? Or perhaps we must read Lewis with one foot firmly entrenched in rationality and the other solidly floating in the beautiful Perelandran seas of Lewis’s imaginative world. I am suggesting, therefore, as a secondary or even tertiary aim of this thesis, that we reframe Lewis as the apologist of beauty because I think this adjusted perspective will enable us to see further into Lewis’s imaginative and apologetic intent. I offer three considerations that build upon one another as a way to show first, how Lewis is currently viewed, second, how that view juxtaposes to Lewis’s own

emphasis of the imagination, and finally the suggestion to view lens through a composite lens.

First, let us consider how Lewis is currently viewed beginning with a brief examination of how the academy, the clergy, and the general public read Lewis: primarily as a stalwart of rational argument for the Christian faith, an apologist of the highest rank. To them, Lewis was the Oxford and Cambridge don who defended Christianity and wrote children's books—the two viewed as mutually exclusive, rather than a composite whole. Consider *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis* published by Cambridge University Press in 2010. The renowned “Companion” series boasts the finest scholars in their fields. This particular volume highlights premier Lewis scholars such as Alan Jacobs (*The Narnian*, 2008), Malcolm Guite (“Telling the Truth Through Imagination/Poetry” lecture, Westminster Abbey), and Michael Ward (editor of the volume; author of *Planet Narnia*), among others. A scan through the table of contents reveals essays divided into three distinct sections, each looking at Lewis as: Scholar, Thinker, and Writer. Section Two, “Thinker,” offers 10 essays “on” a particular topic with which Lewis, presumably, dealt. For example, Duke University professor Stanley Hauerwas wrote “On Violence,” while Oxford University Theology faculty member Judith Wolfe wrote “On Power.”¹¹¹ Though the *Companion* serves its scholarly purpose quite well in most areas of discussion, missing from this list of “ons,” is an essay “On Beauty” or “On Longing” or “On Joy.” It is stunning to find such an omission in so fine a compendium.

¹¹¹ *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis*, x.

On a popular level, the Internet contains myriad C.S. Lewis websites published by institutes, organizations, and enthusiasts. Consider The C.S. Lewis Institute, for example. Its Basic Apologetics course offering is comprised of the following sets: Set I) Reasons for Faith, Set II) Objections to the Faith, Set III) Responding to Atheism, Set IV) Responding to New Age and Cults. Each set consists of five lectures, totaling twenty. Only one lecture discusses the “Argument from Desire” and even that lecture assumes a rational point of view from the outset.¹¹² Is this the way Lewis would want us to read and respond to his individual works, his corpus?

Second, Lewis’s emphasis on the imagination reveals the importance of a cognitive synthesis in which reason and the imagination work in tandem, rather than in an either/or model. How we read Lewis and what we read him for, therefore, predetermines the context into which we place him. How we read Lewis also determines whether we view and use his work as apologetical talking points for the greater Christian culture—the church universal—or as instructive on how we ought to engage imagination and rationality together. If we read Lewis merely through a rational lens, as a “King of the Rational Argument,” then we miss what was, perhaps, Lewis’s intellectual passion post-conversion: beauty as apologetic.

This is not to say Lewis was not a rationalist of the highest rank. Indeed, Lewis says, “I am a rationalist,”¹¹³ in his essay “Bluspels and Flalansferes.” He does so, however, not to put forth the schema of his apologetic approach but to instruct readers on how he views imagination in light of meaning and its relation

¹¹² “Basic Apologetics Course.” *C.S. Lewis Institute*, December 11, 2011. http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/Basic_Apologetics_Course.

¹¹³ C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *Image and Imagination*, 265 (hereafter *II*).

to truth (i.e., the rational). Though I will discuss Lewis's statement here in greater detail further into my study, I believe it will be helpful here to sketch out how he viewed and used imagination since it was his imagination that was first transfixed by beauty and subsequently baptized prior to his final conversion to the Christian faith. Let me, therefore, clarify Lewis's definition of *imagination* before we ramble along in this study with a convoluted understanding of the term.

Lewis distinguished the imaginative from the imaginary. The imaginary was, to Lewis, emblematic of cognitive escape whereas the imaginative denoted cognitive agency whereby a person uses their mind in a particular creative way, "as a gateway into other and better worlds."¹¹⁴ The agency of human imagination works at producing "new metaphors or revivifying old, [it] is not the cause of truth, but its condition."¹¹⁵ Reason exists as the metaphorical condition of language; we must use language to communicate intelligently, according to Professor Corbin Scott Carnell as he interprets Lewis. Our highest truths as humans must be "expressed through symbols which are not rationally but imaginatively understood."¹¹⁶

Furthermore, Robert Holyer, in his essay "C.S. Lewis on the Epistemic Significance of the Imagination," states that Lewis's case for "Christianity is based accordingly, not on a simple appeal to reason, but on an appeal to the critical imagination in which reason and imagination together make up the organ

¹¹⁴ McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*, 139.

¹¹⁵ "Bluspels and Flalansferes," in *SLE*, 265.

¹¹⁶ Carnell, 72.

of truth.”¹¹⁷ Prior to his conversion, though Lewis flirted with the world of imagination, he dismissed it as having little significance outside of escape. Yet even though Lewis eschewed imagination in favor of the rational as an atheist, he encountered in the writer George MacDonald an element that he says baptized his imagination. Once his conversion was complete,¹¹⁸ at age 33 the imagination for Lewis took on enhanced significance. Truth, according to Lewis, could be accessed through the hierarchy of reason *and* imagination, but even though Lewis puts forth this hierarchy he, nevertheless, confesses that within the imagination there exists a certain amount of “truth or rightness.”¹¹⁹

Therefore, to position Lewis solely as an apologist who championed deductive reasoning in order to convince the unbelieving mind misses the scope of his writing in general. Are we to join Victor Reppert in saying that “Lewis is best read as a critical¹²⁰ rather than a strong rationalist”?¹²¹ Or should we formulate a more balanced view of Lewis, the rational imaginative? For even though imagination sits below reason on Lewis’s cognitive scale, it is through the

¹¹⁷ Robert Holyer, “C.S. Lewis on the Epistemic of the Imagination,” *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 74, no. 1/2 (Spring/Summer 1991): 215–241.

¹¹⁸ Here I use the word “complete” because I believe Lewis’s conversion was not necessarily a punctiliar event, but rather a process that began when he read *Phantastes* by George MacDonald and culminated over a decade later in his well-documented conversion to Theism, then Christianity. See *MC*, p. 63, for further clarification on the three things Lewis believes spread Christ’s life to us.

¹¹⁹ “Bluspels and Flalansferes,” in *SLE*, 265.

¹²⁰ Critical rationalism was a philosophy developed by twentieth-century philosopher Karl Popper. It is based on the “naturalistic idea that society has developed through a process of problem solving using trial and error.” See R.J. Ormerod, “The History and Ideas of Critical Rationalism: The Philosophy of Karl Popper and Its Implications for OR,” *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 60 (2009): 441–60. Critical rationalism suggests an emphasis on the imaginative approach to problem solving via theory formulation. It is unclear, however, if Reppert is suggesting this in his statement. My use of Reppert’s statement seeks to show how academic readers of Lewis read him. It is also to suggest that Reppert zeroes in on Lewis’s self-proclaimed rationalism without parsing its unique definition. I look at this definition in Chapter Six.

¹²¹ Victor Reppert, *C.S. Lewis’s Dangerous Idea*, 44.

imagination where the unbelieving mind—and any mind—can grapple with and find “reason” enough to suppose a God might exist.

Consider, as a final example, one of Lewis’s most widely read books *Mere Christianity*. It was originally written as a series of radio addresses broadcast on the BBC, delivered less as a manifesto to convince the unbelieving and more as an encouragement to a doubting and war-beaten England. Many regard *Mere Christianity* as a classic work of apologetics, and yet even though it sets forth a rational exposition of Christian reflection on the subject of natural law, it “does not set out to provide deductive arguments for the existence of God.”¹²² Lewis intended the addresses to benefit his audience in, one could say, a more pastoral way—he acts as the humble minister showing his listeners and readers how their own experiences fit with a world in which God exists.¹²³

Finally, we must consider viewing Lewis through a composite lens. Michael Ward directs us to read Lewis with a composite lens of both imagination and rationality. First, Ward says, “C.S. Lewis understood, like few in the past century, just how deeply faith is both imaginative and rational.”¹²⁴ In his *Christianity Today* feature article Ward aptly shows us how Lewis used rational apologetics *and* poetic apologetics.¹²⁵ In his best works, says Ward, Lewis

¹²² McGrath, *C.S. Lewis: A Life*, 222.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Michael Ward, “How Lewis Lit the Way,” *Christianity Today* 57, no. 9 (November 2013), 41.

¹²⁵ In the *Christianity Today* article Ward uses several different monikers to describe the complimentary side to rational apologetics. These include: poetic apologetics, imaginative apologetics, and narrative apologetics. I will use these monikers throughout this study as synonymous with apologetics of beauty. For a thorough study on “imaginative apologetics” see the book edited by Andrew Davison, *Imaginative Apologetics: Theology, Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition*.

enchants his readers. Lewis employed the beautiful in order to accomplish this. For just as the beauty of the currant flower prompted his young mind to contemplate all that beauty symbolized,¹²⁶ so too did Lewis create worlds in order to entertain, yes, but also to point to something beyond—a kind of beauty for which only the divine can account.

Second, Ward highlights recent scholarship which reveals emerging streams of enquiry within Lewis studies. The stream of imagination surfaces as one of the primary areas in C.S. Lewis studies. Ward names seven fresh streams of Lewis scholarship. The first six are as follows: Fresh Stream 1) The publication of *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis*, a very recent and comprehensive study of Lewis's thought and major writing themes; Fresh Stream 2) The publication of *Lewis's Lost Aenid*, a translation by Lewis of Virgil's epic poem (Lewis's work was unfinished) on Yale University Press; Fresh Stream 3) The biography of Joy Davidman, Lewis's wife, published by Houghton Mifflin (2012); Fresh Stream 4) The publication of the peer-reviewed journal *The Journal of Inklings Studies*, a collaboration between the Oxford University C.S. Lewis Society, the Charles Williams Society, and the Owen Barfield Estate; Fresh Stream 5) The life and work of Walter Hooper, personal friend of C.S. Lewis, compiler and editor whose tireless work has given the general public numerous volumes of Lewis's collected essays and stories; Fresh Stream 6) Alister McGrath, whose most recent major works on Lewis include what many regard as the preeminent Lewis biography, and a collection of essays examining Lewis's intellectual world.

¹²⁶ *SBJ*, 16.

Ward's seventh, and final, *Fresh Stream* names a recently published collection of essays titled *Imaginative Apologetics: Theology, Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition*. Ward himself published an essay in the collection that examines Lewis's apologetic method. He states that his "examination will show that Lewis's apologetics were successful not simply because the Christianity he presented was reasonable (although reasonable it certainly was, or at any rate was intended to be), but above all because it was presented with imaginative skill and imaginative intent."¹²⁷ Ward's recent work compels us to consider not only Lewis's apologetic intent, but perhaps more importantly, how much he valued imagination. Ward's innovative scholarship further invigorates my own study as I seek to examine Lewis's imaginative elements of beauty and contributes to my assertion that we need to reframe Lewis's apologetic intent from King of the Rational Argument to Apologist of Beauty.

1.5 Comparative Literature and Scope

Next, I want to survey the current state of beauty studies within Lewis scholarship as a way of situating my own project in addition to summarizing the remaining chapters in order to show the scope of this thesis.

Studies on how Lewis uses beauty as an apologetic do not abound. In my research I have encountered few works that offer rigorous commentary on the subject of beauty within the works of C.S Lewis. Here I offer a suggestive list, though it should be recognized that none of the works mentioned offer a fully orbbed critical analysis of Lewis's notion of beauty.

¹²⁷ Michael Ward, "The Current State of Lewis Scholarship," *Sewanee Theological Review* 55, no. 2 (2012): 123–126.

First, Andrew Cuneo’s article, “Beauty Will Save the World—But Which Beauty?” in *In Pursuit of Truth: A Journal of Christian Scholarship* does little more than mention Lewis’s appetite for beauty. Second, Clyde S. Kilby’s *The Christian World of C.S. Lewis* mentions beauty, but only as one of Lewis’s many themes.¹²⁸ Third, Eliane Tixier’s “Imagination Baptized” in *The Longing For a Form* contributes four pages to the related themes of glory and beauty in Lewis’s work, specifically, Lewis’s Narnia tales. Tixier explains how Lewis combines images of homely beauty, or everyday charms such as Mrs. Beaver’s sewing machine, and wonderful beauty as in the silver rain of falling stars depicted in *The Last Battle*, to produce scenes of mysterious beauty unique to fantasy literature. The infusion of beauties produces “a route to Holiness which we have discovered winding through the adventures of Narnia.”¹²⁹ Tixier touches on the relation between beauty and holiness, which I discuss in this study (see Chapter 7), but relays the terms as operating independently, whereas I propose holiness, or the *numinous* as Rudolph Otto conceives it, works in conjunction with beauty.

Fourth, Gilbert Meilaender offers illuminating insights into Lewis’s social and ethical thought in *The Taste for the Other*. Meilaender deftly handles the Lewis corpus, drawing rich insights from both his non-fiction and his fiction, which might be the book’s greatest strength. Meilaender also touches on Lewis’s argument from desire in chapter one, “The Sweet Poison of False Intimates,” but frames it in an ethical discussion rather than an apologetic one. I suggest that desire (*Sehnsucht*) contributes to the aesthetic experience as one of its by-

¹²⁸ Clyde S. Kilby, *The Christian World of C.S. Lewis*, 41; 56-57; 62, 64;

¹²⁹ Elaine Tixie, “Imagination Baptized” in *The Longing for a Form*, 156-157.

products. Fifth, *C.S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness and Beauty* goes much deeper in dealing with Lewis's apologetic of beauty. This volume of essays, edited by David Baggett, Gary R. Habermas, and Jerry Walls, contains essays by Peter Kreeft, "C.S. Lewis's Philosophy of Truth, Goodness and Beauty," as well as three pieces on the topic of beauty in C.S. Lewis's thought, one being "Evil and the Cosmic Dance to Come: C.S. Lewis and Beauty's Place in Theodicy" by Philip Tallon. Kreeft's essay does much to formulate Lewis's philosophical framework with regard to the transcendentals but does not break new ground with regard to how Lewis uses beauty as apologetic. Likewise, Tallon's piece focuses on the difficulties with beauty in the face of justice regarding a Christian theodicy. It does not, however, discuss apologetic implications of Lewis's literary use of beauty.

Sixth, we find the aforementioned *Imaginative Apologetics: Theology, Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition* as a valuable resource in my study. Alison Milbank, Dona J. Lazenby, and Michael Ward contributed essays on Christian apologetics and the human imagination. Ward's essay, in particular, forges his seventh fresh stream of Lewis scholarship discussed earlier (see 1.4). Though these essays provide helpful insight into the use of the imagination in the apologetic enterprise, they do not interact with the ways in which beauty engages the imagination.¹³⁰ Finally, both Alister McGrath and Malcolm Guite have contributed essays regarding Lewis's imaginative enterprise. McGrath's "An Enhanced Vision of Rationality: C.S. Lewis on the Reasonableness of Christian

¹³⁰ Alison Milbank comes closest to discussing beauty as she seeks to show how the imagination operates "as a philosophical tool that helps us reason by providing an epistemology ... that is inherently religious." See "Apologetics and the Imagination: Making Strange," 32-34.

Faith”¹³¹ contributes to Ward’s discussion in that it too discusses the relationship between reason and imagination, touching on Lewis’s use of the *numinous* and furthering the argument that perhaps we need not relegate Lewis into his own deductive box. Guite’s essay “C.S. Lewis: Apologetics and the Poetic Imagination”¹³² examines the role Lewis’s imagination played in his apologetics.

Lewis scholarship over the past fifty years has largely remained silent on Lewis’s use of beauty as apologetic, though emerging scholarship, my own included, seeks to invigorate Lewis studies by reframing Lewis as not only the Imaginative Apologist, but the Apologist of Beauty.

Chapter Summaries

This study seeks the unique goal of identifying, defining, and showing C.S. Lewis’s language of beauty. I approach this task by first, in Chapters 2-7, offering analysis of the language of beauty. In Chapter 8, I apply that analysis to Lewis’s work in a more concentrated chapter designed to focus more on the primary documents. Chapter 9 serves as a concluding reflection on the uniqueness of my study and seeks to answer the question: What does beauty demand?

Now that we have oriented ourselves to the foundations of this study I will continue my inquiry in Chapter 2 by defining what I term Lewis’s “language of beauty.” I preface this chapter by showing how beauty remained an enduring

¹³¹ Alister McGrath, “An Enhanced Vision of Rationality: C. S. Lewis on the Reasonableness of Christian Faith,” *Theology*, doi:10.1177/0040571X13501263, 116: 410–17, no. 116 (December 2013): 410–17.

¹³² Malcolm Guite, “C.S. Lewis: Apologetics and the Poetic Imagination,” *Theology*, no. 216 (2013): 418–26, doi:DOI: 10.1177/0040571X13501264.

literary motif in Lewis's fiction and non-fiction. I then sketch the elements of Lewis's language of beauty and briefly state how they operate. I conclude this chapter by discussing the importance and use of poetic language and how it applies to my study. Within this chapter I also suggest Lewisian Northernness to be an important and neglected strand of inquiry within Lewis scholarship.

In Chapter 3 I expand my idea that Northernness should be considered more seriously. I accomplish this by revisiting Lewis's initial experiences with Northernness, discussing Lewis's "Norse Complex," and suggest that Northernness connects to beauty in a profound way. I make this connection by more accurately defining Lewisian Northernness, showing the Romantic connection to Lewisian Northernness, and by suggesting that Lewis's affection for landscape, along with his deft ability to describe beautiful scenes consisting of imaginative landscapes, further support a view of Lewis's language of beauty as consisting of a Northernness framework.

Chapter 4 further expands Lewisian Northernness as inherent in his language of beauty by examining three primary examples of Lewisian Northernness; showing their connection to Norse echoes, as well as the longevity of Northernness throughout Lewis's life and work. The three examples of Northernness included in the examination are: *The Pilgrim's Regress*, *Perelandra*, and *The Last Battle*. All three examples show explicit and implicit Northernness echoes, which suggests that Northernness within the Lewis corpus is not always expressed by simply using Old Norse language (lexical or semantic echoes). On the contrary, in this chapter I show that Northernness can also be expressed via a

Northernness worldview, or, in the case of Lewis, a contra-Northernness worldview: eucatastrophe.

Chapter 5 examines Joy as an element of Lewis's language of beauty. I suggest that Joy operates in a dual function within Lewis's language of beauty. I accomplish this by detailing the aesthetic progression inherent within Lewis's language of beauty: encounter, the surprise of Joy as aesthetic gasp, which awakens desire. I revisit Lewis's "Three Glimpses of Beauty" and re-interpret these encounters from the perspective of aesthetic experience. When viewed in this light, Lewis's "Three Glimpses" help show the aesthetic progression of encounter, Joy, and desire (*Sehnsucht*). I show how Lewisian Joy echoes Romantic joy as well as biblical joy, and how Lewis's Joy is evidenced in his storytelling—that is to say, within his worldview of eucatastrophe. Showing Lewisian Joy in this light prefaces my assertion that many within the academy elide the Lewisian terms Joy and *Sehnsucht*. I spend one section discussing this elision and then rely on my analysis of Chapter 6, which focuses on *Sehnsucht*, to further support my assertion.

In Chapter 6 I analyze *Sehnsucht* as a primary element in Lewis's language of beauty. *Sehnsucht* operates as constitutive of the inherent aesthetic progression set forth in Chapter 5. In this chapter I define *Sehnsucht*, drawing from Corbin Scott Carnell's work that has defined *Sehnsucht* within Lewis scholarship for the last two decades. Carnell, however, fails to include German Romanticism's influence upon the term. I pick up where Carnell left off and show how *Sehnsucht* as part of the aesthetic progression denotes movement. Movement

also connects to beauty, both neurologically and theologically—two areas I highlight in this chapter.

Chapter 7 explores the *numinous* as an element within Lewis’s language of beauty. In this chapter, I will offer a working definition of apologetics as a preface to developing a phenomenological apologia. Lewis employed an imaginative approach to his apologetic and I suggest that the *numinous* works in conjunction with beauty as a cognitive jamming device. I will offer a more comprehensive definition, derived from Rudolf Otto’s *The Image of the Holy* and suggest that Lewis employed the *numinous* as a way to create a kind of literary atmosphere conducive to introducing readers to the possibility of the Divine. The *numinous*, however, also carries a relational quality I term “*Bifrost*.” It is this seldom-discussed element of the *numinous* that contributes to our understanding of its relational side.

Chapter 8 offers a suggestive compendium that highlights examples of Lewis’s language of beauty. In this chapter I aim to show how the language of beauty works within Lewis’s works. Though I included additional analysis of the movement of beauty, the chapter primarily deals with Lewis’s work and uses samples from his various works to connect the dots of the thesis in general.

Finally, as stated above, I will conclude with a chapter of reflection on the uniqueness of my study as it relates to Lewis scholarship and imaginative apologetics. Before I begin defining the central elements in Lewis’s language of beauty in chapter two I want to offer a concluding postscript to this introduction in order to contribute further clarification this literary-theological study.

1.6 Concluding Postscript: Beauty's Dual Constitution

In considering how C.S. Lewis approaches and defines beauty and, furthermore, how he employs a unique language of beauty within his writing, a very basic theological question emerges: In what way do humans encounter God? I believe one possible answer to this question can be expressed in two ways: *by-paths to God* and *mirrors and lamps*.

By-paths to God

In his *Preface to Christian Theology* John A. Mackay suggests we encounter God in varied ways such as religious experience and the *numinous* experiences brought on through nature itself, such as the setting of the sun. He defines these experiences as by-paths, albeit paths one must travel if one wishes to encounter God. "The way of the seeker," writes Mackay, "leads first through by-paths of nature and culture in the world of which he is a part. He looks everywhere for footprints of the Divine, whose challenge he has felt, and upon whose reality he is gambling his life."¹³³ These by-paths provide portals into the Divine; entry points for encounters with God. Such encounters, posits Mackay, represent the very core of Christian religion.¹³⁴

Mackay offers various examples of what one might consider to be by-paths; avenues by which we encounter God. In detailing the primary elements of Lewis's language of beauty, I am suggesting that Lewis regarded beauty as a primary by-path from which we encounter God and that Mackay's rough

¹³³ John Mackay, *A Preface to Christian Theology*, 55.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

framework of nature and culture can provide us with two categories from which beauty, in the Lewisian way, may be analyzed: *nature* and *culture*. Nature and culture come together in Lewis's corpus as he paints his fiction with *numinous* landscapes and literary atmosphere (nature), enriching them with the austere and conceptual-theological beauty of Northernness, while at the same time guiding readers into theological contemplation (culture) as he shows how the Christian term *Joy* intermingled with the literary-philosophical notion of *Sehnsucht* (intense longing). I must clarify what I mean by culture. In brief, I am using culture to mean the shared experience of the human intellect as regards conceptual understanding and its effects upon personal cognition and spirituality.¹³⁵

Therefore, it would be appropriate to consider how the elements of beauty, such as *Joy* and *Sehnsucht*, affect the human condition, which, in turn, affects the shared experiences of humans in life.

In the subsequent chapters I will categorize Lewis's language of beauty by way of examining its expression through landscape (nature) and "innerscape" (culture). Here I am introducing a word I feel helps distinguish between the effects of a beauty communicated through a Northernness that relates primarily to the physical landscape, and the effects of a beauty communicated through a

¹³⁵ Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 6-18. I am using "culture" here as an extension of Berger's conception of society and culture. Society, according to Berger, is "a dialectic process [that] consists of three moments: 1) externalization, objectivation, and internalization." (4) Inclusive of these moments is the world-building of man, or *culture*, through material and immaterial production, i.e. language, "and by means of it, a towering edifice of symbols that permeate every aspect of his life." (6) In using "culture" I intend its use to extend into the inherent relational function of world-making (6) and representative of the immaterial enterprise of man's world-making. Furthermore, I believe the societal moment of internalization also applies here. Internalization denotes man as a dialectic contributor: "The individual is not molded as a passive, inert thing. Rather, he is formed in the form of a protracted conversation (a dialectic, in the sense of the word) in which he is a participant." (18) Therefore, culture here regards the relational immaterial production of man, which I am further demarcating in this thesis as *innerscape*.

Northernness of the heart and mind that relates to a person's outlook or perception of beauty; one that elicits emotions such as, but not limited to, joy and desire; or even theological illumination as expressed via aesthetic experience.

Next, I want to consider how a helpful metaphor, as the second expression of the answer to the question posed above, provided by M.H. Abrams might crystallize the endeavor.

Mirrors and Lamps

In *The Mirror and the Lamp*, Abrams employs the symbols of the mirror and the lamp in his discussion of Romantic poetry. The mirror describes the way in which poets and artists viewed creative expression from the Platonic point of view. The expression of the poet reflects, by way of creative mimesis, the natural world. The lamp describes the transition of the previous viewpoint—that of reflecting nature—into the view that creative expression shifts from merely finding origin in reflecting nature but now, instead, illuminates aspects of the spirit. It is, as Novalis suggests, a “representation of the spirit.”¹³⁶ In this view, poetry, or other forms of artistic expression, draw from two origins: the natural world and the world of the spirit.

Abrams employs a framework similar to Mackay as he observes how poetry expresses beauty in nature and how that expression also illuminates the innerscape of a person. Thus, the mirror and the lamp intermingle as expression shows the influence of nature while connecting it to the spirit. Often artists used the natural world to convey moods, feelings, and sentiments. Thus nature found

¹³⁶ M. H Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 51.

prominence in artistic expression as a muse, a tool to express landscape, and a means to also express the innerscape.¹³⁷

Mackay, therefore, provides us with a categorical schematic—nature and culture—with which we can analyze Lewis’s work, while Abrams provides a conceptual schematic—expression and illumination—to assist our understanding of how objects of beauty function in literature and how those objects affect the mind. Both Mackay and Abrams implicitly suggest a dual constitution intrinsic to beauty: 1) natural (nature) analogs exist and appeal to our senses (aesthetic experience), and 2) there is the beauty that appeals to the imagination,¹³⁸ divine elements connecting with our human sensibilities.

Therefore, I aim to frame beauty in landscape (nature) and innerscape (theological illumination as expressed via aesthetic experience).¹³⁹ In terms of landscape, I propose a thorough analysis of Northernness within the three primary examples of the Lewis corpus I discussed earlier: *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, *Perelandra*, and *The Last Battle*. Northernness, however, works in various ways and also speaks to the innerscape. Thus, I expect some overlap in my examination of Northernness in Lewis and my inquiry into beauty as affecting human innerscape. I also suggest a brief examination of the *numinous* both as a literary concept in general, and as an apologetic element of Lewis’s work that heightens

¹³⁷ Tolkien scholar Tom Shippey notes how Tolkien used Northernness as atmosphere but sought to appropriate it as a vehicle for eucatastrophe. See Tom Shippey, “Tolkien and the Appeal of the Pagan” in Jane Chance, *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, 152.

¹³⁸ Abrams quoting Cicero, *The Mirror*, 43

¹³⁹ Paul de Man, “Landscape in Wordsworth and Yeats” in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 143. Such a categorization is endemic to Romanticism, where a material or natural object leads to spiritual insights. In the case of Northernness we find that because Northernness represents more than Old Norse literary echo and references to Viking culture and landscape but also signifies a worldview, it can nearly be regarded as a controlling trope of Lewis’s language of beauty.

the experience of the beautiful. I refer to *numinous* in relation to landscape because it is generally used along with landscape as a way to create literary atmosphere. In terms of innerscape I propose an examination of the terms Joy and *Sehnsucht* as Lewis used them. In so doing I will sketch Lewis's language of beauty as ranging from the material world into the depths of the spirit of humankind, with the romantic vision feeding each strand of thought.

Chapter 2: The Language of Beauty

Sketching Lewis's Literary-Theological Language

“Intense moments of aesthetic experience feel as if they are in the orbit of knowing, as if something has been barely whispered yet somehow heard ... These experiences often may help me to identify what it is I already know but have yet to figure to myself as knowledge.”

—Peter de Bolla, *Art Matters*¹⁴⁰

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I noted the current renaissance of the concept of beauty, spearheaded by pioneering researchers like Gabrielle Starr from New York University and Elaine Scarry from Harvard University. The bifurcation of the field of aesthetics, separating “beauty” from “the sublime,” seems not as stark as it once was. I also discussed my method of research, conceding that Lewis himself would not, perhaps, approve of dissecting his fiction (or nonfiction) in order to discover something hidden there with regard to the author's intent. Michael Ward, however, has made a strong case that Lewis held a strong affection for literary hiddenness¹⁴¹ and, perhaps, was about more than just creating mythical lands and space heroes. Indeed, he showed a certain level of intentionality in his prose regardless of their disinterested genesis, such as a simple vision of a faun carrying an umbrella in the snow.¹⁴² I also said a brief word about the field of aesthetics and gave further insight into the contemporary understanding of beauty.

¹⁴⁰ De Bolla. *Art Matters*, 12.

¹⁴¹ Ward, *Planet Narnia*, 15; 75.

¹⁴² See “Fairy Stories” in *Other Worlds*, 36.

With the context set, I now aim to define Lewis's language of beauty and to then unfold that definition in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. Unraveling Lewis's language of beauty reveals several elements that demand further investigation. I will begin to peel away the layers in section two by observing the enduring motif of beauty in Lewis's work. Next, in section three, I will briefly outline the primary elements of his language of beauty. With the elements of the language in place, I will, in section four, further develop the idea of "language" as I am applying it to Lewis's uses in the expression of beauty. In so doing I will also suggest that Northernness, as described in Lewis's spiritual memoir *Surprised by Joy*, works as a kind of framework and holds a primary position within Lewis's language of beauty.

I have mentioned the term "Northernness" here as a primary element of Lewis's language of beauty. To date, Lewis scholarship has largely neglected a proper analysis of the term Northernness,¹⁴³ ergo, I intend to offer a detailed examination of the term in Chapters 3 and 4 and show how essential it is in understanding Lewis's language of beauty.

2.2 An Enduring Motif: Lewis, The Pursuing Hunter

I want to investigate what I believe to be a key passage in Lewis's writings as it relates to beauty. *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis's final work of fiction, exhibits the author's maturation in style and ability in mythmaking,¹⁴⁴ but it also offers to

¹⁴³ See Chapter 3, section three, of this thesis for more on the neglect of Northernness within Lewis scholarship.

¹⁴⁴ Peter J. Schakel, "Preface" in *Reason and Imagination in C.S. Lewis*, xi.

the reader what I believe to be Lewis's overall thesis for his work as a writer, and as a man in general.

Before Psyche, one of three daughters to the King of Glome, is taken to the Brute of the mountain, her older sister Orual visits her for, what she believes to be, the last time. In this moving scene, Psyche, who should be ministered to by the older Orual, comforts her older sister with calm reassurance. She helps Orual remember their past together, when she used to pretend the greatest king of all was making a house for her, how she longed for that place she and her sister were not allowed to visit. The ironic scene, where the doomed sister comforts the free sister, ebbs into a climactic moment of literary ecstasy when Psyche admits, "And I am the one who has been made ready for it ever since I was a little child in your arms, Maia [this being her pet name for Orual]. The sweetest thing in all my life has been the longing—to reach the mountain, to find the place where all the beauty came from—."¹⁴⁵ Psyche continues to unravel the reason for her unsettling peace in the face of her demise. She tells her sister that the god of the mountain has wooed her all her life, calling her home to the mountain, the very place of her impending death.

What do we make of Psyche's response to her sister, Orual? Do we find Psyche here speaking for Lewis, revealing his goal for his writing? We must, I believe, take Lewis's own advice and ask the same questions we ask when we evaluate all other literature: "Why and how should we read this?" and "Why did he write it?"¹⁴⁶ Is Lewis, then, acting as a ventriloquist, speaking to us through the

¹⁴⁵ C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, 75 (hereafter *TWHF*).

¹⁴⁶ "Psycho-Analysis and Literary Criticism," in *SLE*, 286.

revelations of Psyche? If so, should we then regard Lewis as “the greatest apologist for beauty”?¹⁴⁷

I believe we ought to answer these questions in the affirmative.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Lewis, in effect, speaks through the character Psyche and gives us a glimpse into what I refer to as his language of beauty: the mode of imaginative expression Lewis employed to shape his writings, post-conversion, in order that he might show his readers a pathway past the “watchful dragons,” as he called them, and into a way of thinking about the world that allowed for the supposal of a divine being called God—what Lewis refers to in his book *Miracles* as the “One Thing.” I believe, however, in considering Psyche’s words to be speaking for Lewis we must remain aware of the novel’s chronological context so that we do not ascribe a literary or theological motif to Lewis’s corpus that eventually faded throughout his life.

Peter Schakel provides helpful guidance in the Preface to his illuminating study on Lewis’s thought, *Reason and Imagination in C.S. Lewis*. Schakel cautions Lewis scholars not to neglect the chronology of Lewis’s thought in relation to his development and reconciling of reason and imagination. Schakel claims that a tendency exists in Lewis scholarship to combine early and late statements by Lewis and then to “treat Lewis as an authority figure and concentrate on summarizing his positions on various subjects.” I agree with

¹⁴⁷ Louis Markos, *Restoring Beauty: The Good, the True, and the Beautiful in the Writings of C.S. Lewis*, 11.

¹⁴⁸ Peter J. Schakel, *Imagination and Reason in C.S. Lewis*, 14. Schakel states; “There is much of Lewis in Psyche as well.” See 3.5 of this thesis for further commentary on Romanticism’s intuitive quality. See also 3.7 for more on Lewis’s affinity for landscape/nature and how his original experience of beauty, one being an experience of nature, contribute to the forming of his aesthetic experience in general, and his language of beauty specific to this thesis.

Schakel, scholarship does indeed tend to amalgamate Lewis's thought at times and popular readings of Lewis tend to "cherry-pick" quotes to suit the purposes of the reader or speaker or pastor. "If Lewis studies are to progress beyond this," writes Schakel, "and become increasingly precise and illuminating, it will be necessary to attend to chronology and to the specific context which generated particular works, as well as the historical milieu in which Lewis's thought developed."¹⁴⁹ Keeping chronological context in mind, let us then examine the evidence, which I believe supports the claim that we can, indeed, read Lewis speaking through Psyche.

First, I believe the chronological context of *Till We Have Faces* does not diminish or negate my assertion that beauty remains a major Lewisian motif throughout his literary career. Lewis conceived the idea in his twenties. He began a version of the story of what would become *Till We Have Faces* as an undergraduate at Oxford University (1923). This version, however, Lewis attempted to write in verse. On September 9, 1923, Lewis said, "My head was very full of my old idea for a poem on my own version of the Cupid and Psyche story in which Psyche's sister would not be jealous, but unable to see anything but moors when Psyche showed her the Palace. I have tried it twice before, once in a couplet and once in ballad form."¹⁵⁰ It was not until decades after his conversion to Christianity (1931), through helpful conversations with Joy Davidman in the

¹⁴⁹ Peter J. Schakel, "Preface" in *Reason and Imagination in C.S. Lewis*, xi.

¹⁵⁰ Walter Hooper, *C.S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*, 246. Here Lewis is referring to what is considered to be the original myth of Cupid and Psyche, found in the Latin novel *Metamorphoses*, or *The Golden Ass*, and was written by Apuleius, though the Cupid and Psyche story did not originate with Apuleius. The Plato influenced story was a common motif among the ancient literature: "In Hellenistic statuary the love relationship of Cupid with a winged maiden is a frequent theme, and must relate to the Platonist myth as depicted in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*. See Apuleius and P. G Walsh, introduction to *The Golden Ass*, xlii.

spring of 1955,¹⁵¹ that he finally found a way to tell the story to his liking.

Davidman's assistance to Lewis throughout the writing process has caused some biographers to suggest she highly influenced the work as a whole—its beauty, subtlety, and romantic form. "Her part in the book," writes biographer George Sayer, "and there is so much that she can almost be called its joint author, put him very much in her debt."¹⁵² I include the remarks about Davidman's help to offer some context by showing, first, the impetus for the final version of the story and also that Lewis, at the time of the writing, was experiencing a bit of a dry spell imaginatively and benefitted from Davidman's editorial assistance.

The novel's provenance matters insofar as the text differs in tone from *The Pilgrim's Regress*, Lewis's first post-conversion publication, and *Perelandra*, a novel published twelve years after his conversion, for precisely the same reason mentioned above: subtlety and Romantic form. Unlike *The Pilgrim's Regress*, we find a more mature Lewis, reflective and tempered in his philosophical critiques.¹⁵³ Unlike *Perelandra*, we find a refined mythmaker, rather than a Miltonesque work brimming with theological eloquence.¹⁵⁴ *Till We Have Faces*, therefore, is considered one of Lewis's more mature works with regard to its form

¹⁵¹ Abigail Santamaria, *Joy*, 288-292.

¹⁵² George Sayer, *Jack: a Life of C.S. Lewis*, 361. Sayer suggests Joy influenced the very idea of *TWHF*. He describes her idea generating session with Lewis, noting he was enduring a dry spell in his writing career. His discussion with Joy (prior to their marriage) sparked his imagination. She collaborated with him on the project all the way through. See also Alister E. McGrath, *C.S. Lewis: a Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet*, 320-340 for a more precise handling of chronology regarding Lewis and Davidman's relationship and her influence on his later works.

¹⁵³ Corbin Scott Carnell, *Bright Shadow of Reality: Spiritual Longing in C.S. Lewis*, 115.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

and thought.¹⁵⁵ It is important to note that these three novels, *The Pilgrim's Regress* (May, 1933), *Perelandra* (April, 1943), and *Till We Have Faces* (September, 1956), were published nearly ten years apart over a twenty-three year span, which offers us a chronological lens by which we can see Lewis's development as a fiction writer as well as the progression and clarifying of his Christian thought in general. In light of Lewis's development as a writer and maturation as a Christian man, I believe we can interpret the words of Psyche as evidence for the author's own lifelong hunt for beauty's source.

Second, in a return letter to a young girl dated June 26, 1956 Lewis gives her some advice on writing. The young girl, Joan, had apparently described a very special night in her letter and then asked Lewis a few questions about writing. Lewis responds positively to Joan's writing and says, "... you describe the place & the people and the night and the feeling of it all, very well—and not the *thing* itself—the setting but not the jewel. And no wonder! Wordsworth often does just the same. His *Prelude* is full of moments in which everything except the *thing* itself is described."¹⁵⁶ Here, at fifty-eight years of age, Lewis offers Joan the same advice he might have given her just after his conversion and the publication of *The Pilgrim's Regress*.¹⁵⁷ It is in these words of advice we find the echoes of Psyche: "If you become a writer you'll be trying to describe the *thing* all your life: and lucky if, out of dozens of books, one or two sentences, just for a moment,

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 115.

¹⁵⁶ C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *Collected Letters. Vol. 3: Narnia, Cambridge and Joy: 1950 - 1963*, 766 (hereafter *CLIII*).

¹⁵⁷ See below where I enumerate six instances where Lewis references the "thing" or beauty; the first taken from *PR*, Lewis's first post-conversion work.

come near to getting it across.”¹⁵⁸ We find, therefore, a mature Lewis—of course—corresponding with a young fan and in his reply to her states what he has, essentially, been pursuing his whole writing life: the *thing*.

The *thing* Lewis is describing surfaces throughout his *oeuvre*. I am including six such occurrences to show chronological longevity. First, the *thing* to which he refers is the same *thing* embedded in Father History’s song in *The Pilgrim’s Regress* (1933):

Because, while it forgets, the heaven remembering throws
Sweet influence still on earth,
Because the heaven, moved moth-like by thy beauty, goes
Still turning round the earth.¹⁵⁹

Ten years after writing *The Pilgrim’s Regress* Lewis added a preface so he could offer a corrective regarding what he had meant by using the term “romantic” throughout the book. Here Lewis holds to his original thesis of the book, which is *Sehnsucht* (intense longing) and again points to “the beautiful” as a beginning point for that desire. He says of that unnamable something for which we all desire that it is such a desire that “pierces us like a rapier at the smell of a bonfire, the sound of wild ducks flying overhead, the title of *The Well at the World’s End*, the opening lines of ‘Kubla Khan,’ the morning cobwebs in late summer, or the noise of falling waves.”¹⁶⁰ Second, he references it (*thing*) again in *The Problem of Pain* (1940) when he refers to that *something* “which you were born desiring, and

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, 157 (hereafter *PR*). I am using the Eerdmans illustrated version (1981) of *PR* in which the preface from the Geoffrey Bles version (1965) was inserted as the “Afterword to the Third Edition.”

¹⁶⁰ “Afterword” in *PR*, 204.

which, beneath the flux of other desires and in all the momentary silences between the louder passions, night and day, year by year, from childhood to old age, you are looking for, watching for, listening for.”¹⁶¹ Third, it is also the *thing* he refers to as “that indescribable something”¹⁶² in his address “The Weight of Glory” (1941). Fourth, in 1943 Lewis published the second book in his Cosmic Trilogy, *Perelandra*. In it he again echoes himself from *The Pilgrim’s Regress* and “The Weight of Glory” when he writes, “Nay, the very beauty of it lay in the certainty that it was a copy, like and not the same, an echo, a rhyme, an exquisite reverberation of the uncreated music prolonged in a created medium.”¹⁶³ Fifth, the poet Lewis wrote these lines in “No Beauty We Could Desire”:

Yes, you are always everywhere. But I,
Hunting in such immeasurable forests,
Could never bring the noble Hart to bay.¹⁶⁴

Finally, we come full circle to the closing scene of *Till We Have Faces* (1956). Orual stands with Psyche waiting as the god approaches. Orual describes the scene: “The earth and stars and sun, all that was or will be, existed for this sake. And he was coming. The most dreadful, the most beautiful, the only dread and beauty there is, was coming.”¹⁶⁵ The god, Cupid, here represents the epitome of

¹⁶¹ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 131 (hereafter *PP*).

¹⁶² *TWG*, 14.

¹⁶³ C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra*, 261. (hereafter *P*).

¹⁶⁴ C. S. Lewis, “No Beauty We Could Desire” in *Poems*, 124 (hereafter *CSLP*). In 2015 Don King published a critical edition of Lewis’s collected poems. The collection contains previously unpublished poems and divides Lewis’s poetical work chronologically. King also renamed many poems. The poem I reference here may be found in King’s collection as “Yes, You Are Always Everywhere.” See Don W. King, ed., *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis: A Critical Edition*, 422.

¹⁶⁵ *TWF*, 307.

beauty and anticipates beauty's nuanced constitution within Lewis's language of beauty: divine, *numinous*, original, thrilling, abounding in vitality.

Beauty pervades the Lewis corpus and yet this theme exists largely on the margins of Lewis scholarship.¹⁶⁶ Next, I want to sketch the various elements of Lewis's language of beauty in order to establish a framework and define terms.

2.3 A Sketch: The Language of Beauty

For Lewis, the experience of beauty can be delineated in a progression. This progression begins with an initial encounter. The subject experiences an object, person, or place that strikes the subject with its beauty (form and/or splendor). Mingled in this encounter is the *numinous tremendum*. The *numinous* is the experience of dread or even terror that often accompanies the encounter of the beautiful, or the sublime.¹⁶⁷ Lewis, at one point in his writing, refers to this *numinous* element as holiness.¹⁶⁸ When Lewis infuses divine elements into his storytelling, for example, we find the whimsy and desirous fear of God pulling us "further up and further in."¹⁶⁹ Next, the encounter of that object, person, or place, possibly through *numinous* means, produces an aesthetic gasp in the subject, what Lewis describes as "Joy."¹⁷⁰ Joy possesses two roles in the language of beauty. First, it operates as the subject's response to the beautiful. Second, it operates as

¹⁶⁶ See 1.4 and 1.5 of this thesis.

¹⁶⁷ See 7.4 of this thesis.

¹⁶⁸ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 8-11.

¹⁶⁹ C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, 161 (hereafter *LB*).

¹⁷⁰ See 5.3 of this thesis.

an elemental characteristic of beauty itself.¹⁷¹ Joy remains through the aesthetic progression and, when the subject obtains the object, in a purely physical and perhaps spiritual manner, the subject then experiences the perpetuity of Joy. The Joy experienced, however, connects to the divine, to the God of Christianity, according to Lewis.¹⁷² This initial response (Joy) to the beautiful then awakens desire, the romantic notion of *Sehnsucht*. It is an odd desire in that if the subject only looks to the desired thing itself, the impetus of the desire, the subject is left still desiring—it turns out that desire itself is what we desire, and this points us to something beyond the object, the “outer,”¹⁷³ for which the subject first longed.

It is my view that we find this progression of beauty expressed both throughout the Lewis *oeuvre* as a literary tool—a device Lewis employs to quicken his stories and to incite the wonder and curiosity of his readers, but also in Lewis’s own theology. Indeed, Lewis communicates this progression of beauty via a unique language germane to his storytelling and even his theological writings. Furthermore, if we interpret Lewis’s language of beauty utilizing the primary elements stated here below, we discover a previously unexamined strand of Lewis scholarship altogether: Northernness.

Based on Lewis’s delineated progression of beauty, I suggest, therefore, five primary elements of Lewis’s language of beauty: metaphysical resonance,

¹⁷¹ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 134. See also 5.4 and 8.3 of this thesis.

¹⁷² *SBJ*, 238. In this final passage of his spiritual memoir Lewis implies now that he has come to faith in the God of Christianity Joy has “lost nearly all interest” for him. This is not to be interpreted as Lewis caring not for Joy. On the contrary, the text further explains his loss of interest resulting from an epistemological and spiritual awakening. He still encountered the same “stabs” of Joy with the same frequency as before. However, his spiritual position was altered. He had come to understand (epistemological) Joy’s order of importance within the Christian faith. Joy was a “pointer” to the “outer.” Joy loomed larger before, but now served as a “signpost”. See also chapters XV and XVI of *LB*, in which Lewis shows the place of Joy in the new Narnia.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

encounter, Joy, desire, and nature. Allow me to further develop these five primary elements so that I may more precisely define Lewis's language of beauty.

First, there exists a *metaphysical resonance*.¹⁷⁴ G. Gabrielle Starr notes, "Aesthetic experience is predicated on the dynamic interplay not just of senses, but of values and knowledge."¹⁷⁵ Interplay exists between what we sense and what we know. Knowledge and values¹⁷⁶ are, indeed, formed over the span of a lifetime, but they also suggest the capacity or potential for such maturation, signaling intuitive capacity, or the ability to encounter a pleasing form and formulate knowledge of that form based on the experience of it. Before a person encounters an object of beauty or experiences the Joy and desire prompted by such an object, Lewis suggests human beings possess innate qualities of being that resonate with the feeling produced by a pleasing form. Lewis illustrates this concept with the analogy of a young student studying Greek who suspects the pleasure of learning Greek grammar through his reading of English poets. "In other words," writes Lewis, "the desire which Greek is really going to gratify already exists in him."¹⁷⁷

Second, there is *encounter*.¹⁷⁸ A person encounters an object that possesses aesthetic qualities. For Lewis, the encounter can span myriad aspects of life

¹⁷⁴ G. Gabrielle Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 66-67. Starr states: "... perhaps aesthetic experience unites what we didn't predict with what we are always waiting for."

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁷⁶ W.R. M. Lamb "General Introduction" in *Plato* and W. R. M Lamb, *Plato in 12 Volumes III: Lysis Symposium Gorgias*, xii-xv.

¹⁷⁷ *TWG*, 29

¹⁷⁸ Scot Oury, "The Thing Itself: C.S. Lewis and the Value of Something Other" in *Longing For a Form*, 3. Oury states: "... Strictly speaking, 'the object itself' can only be encountered and experienced, in the sense that one undergoes an experience."

experience, from poetry, to music, to human beings,¹⁷⁹ to the scent of a flower.¹⁸⁰ To understand how Lewis views the temporal pleasurable objects, or *objets d'art*, that we encounter, it will be helpful to briefly examine what might be called the *aita* of Lewis's thought on the matter as found in his reflections on miracles.

In 1947 Lewis defended the existence of the supernatural in his book *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. As the subtitle suggests, this project was supposed to incite a conversation on the issue of miracles. It was, rather, a book that attracted the now famous critique of Elizabeth Anscombe of the Oxford Socratic Club, the gathering where Lewis first presented the arguments within *Miracles*.¹⁸¹ The background for *Miracles* notwithstanding, our way into Lewis's language of beauty presents itself in chapter two, "The Naturalist and the Supernaturalist."

Lewis compares the naturalist's view of reality with the view of the supernaturalist. Both the naturalist and the supernaturalist, Lewis suggests, find that there must be "something which exists in its own right."¹⁸² The supernaturalist maintains a monarchical view of reality in that she sees existence divided up into two categories. In the first category exists the "One Thing" which is the true original that nothing can get behind. It is, therefore the source of all

¹⁷⁹ *SBJ*, 45. Here Lewis notes, with great detail, the physical beauty of Lady E., Sir W., and their family.

¹⁸⁰ *TWG*, 29.

¹⁸¹ Victor Reppert, *C.S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: a Philosophical Defense of Lewis's Argument from Reason*. See pages 15-18 and note how Reppert suggests the Anscombe encounter may be mere legend based upon a supposed eyewitness's account of an attendee of the Oxford Socratic Club. For Reppert's full discussion of Anscombe's rebuttal see Chapter 3: "C.S. Lewis, Elizabeth Anscombe and the Argument From Reason."

¹⁸² C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (hereafter *M*), 8.

existing things.¹⁸³ It follows, then, that derivatives constitute the second category. These things stem from the first category and, indeed, are maintained in their existence by the “One Thing” in category one. Here we find shards of the Platonic vision of reality: derivatives existing and making up a world but wholly dependent upon the “One Thing” (Plato, *Republic*, 514a – 521b).¹⁸⁴ In Lewis we find echoes of Plato’s cave analogy: a derivative reality and the “One Thing,” that source which casts the shadows upon reality. It is here, in Lewis’s “One Thing,” that we find our way into beauty.

Lewis holds to a view of reality where the derivatives in category two act as echoes of the “One Thing” or reflective shards of existence emanating from the brilliance of God.¹⁸⁵ For Lewis, then, all created things—whether created things of nature such as waterfalls or rivers, clouds or rainbows—find resonance in their source.¹⁸⁶ It follows, therefore, that humans echo something of God as well. Furthermore, what humans themselves manage and produce by way of cultural artifacts¹⁸⁷ also exist as tertiary derivatives—a poem, a song, an armchair, or a relational experience with friends. Lewis establishes a pattern framework in which the derivative always points to the “One Thing.” Lewis, however, directs readers not to look for the “One Thing” in the framework and reminds us that it is not his

¹⁸³ Lewis’s thinking here seems to be influenced by Plato’s cave analogy found in Book VII of *The Republic*, though indeed the Platonic influence shows itself in this passage of *Miracles* and throughout Lewis’s thought. There is, however, a similar Christian strand of thought that also owes its origin to Plato, and that is found in Augustine’s *On True Religion*. See pages 252-253. For a contextual schematic of the thought-line that so influenced Lewis, see chapter six of this thesis.

¹⁸⁴ Plato, *Republic*, Bk VII.

¹⁸⁵ *M*, 9.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Physics*: Bk II: Prt1.

framework at all. Rather, “He [God] Himself invented it,” and for us to look for God within that framework would be nonsensical.¹⁸⁸ In Lewis’s world, then, a person lives surrounded by derivatives, shadows of the true beauty. As this study intends to expatiate, beauty, for Lewis, operates as a beginning point, a marker for the “One Thing.”

The importance of the *encounter* must be examined for it is from the encounter one *feels* beauty and is, subsequently, influenced within their innerscape.¹⁸⁹ Powerful encounters with beauty do not merely affect our sensibilities as they relate to pleasure. Rather, they affect us neurologically, in terms of our core consciousness and what occurs when we contemplate the *worth* or *value* of the object of beauty we encounter.¹⁹⁰

Third, there is *Joy*. We may categorize Joy, in the context of Lewis’s writing, as the aesthetic gasp.¹⁹¹ That is to say, it operates as a reaction to or by-product of the initial encounter of beauty. The Joy we receive from encountering beautiful objects relates to our intrinsic desire to be united with the source of beauty.¹⁹² We desire so much to become part of the beauty we see, “we have peopled the air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves that, though we cannot, yet these projections can enjoy the beauty, grace, and power of which Nature is the image.”¹⁹³ Lewis here suggests that we desire

¹⁸⁸ C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *The Seeing Eye and Other Selected Essays from Christian Reflections*, 227.

¹⁸⁹ See 1.6 of this thesis.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁹¹ See 5.3 of this thesis.

¹⁹² See *SBJ*, 77-78. Lewis states that Joy is “... never a possession, always a desire for something longer ago or further away or still ‘about to be.’”

¹⁹³ *TWG*, 42-43.

what the nymphs and elves experience, though we have temporarily contented ourselves with the Joy we receive through the aesthetic experience brought on through story, art, music, and through the nymphs and elves we create in order to reproduce that sense of Joy. Note specifically that Joy in this sense does not depend on a particular object of beauty. Rather, Joy, as Lewis means it, is a common response “germane to the aesthetic response evoked, and not to the objects that evoked them.”¹⁹⁴ Starr suggests a common thread within the aesthetic response to objects; it is the “chill” that people find universal when, for example, discussing their particular favorite pieces of music. Lewis positions Joy throughout his spiritual memoir, *Surprised by Joy*, as an aesthetic experience he feels common to the human experience.¹⁹⁵ We can relate to Lewis’s depiction of Joy because we have encountered a similar feeling when experiencing other varied objects of beauty. For example, when a person rises early in order to enjoy the beauty of the sunrise, but the temporary feeling experienced upon watching the sun crack the horizon, does not suffice. The Joy received in that encounter possesses the capacity to break through the subject’s everyday experience and communicates that which abides beyond the atmospheric coloring of the sky.¹⁹⁶ As we shall discover, Lewis’s understanding of the universal aesthetic experience of Joy plays an important role in his apologetic program.

¹⁹⁴ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 55.

¹⁹⁵ Joy, as aesthetic experience, does not fall within the subjective aesthetic framework so germane to the interpretation of the beautiful. Lewis allows for variety with regard to what gives an individual pleasure. Lewis, however, is more concerned with the value or quality of the object of beauty, which he indirectly suggests is common to all people.

¹⁹⁶ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 5.

Next, there is *desire*. We find the language of man's desire for God embedded within the overall thesis of Lewis's sermon, "The Weight of Glory."¹⁹⁷ As I stated before, we, as humans, possess an "instinct of transcendence."¹⁹⁸ I have termed this pre-existent quality of desire as man's capacity for metaphysical resonance. Lewis suggests a latent desire that, when an object of beauty is encountered, quickens.¹⁹⁹ It is this quickening that so tantalized, plagued, and ultimately drove Lewis to discover the source of the quickening of his desire.²⁰⁰ Such a desire, according to Lewis, inflames a person; it is inconsolable, it hurts, it is insuppressible, it pierces,²⁰¹ until one discovers the source of such desire. Lewis illustrates his concept of desire in his first post-conversion work, *The Pilgrim's Regress* when the protagonist, John, beholds a vision of a faraway island. The beautiful island incites intense desire within John, so much so that he sets off from his home to discover the location of the island. His desire is to possess the very source of the object which created such intense desire. The allegorical and autobiographical *Regress*²⁰² depicts John's journey to discover the island, which includes many deviations from the path into experiences, people, and objects that seem able to satiate the desire but result in emptiness. Beauty, therefore, creates

¹⁹⁷ McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*, 109. McGrath suggests that Lewis discusses the so-called argument from desire in four primary texts: *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933), "The Weight of Glory," (1941) the broadcast talk "Hope," (1942) which was later a chapter within *Mere Christianity*, and his spiritual memoir *Surprised by Joy* (1955).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 116-117.

¹⁹⁹ G. Gabrielle Starr suggests that aesthetic experience enlivens a person, and can, in fact, make them feel more aware of their existence in terms of self-awareness and the awareness of the world around us. See *Feeling Beauty*, 66.

²⁰⁰ This was discussed in the previous section, 2.2.

²⁰¹ *TWG*, 29-30.

²⁰² Andrew Wheat, "The Road Before Him: Allegory, Reason, and Romanticism in C.S. Lewis' *The Pilgrim's Regress*," *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature* 51, no. 1 (1998): 21-39.

desire, but such desire must be governed, otherwise a person may succumb to empty beauties.

Finally, there is *nature*. In “The Weight of Glory,” Lewis positions nature as a kind of gateway through which a person can discover knowledge about God.²⁰³ Nature holds a primary position in Lewis’s conception of beauty.²⁰⁴ First, Lewis’s literary influences²⁰⁵ such as Morris (and arguably Spenser, Milton, and Wordsworth among others), utilized the idyllic as expressed through the poetic and the myth to communicate something *other*.²⁰⁶ As noted above, Lewis viewed these literary devices as a way for humankind to give personality to nature and, in so doing, “possess” it; this is the effect natural beauty has upon humans.

Second, Lewis’s love for nature (i.e. landscape)²⁰⁷ also incited his lifelong affection for what he called Northernness; a stern beauty²⁰⁸ (as opposed to delicate) that also possessed an element of terror. Lewis created a word to describe such a beauty: *terreauty*.²⁰⁹ Lewis’s understanding of beauty can therefore be described as a robust, tempestuous, yet austere beauty with Romantic

²⁰³ St. Athanasius, *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, 39. Athanasius suggests three ways in which man can obtain knowledge about God. 1) Observing the heavens and pondering the “harmony of creation,” 2) Converse with holy men, and 3) Lead a good life by knowing the law.

²⁰⁴ I discuss this in further detail in 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7.

²⁰⁵ Lewis, “Literary Impact of the Authorised Version” in *SLE*, 136. Lewis defines literary influence as: “that which prompts a man to write in a certain way.”

²⁰⁶ “William Morris” in *SLE*, 221, 223, 226-229

²⁰⁷ *SBJ*, 152-157. Lewis notes his affection for the dramatically Romantic features of landscape while explaining how Arthur Greeves taught him “homeliness,” a more rural and rustic beauty found in simple things, like a vegetable garden or a cat squeezing through a fence. See also Ruskin, “On Truth of Skies” in *Selected Writings (Modern Painters)*, 9-12 for further background to Lewis’s love of Romantic landscape, namely the sky.

²⁰⁸ *CLI*, May 16, 1916.

²⁰⁹ *CLI*, March 21, 1916. Such was the early influence of his tutor at Malvern College who gave Lewis an appreciation for classic texts that possessed such a “Northernness” aesthetic.

melancholia outlining the form.²¹⁰ Furthermore, such a stern beauty includes the *numinous* as that “fullness” which Lewis noticed as a young man, pre-conversion, within the works of George MacDonald.²¹¹ Nature possesses a sense of presence as well as being. Like humankind, nature suffers the relational rift of sin even as the Divine Logos holds it together.²¹² (Rom. 8:21-23) For Lewis, then, nature participates in the beautiful as possessing its aesthetic qualities (form) but goes further and participates in our understanding of what lies behind its beauty and wonder (splendor). Moving forward, however, I will discuss the element of nature within the framework of Northernness because I believe it stemmed from Lewis’s affection for landscape, and manifests itself within his language of beauty as a larger aesthetic and theological framework.

I have summarized five primary elements of Lewis’s language of beauty. The first two, metaphysical resonance and encounter, will, moving forward, operate as presuppositions within the beauty progression. That is to say, I will assume these elements as already active within Lewis’s language of beauty. Therefore, the remaining chapters of this dissertation will examine the primary elements of Northernness, Joy, *Sehnsucht*, and *numinous*. Now that I have outlined the primary elements of Lewis’s language of beauty and how I will be

²¹⁰ *CLI*, May 16, 1916, 180. Lewis notes the countryside: “The country here is looking absolutely lovely: not with the stern beauty we like of course ...” Couple this description with his Romantic description of a familiar walk shared with Arthur Greeves: “I well remember the glorious walk of which you speak, how we lay drenched with sunshine on the ‘moss’ and were for a short time perfectly happy ... As Keats says, ‘Rarely, rarely comest thou, spirit of Delight.’” See *CLI*, March 7 1916, 71.

²¹¹ *CLI*, March 7 1916 also *SBJ*, 179.

²¹² St. Athanasius, *The Incarnation*, 45.

discussing them, we need to examine the notion of language and how we will be using it with regard to beauty.

2.4 What Icebergs Say: Northernness as Context for Lewis's Language of Beauty

When we use the term “language” to describe an underlying quality of an author’s writing, what exactly do we mean? I want to note three things with regard to poetic language as referenced in this thesis. First, poetic language reveals an author’s imaginative and ontological intent. Second, poetic language, at base, employs description. Third, poetic language produces emotional response through representation.

First, poetic language reveals an author’s imaginative and ontological intent. In *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* Paul de Man states, “Poetic language seems to originate in the desire to draw closer and closer to the ontological status of the object, and its growth and development are determined by this inclination.”²¹³ Here, de Man directs our attention to the *intent* of the Romantic literary program, one of epistemological and ontological proximity and pursuit. The Romantic writer seeks not only to describe the natural world, or the world within herself, by utilizing image and metaphor, but also attempts to employ her own awareness of what lies beyond the natural world and herself by constructing

²¹³ De Man, “Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image” in *Romanticism*, 7. It is difficult to conceive Lewis and de Man finding any common ground with regard to literary criticism. As a literary post-structuralist, de Man believed in the instability of language and, therefore, the ambiguity of meaning. Yet even with this stance de Man, in his analysis of the rhetoric of Romanticism, gives helpful insight into the Romantic program and what poets, such as William Wordsworth, sought in their poetic endeavors.

literary atmosphere via image and metaphor.²¹⁴ This “I-Thou”²¹⁵ awareness expresses itself through nostalgia for an object, say, a flower, waterfall, or poem, but goes far beyond sentimental remembering. “The nostalgia for the object has become a nostalgia for an entity that could never, by its very nature become a particularized presence.”²¹⁶ The ontological priority, as de Man puts it, transitions from the natural object, the flower, to something *other*.

Second, poetic language, at base, employs *description*. This is familiar territory for Lewis. As I have noted earlier, Lewis was keen to point out the nostalgia incited by the poetry of Wordsworth—it is not the object itself, but the *thing* behind the object.²¹⁷ In this case, however, we are not parsing Lewis’s Platonism. Rather, we are noting the use of a kind of language extant in Romantic writing in general, not only poetry. In discussing the agency of poetic language Lewis says, “This [language], which is eminently true of poetry, is true of all imaginative writing.”²¹⁸ In his discussion on the “primary epic” in *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, Lewis states the necessity for Poetic Diction, for “a language which is familiar because it is used in every part of every poem, but unfamiliar

²¹⁴ It is the imaginative structure of myth, metaphor, symbol, et al., that allows their rhetoric, or language, to penetrate deeper than the rational arguments of philosophy. See Stephen Prickett, *Coleridge and Wordsworth*, 2.

²¹⁵ Martin Buber’s “I and Thou” conception speaks into the theological notion of revelation and the way in which God’s general revelation is both a summons and a sending, thus depicting the relational quality extant in nature. Buber echoes in Lewis’s writings as he describes how, due to man’s desire to possess God, he ultimately makes an *It* out of God, i.e. Lewis’s false infinities, rather than entering into the proper relational position as an *I* before the *Thou*. See M. Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 107-108.

²¹⁶ De Man, “Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image” in *Romanticism*, 15.

²¹⁷ This is one of the primary motifs in Lewis’s address “The Weight of Glory.”

²¹⁸ *SW*, 317.

because it is not used outside poetry.”²¹⁹ There is, therefore, a stock descriptive language intrinsic to literature. It makes a poem, epic. It renders a story, saga. It paints a landscape, Nordic. In *Perelandra*, for example, Lewis creates a watery world with his “floating islands,”²²⁰ “bubble trees,”²²¹ “fixed land,”²²² and a “darkness . . . poured out of a bottle.”²²³ Lewis conditions the reader to a watery Perelandran language throughout the Romantic novel.

Third, poetic language, however, is not only descriptive, it produces emotional response through *representation*; it is an emotional language that communicates through imaginative means.²²⁴ Here I draw from Rowan Williams’s definition of *representation*: “a way of speaking that may variously be said to seek to embody, translate, make present or re-form what is perceived.”²²⁵ This language, which can contain a vocabulary “of endearment, complaint, and abuse,” takes us to the “frontier between language and inarticulate vocal sounds.”²²⁶ But vocabulary by itself is ineffective without image or concept,²²⁷ which is precisely what we discover in Northernness: an embedded language that

²¹⁹ *PPL*, 21.

²²⁰ *P*, 36.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

²²² *Ibid.*, 63; as a contrast to the floating islands.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 137.

²²⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria Volume 2*, 26; fn.2. The imagination is regarded as “the capability of reducing a multitude into a unity of effect.” Poetic language enters the imagination through variety of images, concepts, and descriptions, thus creating emotional response.

²²⁵ Rowan Williams, *The Edge of Words*, 22; 25. See also Edward W. Said “Introduction” to Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, xiii. See also Ashworth, E. Jennifer, “Medieval Theories of Analogy”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/analogy-medieval/>, Accessed March 20, 2016.

²²⁶ *SW*, 320-321.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 324.

utilizes the images, concepts, and vocabulary to create a pleasurable and beautiful experience.²²⁸ Emotional language, according to Lewis, reveals itself by way of two viewpoints from which we are able to consider the greatness of literature (and I have mentioned these two points previously): the *Logos* (something said) and *Poiema* (something made).²²⁹ The *Logos* and *Poiema* operate in concert to tell stories, evince emotion, express rebuke, or excite laughter (*Logos*) as well as provide immense satisfaction as an *objet d'art* (*Poiema*)—a thing “shaped so as to give great satisfaction.”²³⁰ The *Logos* and *Poiema* constitute a literary language distinct to the writers themselves, but it is the reader, according to Lewis, who validates the peculiar tongues of myriad writers. We, as readers, read great literature because we “seek an enlargement of our own beings. We want to be more than ourselves. . . . We want to see with other eyes, to imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts, as well as with our own.”²³¹ Literary language makes this possible, while, to use Lewis’s phrase, it gives *entrée* to experiences of the terrible, the awe-inspiring, and the *beautiful*.²³²

Lewis valued the ability of language to communicate meaning. Notice his emphatic linguistic commentary in Chapter 15 of *That Hideous Strength*, “The Descent of the Gods.” Meaning, for Lewis, rested at the seat of language. “For Ransom, whose study had been for many years in the realm of words, it was

²²⁸ It is helpful to note how Lewis viewed William Golding’s “island” in *Lord of the Flies* with regard to the pleasure and effect good literary language has upon the reader: “It was a very terrestrial island; the best island almost in fiction. Its actual sensuous effect on you is terrific.” See Lewis’s “Unreal Estates” in *Of Other Worlds*, 92.

²²⁹ *EC*, 132

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

²³² *Ibid.*, 140, emphasis added.

heavenly pleasure. He found himself sitting within the very heart of language, in the white-hot furnace of essential speech. All fact was broken, splashed into cataracts, caught, turned inside out, kneaded, slain, and reborn as meaning.”²³³

This shows how Lewis understood the deep value of language itself and of its intrinsic meaning; how speech and the written word expand in deified form from their source. We can conclude, then, that this emotional, descriptive language of beauty was, for Lewis, a natural expression of his own beliefs regarding language.

Lewis was well suited to disseminate his language of beauty because of his own personal experience. Consider this parallel thought regarding Lewis’s ability to write with clarity, conviction, and a certain “knowing” when it came to the Christian faith. Paul Holmer suggests that Lewis was able to write in such a way because he himself was educated *by* Christianity. Thus, his literature “is so different, not because it is confessional and about himself, but because he knows what it is like to feel, to think, to judge, to hope, as a Christian. . . . Lewis has actually seen it [Christianity] from the inside and therefore has a subjective matter to talk about.”²³⁴ Holmer here alludes to the principle in Lewis’s essay “Meditation in a Toolshed”²³⁵ in describing Lewis’s ability to utilize the teachings of Christianity from the inside—he sees Christianity *with* them (the teachings) rather than merely looking *at* the teachings of Christianity. Lewis’s writing so compels us because we feel that he has truly discovered God, according to Holmer. Lewis possesses firsthand awareness, and this awareness forms his

²³³ C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 322.

²³⁴ Holmer, *Shape*, 108.

²³⁵ I shall refer to this essay later on with regard to the way in which artists and critics should “see” beauty.

dialectic. In the same way that Lewis utilizes firsthand awareness in crafting clear and vivid apologetic writings, so too does he employ his own life experience and literary knowledge to form a language of beauty.²³⁶

To better grasp what I suggest to be Lewis's language of beauty, let us consider Lewis's own illuminating definition of *myth* as a kind of analog to the present examination of beauty.

Myth as Analogy for a Language of Beauty

As noted above, Lewis writes with a unique *sermonem* that possesses phraseology and vocabulary. Furthermore, Lewis employs specific romantic elements such as Joy and *Sehnsucht* (intense desire), along with a melancholy derived from *numinous* elements. Lewis describes *myth* in terms of a quality or language unique to his proposed mythical structure. Lewisian *myth* abides by specific qualities and it is those qualities that enable certain readers to discern his *myth* from the historical (the Greek *muthos*) or anthropological myth. Stories, therefore, possess and operate within a kind of language that distinguishes them from other types.²³⁷ A Lewisian myth, therefore, employs specific language that helps the reader determine its literary mode. As we consider Lewis's definition for

²³⁶ John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, 126 Macquarrie notes that language originating from personal experience should not be considered subjective simply because of its personal nature. Personal language can function as an illuminating resource to help interpret reality.

²³⁷ Ibid. 132-133. Macquarrie notes that the pre-religious language that operates as the root for theological language is the language of mythology. A myth possesses a form (narrative), details events (which can be objective within their immediate contexts), and is evocative in character. In this sense, we might suppose Lewis's language of beauty as a pre-religious mythological language that works to establish by-paths into future theological discourse. (See 1.6 and 7.3 of this thesis)

myth let us also consider how we might expand the notion of a beauty germane to Lewis into Lewis's *language of beauty*.

The “mythical quality” is what Lewis is after. In this sense, stories that possess “a value in itself”²³⁸ rise to our sense as *myth*. There are some stories found throughout history that anthropologists describe as myth and yet they fail to possess the value Lewis deems necessary elements for effective *myth*. For Lewis, the effective myth possesses “a very simple narrative shape—a satisfactory and inevitable shape, like a good vase or a tulip.”²³⁹ In this way Lewis's *myth* differs from the Greek *muthos* that, according to Lewis, can be any story. From the myriad myths throughout literary history Lewis lists the preeminent *myths*: Orpheus, Demeter and Persephone, the Hesperides, Balder, and Ragnarök.²⁴⁰ There are stories, then, which are not myths in the historical anthropological sense, such as Ragnarök, yet still possess the “mythical quality”²⁴¹ Lewis is describing. Among these stories Lewis lists J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* as a story with myth-like qualities.²⁴² So we see that Lewis's definition of *myth* varies from the historical Greek definition of any story that conveys a lesson to be learned or from the anthropological understanding of myths being all stories rising from the ancient societies where stories were passed down through oral tradition and eventually found their way onto the papyrus of the day. Lewis retains the word *myth* but distinguishes it with the following characteristics:

²³⁸ *EC*, 42.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Ibid.* 43.

1. Lewisian *Myth* is extra-literary.
2. Lewisian *Myth* does not derive readable pleasure from normal narrative attractions such as suspense or surprise. (Here again Lewis uses Ragnarök {Northernness} as an example of a myth that stands as myth without even the aid of narration—the thought of the Norse apocalypse is enough even without the stories attached to it.)
3. Human sympathy is at a minimum.
4. Myth is always fantastic in that it deals with impossibilities and preternaturals.²⁴³
5. “The experience may be sad or joyful but it is always grave.”
6. “The experience is not only grave but awe-inspiring. We feel it to be *numinous*. It is as if something of great moment has been communicated to us.”²⁴⁴

Lewis’s conception of *myth* deals primarily with how the reader responds to encountering it within the writing. “When I talk of myths I mean myths as we experience them: that is, myths contemplated but not believed, dissociated from ritual, held up before the fully waking imagination of a logical mind.”²⁴⁵ Lewis compares the reader’s encounter with *myth* to a person encountering the beauty of an iceberg. An iceberg protrudes from the water, at once beautiful and awe-inspiring, with its girth lying silently beneath the cold waters. Lewis’s *myth*, like the iceberg, alone demands the reader’s contemplation. The *myth* “suggests” as the iceberg suggests the mass beneath the surface awaiting exploration. It is, however, the protrusion of ice from the water that acts as the impetus for such

²⁴³ Kilby notes how Lewisian myth is “always awe-inspiring and numinous.” See Kilby, *The Christian World of C.S. Lewis*, 80.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

wonder and the desire to know more of what lies beneath. Lewis suggests it is this desire to know more that prompts men to “allegorise the myths.”²⁴⁶

Next, Lewis throws a literary curve ball as he explains that because he is concerned with the effects that a *myth* has upon the reader then it follows that readers may encounter *myth* differently. One reader may feel the pull of the action within the story whereas another reader will feel the stab of desire to know more of what is happening beneath the surface. The story for the second reader becomes mythic; an experience of reading that presents the reader with the *numinous* and prods them for deeper understanding. The second reader is the *myth-lover*, according to Lewis, and her behavior is extra-literary; she “gets out of myths what myths have to give.”²⁴⁷

Lewis’s *myth*, therefore, presents itself as a portal for us not only to understand more deeply Lewis’s literary program—his attempts and victories to inspire, to transform, and to transport—but to enlarge our very beings.²⁴⁸ If this stands as Lewis’s endgame for his literary program, then it is a natural curiosity to ask how and by what means he achieves his goal. It seems probable Lewis would employ the very literary elements he discusses in his experiment in criticism: beauty, *numinous*, desire, nature, and sense fulfillment. Thus we find a rough schematic for Lewis’s *language of beauty*.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 48.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 137.

So far I have briefly outlined Lewis's language of beauty. I outlined the primary areas of examination with regard to Lewis's language of beauty: Northernness (nature/landscape), Joy, *Sehnsucht*, and *numinous*. After establishing these primary areas of inquiry I clarified the use of the term "language" so that, moving forward, we might see how Lewis used these elements to create literary atmosphere, as well as theological insights. I also noted how in examining Lewis's language of beauty one cannot ignore the primacy of landscape within the Lewis corpus. Indeed, when we look deeply in Lewis's use of landscape, we find an area of Lewis scholarship previously neglected: Northernness. In the next two chapters I want to more fully explore Lewisian Northernness in order to show how significant it ought to be within Lewis scholarship and to suggest that Northernness operates as an overarching framework for Lewis's language of beauty.

Chapter 3: The Great Northern Stab:

Definition and Analysis of Lewisian Northernness

“In all things that live there are certain irregularities and deficiencies which are not only signs of life, but sources of beauty.”

—John Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic”²⁴⁹

3.1 Introduction

I propose that beauty nestles within a Northernness framework in Lewis’s writing. Within such a framework we find icebergs, to use Lewis’s image, in nearly every work; beauty that emanates and speaks to the reader with *numinous* qualities thus creating a desire (*Sehnsucht*) to understand and discover more of what lies beneath the surface. Though this literary framework—Northernness—is not unique to Lewis, he enlisted himself among its masters and borrowed from pagan Northernness as well as Victorian novelists and Romantic poets, such as Morris and Wordsworth, to weave grand theological tapestries within highly imaginative works as well as in his philosophical apologetic works. We do not, therefore, only discover Lewisian Northernness in the very fabric of frozen Narnia,²⁵⁰ or throughout Ransom’s voyage over the mercurial seas of Perelandra, or in his own nostalgic descriptions of County Down in his spiritual memoir

²⁴⁹ John Ruskin, *Selected Writings*, 49.

²⁵⁰ Ragnarök, the Norse apocalypse, is set off by a succession of long winters. These winters mark of the events leading up to the ultimate doom of the Norse people. The High One says: “First will come the winter called Fimbulvetr [Extreme Winter]. Snow will drive in from all directions; the cold will be severe and the winds will be fierce. The sun will be of no use. Three of these winters will come, one right after the other, with no summer in between.” See Snorri Sturluson and Jesse L. Byock, eds., *The Prose Edda*, 71.

Surprised by Joy.²⁵¹ Northernness is, in fact, also woven into his theological thought regarding Christian Joy, creation, and re-creation. Many Lewis scholars refer to Northernness, but do so only to establish Lewis's early influences as a young person pre-conversion. What nearly all scholars have neglected, until my own research, is that Lewis considered Northernness as a central component part to understanding his work as a whole.²⁵²

In the next two chapters my chief concern is to properly define and give chronological examples of Lewisian Northernness, thus establishing its preeminence in Lewis's thought. In this chapter I will focus on articulating a working definition of Northernness whereby we can accurately examine Lewis's works for Northernness echoes. I will present my working definition of Northernness for this dissertation and suggest three areas in which Lewisian Northernness influences his writing: stylistic, conceptual, and theological. These three areas of influence will provide a rubric for Chapter 4 as I parse three major fiction works by Lewis as a means to show the range of the Northernness influence upon his work.

In the second section of this chapter I will trace Lewis's initial childhood Northernness experiences as well as examine his correspondence with his lifelong friend, Arthur Greeves. By examining these experiences as well as his chronological correspondence with Greeves, I believe a clear and rising arc of Northernness influence carves a stark through-line of thought in Lewis's life and

²⁵¹ *SBJ*, 152-157. Lewis's care of landscape description and his ability to execute should be considered when discussing Northernness insofar as Northernness can be understood as literary description, or atmosphere, as well as one's personal feeling or *numinous* experience in landscape. For more on this see Peter Davidson's *The Idea of the North*.

²⁵² As discussed below in 3.3.

writing. In examining Northernness it is essential to consider the importance of landscape as literary figure and theological metaphor. In section three, I will further reflect on Lewis's language of beauty and suggest that Northernness works as its framework. Lewis more than hints at the importance of Northernness in his writing program by identifying his Northernness as his "Norse Complex." In the fourth section, I will show how this so-called "Norse Complex" further suggests an overarching literary language Lewis employed as a way to entertain his readers as well as theologically guide them with an apologetic of imaginative rhetoric. In my view, Northernness constitutes more than a passing adolescent phase for Lewis and should be evaluated as an evolving through-line of his thought. I will offer such an evaluation by way of defining Northernness. I will accomplish this in section four by showing that Northernness was a term not particular to Lewis and was, in fact, shared with his friend and fellow Oxford colleague J.R.R. Tolkien. In section five, I will consider Romanticism's view of beauty and show how that view connects to Lewisian Northernness. I will then, in section six, trace Northernness in Lewis's early life, primarily focusing on his correspondence with Arthur Greeves in order to show the strength of Northernness in Lewis's early thought-shaping. In section seven, by considering the variegated definition of Northernness, I will show the connection between landscape and innerscape and briefly discuss why this is important. When we consider how landscape situates itself within Lewis's thought we can better understand his language of beauty. In my view, in order to understand the importance of Northernness in Lewis's writing we must explore the significance of landscape.

3.2 The Beginning of Northerness

When we parse the initial two northern experiences that are discussed below, we find that both relate to Romantic interpretations of Norse mythology.²⁵³ The first Northerness experience for Lewis occurred between the ages of six and eight when he read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Saga of King Olaf*.²⁵⁴ Though Lewis found pleasure in Longfellow's saga, it was his translation of Tegner's *Drapa* and the lines "I heard a voice that cried / Balder the beautiful / Is dead, is dead—" ²⁵⁵ that caused him to say "instantly I was uplifted into huge regions of northern sky."²⁵⁶ Longfellow's translation of Bishop Esaias Tegner's 1825 Swedish paraphrase of the Icelandic saga *Frithiof of Sognefjord* initiated Lewis into Norse mythology, specifically the sagas. Longfellow was among many who translated the Swedish bishop's paraphrase. "In the period 1833-1914 at least fifteen English versions of Tegner's poem were published along with an assortment of retellings."²⁵⁷ Like many poets and writers of the Romantic era (or persuasion), Longfellow shared Lewis's love for Northerness. In fact, we may best interpret Lewis's own love of Northerness as initially influenced by

²⁵³ Here I refer to Romantic interpretations of Norse mythology due to the research provided by Andrew Wawn regarding the interpolating and romanticizing of the Norse sagas and poetry by Victorian writers such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Sir Walter Scott, and William Morris, all of whom influenced C.S. Lewis—Morris most of all.

²⁵⁴ Longfellow published the saga as part of a larger collection titled *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863). He used the famous British travel writer Samuel Laing's translation of "King Olaf Tryggvesson's saga." Andrew Wawn also notes Longfellow's heavy use of northern imagery. See Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 111-112; 191.

²⁵⁵ Balder (in the Norse fashion it is spelled "*Baldr*") was Odin's second and presumably favorite son, and in many ways untouchable by the other gods. It is possible that Longfellow's poem affected Lewis deeply since he was so infatuated with Norse mythology at the time. For Balder "is so beautiful and so bright that light shines through him. . . . He is the wisest of the gods. He is also the most beautifully spoken and the most merciful." See "Gylfaginning" in Snorri Sturluson and Jesse L. Byock, eds., *The Prose Edda*, 33.

²⁵⁶ *SBJ*, 17.

²⁵⁷ Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 121.

Longfellow and William Morris, two poets he admired, with Morris chief among the two and perhaps his favorite in his earlier years.²⁵⁸

Longfellow, indeed, travelled to Scandinavia (Lewis never did) and became “a student, a man intent on the process of saturating his mind with all that Scandinavia was.”²⁵⁹ In his travels the landscape struck him; he noted it in his *Journal*, but he also took pictures of the landscape so the images would remain with him. The rural landscape also incited his curiosity into the languages; he learned Swedish, Finnish, Danish, and Icelandic. Once into the languages, he delved into the literature and Tegner’s translation of *Frithiof’s Saga*. After his initial trips to Scandinavia and during his time at Harvard as a professor, in order to write on the “North” he needed to read a certain book, hear a song, see a skeleton, or take a trip back to Scandinavia to stir up his Northernness.²⁶⁰ On December 1, 1840 Longfellow wrote to Samuel Ward, editor at the *Journal* who had asked to see a copy of his poem “The Skeleton in Armor,” saying: “I will read you the ‘Skeleton in Armor,’ which is too long to copy. ... At present, my dear friend, my soul is wrapped up in poetry.” By this Longfellow meant that he was engulfed in thoughts and “dreams” of the Norse sagas, the Scandinavian landscape, and expressing his euphoria through poetry. In a letter to his father, Longfellow admitted the same and that he thought he had succeeded in giving his poem, “The Skeleton in Armor,” a “Northern air.”²⁶¹ His friends received the

²⁵⁸ *SBJ*, 17; *SLE*, 231.

²⁵⁹ George L. White Jr., “Longfellow’s Interest in Scandinavia During the Years 1835-1847,” *Scandinavian Studies* 17, no. 2 (May 1, 1942): 70–82, DOI: 10.2307/40915544, 70.

²⁶⁰ Lewis constantly references objects that stirred nostalgic emotions within him.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 75.

poem with overwhelming praise. Ward, his editor, read it to another contemporary poet (Halleck) who said, “There is nothing like it in the language.” The general public received it in like fashion, causing the poem to become almost an infallible talisman to evoke the spirit of the North.²⁶²

The second Northernness experience occurred at about the age of thirteen. Lewis saw an advertisement for Wagner’s *Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods* and one of Arthur Rackham’s illustrations²⁶³ in a picture found in Margaret Armour’s translation of Wagner’s libretto of *The Ring*.²⁶⁴ This was his first encounter with Old Norse mythology. Lewis did not know who Siegfried was but he admitted to being engulfed in a “vision of huge, clear spaces hanging above the Atlantic in the endless twilight of the Northern summer, remoteness, severity.”²⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that the Arthur Rackham illustrations that evoked so much “Northernness” in Lewis do not necessarily express a purity of vision, nor clear spaces suspended above the Atlantic. Rather, they depict narrow scenes bound by the constraint of linearist art. Perhaps what prompted such an exclamation from Lewis was Rackham’s penchant for creating scenes that appear as though they continue past the frame, a weak element of his art according to

²⁶² Ibid, 70.

²⁶³ The Bodleian Library at Oxford University hosts an online exhibition titled “Pure Northernness” in which researchers can view Arthur Rackham’s illustration of the Rhine maidens, the same illustration that C.S. Lewis saw at a young age and that inspired his longing for “Pure Northernness.” See “Bodleian Libraries | Pure Northernness,” accessed April 16, 2014, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whats-on/online/magical-books/pure-northernness>.

²⁶⁴ Lewis owned this translation, which was published in 1911. Walter Hooper, Lewis’s personal secretary, editor, and curator of the Lewis Estate, now possesses these volumes. This author has examined both of Lewis’s Wagner volumes: *Siegfried and The Twilight of the Gods* and *Flight of the Valkyries*. Lewis, in his correspondence to Arthur Greeves mentions his purchase of these now rare Wagner/Rackham volumes.

²⁶⁵ *SBJ*, 72-73.

some.²⁶⁶ Despite Lewis's curious interpretation of the Rackham illustrations, for him they contained a Joy that was located in the *numinous* experience of "Northernness."²⁶⁷ It would, for a season of his life, be his pagan heaven—his vision of Yggdrasil and Valhalla.

Scholars reference Lewis's initial two Northernness experiences often, but seldom develop their significance. Are we to simply believe these deep youthful experiences only influenced Lewis's early affinity for certain kinds of literature? Or, do we find something deeper embedded into Lewis's psyche that would lay the groundwork for a literary language that enabled him to become such an effective imaginative apologist?

3.3 The Overlooked Complex

Most commentators mention Lewis's self-proclaimed infatuation with Northernness, usually citing the same short passage in Lewis's autobiography *Surprised by Joy*—which I will also use in my discussion. Their interest in Northernness, however, tends to matter to current critical Lewis scholarship only insofar as it relates to Lewis's so-called "Argument from Desire" derived from his

²⁶⁶ Harold Darling, "Arthur Rackham (review)," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (Winter): 37, doi:10.1353/chq.0.1641. It should be noted that given this interpretive critique on Rackham's work, one can still deduce why Lewis—especially at a young age—would have found the volumes and content so romantically alluring. Lewis's volumes were hardy, exquisite tomes: golden brown hardbacks, gold embossed title imprint, heavy weighted paper (similar to what might now be considered letterpress stock), with the Rackham illustrations exquisitely centered and bordered and stark against the page. The libretto is typeset with a craftsman's eye, sparse and easily readable upon the page. The girth of both volumes each spans an inch or more. The books themselves (binding, layout, and typeset), therefore, look and feel like well-crafted works of art that even to this day maintain their glory to the extent that they are highly sought after and coveted volumes. However, Lewis later states in *An Experiment on Criticism* that he views the Rackham images, along with the Beatrix Potter illustrations, in a much different light. For more, see Lewis, *EC*, 14.

²⁶⁷ *SBJ*, 221.

experiential discussion regarding *Sehnsucht* and Joy, or as elemental to his early thought-shaping pre-conversion.²⁶⁸ What is almost universally passed over is the fact that both *Sehnsucht* and Joy find deeper rooting within Northernness and are best understood within a Northernness framework.

The lack of research into this important element in Lewis's younger pre-conversion thought formation as well as his continued maturation of Northernness post-conversion is alarming. The most comprehensive treatments of Lewis's Northernness that I have found are: David C. Downing's short passage in *Planets in Peril*;²⁶⁹ R.C. Reilly's commentary in *Romantic Religion: A Study of Barfield, Lewis, Williams and Tolkien*; Don King's reference to Lewis's poetical influences in *C.S. Lewis, Poet: The Legacy of His Poetic Impulse*; and Andrew Lazo's essay "Gathered Round Northern Fires: The Imaginative Impact of the Kolbítar" found in *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth: A Reader*.

Downing relegates his comments on Northernness to Lewis's fiction, framing it in a more literary and lexical fashion than a conceptual one. "Northernness," writes Downing, "was a catalyst of Joy that Lewis would make use of in his own fiction."²⁷⁰ For Downing, it appears, Northernness operates primarily as a literary device. Reilly, on the other hand, begins his examination of Lewis's "romantic imagination" with his Northernness encounter as a young boy.

²⁶⁸ See below for focused commentary on scholars I believe to give Northernness more prominence in their work. See also, Ronald W. Bresland, *The Backward Glance*, 30; Clyde S. Kilby *The Christian World of C.S. Lewis*, 16; Scott Oury, "The Thing Itself" in *Longing for a Form*, 3-5. Robert MacSwain, "Introduction" in *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis*, 6 (MacSwain fails to even mention Northernness; opting, rather to nestle it in reference to Joy and *Sehnsucht*.); A.N. Wilson, *C.S. Lewis: A Biography*, 29-30

²⁶⁹ I would like to acknowledge my own correspondence with Professor Downing and his pleasure in the fact my research was in fact probing an element of Lewis scholarship he felt needed further development.

²⁷⁰ David C. Downing, *Planets in Peril*, 25.

Reilly makes an interesting observation that joins Northernness with Lewis's former Christian religious experience as a child. "Compared to the Joy of Northernness," writes Reilly, "the religion which he professed seemed weak and pallid. His inherited Anglicanism was merely formal, while Northernness offered him scope for 'something very like adoration.'"²⁷¹ I do not disagree with Reilly's assessment of Northernness being an object of Lewis's Joy as well as a continuing conceptual strand in his quest "to find where all the beauty came from," but Reilly's treatment of Northernness ends there. Furthermore, Don King's treatment of Northernness goes no further than recognizing the Norse and Wagnerian influence on Lewis's poetic journey.²⁷²

All three scholars possess their own academic interest, and that is to be expected. They must stick to their tasks. I suggest, however, that explaining Lewisian Northernness in some depth would have enhanced each of their projects as well as offering further assistance to lay readers and scholars alike in accessing a deeper understanding of Lewis's writing in general. With regard to Reilly and King's scholarly objectives in particular, the neglect of a deeper examination into Lewisian Northernness seems more egregious. Reilly's examination seeks to reveal Lewis's romantic underpinnings. "I mean to show," writes Reilly, "the progress of a certain sort of romantic imagination from irreligion into Christianity, and show further that the characteristic word produced by the baptized romantic imagination is baptized romance."²⁷³ If this is Reilly's intent, then why does he neglect to examine Lewisian Northernness? A brief review of Lewis's influences

²⁷¹ Reilly, *Romantic Religion*, 102.

²⁷² Don W. King, *C.S. Lewis, Poet*, 4, 28, 44-46.

²⁷³ Reilly, *Romantic Religion*, 100.

quickly reveals not only his youthful infatuation²⁷⁴ with Norse mythology and Wagner's *Ring* but also his love for William Morris and his respect for Sir Walter Scott. Both are Victorian British writers who referenced their own love of "the north" (Morris) and acted as the progenitors of Britain's nineteenth century's Viking obsession (Scott). Would not this contextual understanding of Lewis reveal insight into his romantic religion? The same critique and question can be leveled at King's work in *Poet*. Lewis's literary coloring with regard to atmosphere, his theological formation as a young man who busied himself writing Norse epic poems²⁷⁵ (i.e. *Loki Bound*), and his mature post-conversion prose *Perelandra* and *Till We Have Faces* clearly point to an underlying literary and theological language he employed to build an apologetic of enchantment.²⁷⁶ Finally, Andrew Lazo offers keen observations on the relationship between Lewis and Tolkien specifically with regard to how Tolkien's *Kolbítars* influenced Lewis's own love of Northernness. Lazo's work penetrates Lewis's Northernness chronologically, showing its origin, its growth, and its maturation as he became close friends with Tolkien.²⁷⁷ Lazo, however, does not connect Lewis's Northernness to the deeper conceptual and theological underpinnings of his work.

²⁷⁴ I have noted these above. See 3.2.

²⁷⁵ When compared to the sagas, Norse poetry—both Eddaic and skaldic verse—is considered the crown jewel of Norse literature, exhibiting sophisticated meters, word plays, and yet no one has examined potential influence on Lewis's own poetry. This literary negation in Lewis scholarship seems curious given that Lewis tended to be overly concerned with poetic structure in his own poems, not to mention his use of verse within his fiction works, such as *The Pilgrim's Regress* for example. For more on Norse poetry see Heather O'Donahue's introductory remarks in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 63-92.

²⁷⁶ See 4.3, 8.2, and 8.3 of this thesis.

²⁷⁷ Lazo, "Gathered Round Northern Fires" in *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, 191-227.

I believe, therefore, that Downing, Reilly, King, and Lazo (among others) miss an opportunity to plumb Lewis's thought and literary development further because they sidestep the breadth and depth to which Lewisian Northernness extends. This, I believe, is due to a kind of scholarly *eisegesis*; pulling meanings and illuminations from the text that will support preconceived lines of inquiry. Popular writers and scholars alike tend to cherry-pick Lewis's ideas they hope to use in order to undergird their arguments, be they apologetic arguments or specific strands of scholarly inquiry. Rather than approaching the Lewis corpus as a whole, first, and allowing Lewis's thought to present itself naturally (which I believe Lewis himself would have us do), writers and scholars seem to look for Lewis to support their own endeavors. Michael Ward articulates the problem well when he contends "there is a tendency to concentrate on those elements in the author's writings that harmonize best with critics' existing interests, rather than a willingness to swallow him *tout a fait*."²⁷⁸

Outside of Downing, Reilly, King, and Lazo the scholarly inquiry on Northernness remains relatively non-existent. I hope to show how grave an error this neglect is in Lewis scholarship. I believe Northernness is one of those elements within the Lewis corpus that reveals valuable insight into the mind of the writer.

Lewis's Norse Complex

In order to show that Lewis regarded his infatuation with Northernness as paramount, we need look no further than his own words regarding his "Norse

²⁷⁸ Ward, *Narnia*, 246.

Complex.” In 1944 Charles A. Brady, a professor of English at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, published two articles titled “Introduction to Lewis” (27 May) and “C.S. Lewis: II” (10 June) in *America*, 71. Lewis wrote to Brady on October 29, 1944, saying: “You are the first of my critics so far who has really read and understood *all* my books and ‘made up’ the subject in a way that makes you an authority.” The caveat to Lewis’s compliment was that Brady had “just missed tapping my whole Norse complex—Old Icelandic, Wagner’s *Ring* and (again) Morris. The Wagner is important: you will also see, if you look, how *operatic* the whole building up of the climax is in *Perelandra*. Milton I think you possibly over-rate: it is difficult to distinguish him from Dante and St. Augustine.”²⁷⁹ Here Lewis offers Northernness, his Norse Complex, as a key to understand his writing program. It should be noted that Lewis references the “operatic effect” in *Perelandra* that mimics Wagner, presumably his *Ring* cycle. When surveying Lewis’s work, therefore, we are not necessarily mining for direct references to Old Norse language or Viking imagery per se, though we certainly find that in Lewis’s writing.²⁸⁰ Rather, we are looking for a broad swath of literary hints such as atmospheric impressions, emphasis on landscape description to create literary mood, allusions to Norse literature and Viking culture, direct use of Old Norse language, theological impressions related to Norse apocalyptic ideology, as well as insights and influences from other writers—from the work of William Morris, for example.

²⁷⁹ C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, vol. 2, 629 (hereafter *CLII*).

²⁸⁰ I note specific examples of Lewis using Old Norse language in 4.3 of this thesis.

We see how Lewis himself viewed Northernness in his correspondence with his most intimate friend, Arthur Greeves. Once, in a letter dated 29th of June 1935, Lewis described the late Romantic Finnish composer Jean Sibelius to Greeves in Northernness terms: “Well Sibelius is definitely not like W. [Wagner] and not like B. [Beethoven] in that respect. He is not *noble* like Beethoven: he is inarticulate, intimate, enthralling, and close to one, like Nature itself. Very, very *Northern*: he makes me think of birch forests & moss and salt-marshes and cranes and gulls.”²⁸¹ In Lewis’s own terms, then, Northernness emanates from Romantic notions relating to personal intimacy, wonder, and awe, as well as physical elements of nature and landscape. These elements, of course, echo through and are rooted in Old Norse myth and Viking culture, as we will discover below. If we are, therefore, examining Lewis’s literature in order to locate Northernness, then we are looking not only for direct images and symbols of Old Norse, but also for a related group of emotionally significant ideas.

What, then, are we to make of Lewis’s “Norse Complex”? Do we simply ignore it, relegating it to Lewis’s list of literary and conceptual muses and/or devices like so many Lewis scholars seem eager to do? I suggest that to read and understand Lewis aright, is to appreciate and understand how his Norse Complex, or Northernness, manifests itself within the breadth and depth of his work (I will now simply use the term Northernness to refer to all that encapsulates Lewis’s Norse Complex). Some argue that Lewisian Northernness remained preeminent only during his pre-conversion state (before he turned 31 years old). Though there is some evidence that Lewisian Northernness recedes post-conversion, and I will

²⁸¹ Ibid., 175.

show how this shift manifests itself in Chapter 4, we cannot neglect a proper examination of the intense impact the Northernness played on Lewis for nearly 24 formative years of his life. Indeed, based on my chronological examples of Northernness in the next chapter, one could argue that Northernness does not recede, but expands into a mature controlling conceptual expression.

In what follows I will further define Northernness in order to set out a clear understanding of the term that will carry through the rest of this study. Is Northernness a synonym for Lewisian beauty? Is Northernness purely a referent to literary atmosphere in Lewis? Is it simply Lewis's literary muse? Or is there a third dimension to Lewisian Northernness that helps us more fully grasp Lewis's theological perspective?

3.4 Tracing The North: Definition and the Two Northern Experiences

In our effort to trace Lewisian Northernness, we must first ask the obvious but seldom-answered question, "What is Northernness?" Is it a reference to an ideal such as beauty, in the case of Lewis, to a place, to a region? Is it a conjured term unique to Lewis? According to Corbin Scot Carnell, Lewis uses Northernness in his essay on William Morris to refer to "that exultant yet strangely tragic emotion which he associates with Tegner's *Drapa*, Norse Mythology and Wagner's operas."²⁸² Carnell extracts his definition from Lewis's own words in *Surprised by Joy*—Lewis's autobiography, which proves helpful in tracing his Norse Complex. Throughout this study I have used the autobiography as a sort of home base for conceptual insight into the shaping of Lewis's early

²⁸² Carnell, *Shadow*, 78.

thought, which carries through to his conversion to Christianity in September 1931.²⁸³ It is important to identify this primary source as a mature reflection by Lewis upon his younger pre-conversion self. The autobiography was published in 1955 and, arguably, constitutes a still evolving but well-aged Christian worldview with regard to Lewis's own thought-shaping.²⁸⁴ In *Surprised by Joy*, therefore, we find Lewis offering readers a developed reflection of his pilgrimage to faith to the God of Christianity and, in so doing, helps us formulate his language of beauty as he provides clues to the "why" behind his enduring love of Northernness. Indeed, not only do we find strong emphasis on his Northernness therein, but viewed alongside his *Collected Letters*, we discover a convincing lineage of Northernness thought developing from an early age, into the post-conversion Lewis. When Lewis, therefore, mentions being infatuated with Northernness we understand that he references a concept with which he is familiar, one he has applied throughout his writing career. Nowhere in *Surprised by Joy* does Lewis pull back from his Northernness influence.²⁸⁵

As an example that sheds light on Lewis's familiarity with Northernness as a word and concept, consider the friendship of Lewis and Tolkien and their shared love for Norse mythology as evidenced by Lewis's inclusion in Tolkien's *Kolbítar*,²⁸⁶ "a group founded by Tolkien to read Icelandic myths and sagas"²⁸⁷ in

²⁸³ *Surprised by Joy* is also the primary resource from which most Lewis scholars reference Northernness, as well as the related terms *Sehnsucht* and *Joy*.

²⁸⁴ See Schakel, "Preface" in *Reason and Imagination in C.S. Lewis*, x. Schakel examines the chronological shifting of emphasis in Lewis's thought-shaping, specifically the growth of his imagination.

²⁸⁵ I refer to Lewis's Northernness as it pertains to his literary and theological influence, rather than Northernness as a formative spiritual influence. See *SBJ*, 211; 219.

²⁸⁶ The term *Kolbítar*, according to Alister McGrath, is a "derisive term for Norsemen who refused to join in the hunt or fight battles, preferring instead to stay indoors and enjoy the

their original language, Old Norse. Furthermore, Tolkien biographer John Garth writes that not only had Tolkien and Lewis formed the early foundations of what would become known as the “The Inklings” during the 1930s, but that Lewis and Tolkien had forged a close friendship and “recognized in each other a love of ‘Northernness.’”²⁸⁸ We can see, therefore, that the concept of Northernness, therefore, surfaces as a link between Lewis and Tolkien. It can be observed, then, that Northernness connotes all that encapsulates Norse: the language, the landscape, and the implications of myth, which, for Lewis, would have held deep theological meaning since it was through his discussions with Tolkien (and Hugo Dyson) regarding myth and Christianity that helped progress Lewis from atheist to theist, from theist to believing in Jesus Christ as the son of God.²⁸⁹

Furthermore, Northernness was not simply a passing phase for Lewis, it was a significant movement of thought as described by Lewis himself: “Asgard and the Valkyries seemed to me incomparably more important than anything else in my experience,” wrote Lewis, “[more] than the Matron Miss C., or the dancing mistress, or my chances at a scholarship. More shockingly, they seemed much more important than my steadily growing doubts about Christianity.”²⁹⁰ The importance Lewis placed on Northernness, as a young man, cannot be overlooked.

protective warmth of the fire.” McGrath suggests that *Kolbitar* was highly influential in Lewis’s imaginative development. Lewis and Tolkien’s friendship began to blossom in 1929, according to Lewis’s own diary. From Tolkien’s perspective, their friendship existed as one of his most intimate relationships from 1926-1940. See McGrath, *C.S. Lewis*, 128-129.

²⁸⁷ John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War*, 281.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. For more on Lewis’s and Tolkien’s friendship see Alister McGrath, *C.S. Lewis: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet*, p. 127-130. See also Andrew Lazo’s chapter in *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth: A Reader*, “Gathered Round Northern Fires: The Imaginative Impact of the *Kolbitar*,” p. 191-215.

²⁸⁹ *CLI*, Sept 22nd / 31 (p.969); McGrath, *Lewis*, 147-149.

²⁹⁰ *SBJ*, 76-77.

Lewis uses Northernness in *Surprised by Joy* as a proper noun;²⁹¹ it is more than a simple creative descriptor of a personal feeling. Lewis, as I aim to show below, establishes Northernness as a prominent personal experience and an historical and literary—even theological—culture with which he became infatuated. Therefore, to support the claim of Lewis’s enduring affection for Northernness we must first determine how Lewis himself uses this term and give evidence of its prominence in his life and thought.

Northernness, therefore, was a common term for Lewis, as well as for Tolkien, and was used to connote all that encapsulates the “flavour” of Old Norse mythology: the language, the landscape, and the implications of myth, which, for Lewis, would have held deep theological meaning.²⁹² I will, therefore, use the term Northernness to mean: *those elements within Lewis’s writing which not only allude to or use language unique to Old Norse literature, but also those elements that stem from the Norse influence, be they stylistic or conceptual-theological.*

By “stylistic” I mean language that employs Lewis’s own romantic description of vast open spaces, images of northern landscape as depicted in the Scandinavian and Icelandic literature he read and translated, but also the style of Norse writing itself. For example, in a letter dated June 24, 1936, Lewis discusses the *humbler* or *harder* style of Norse poetry. “I think probably the greatest influence on my purely literary taste since the old days,” writes Lewis, “has been old Germanic poetry, which, as a friend says, sometimes makes everything else

²⁹¹ *SBJ*, 73.

²⁹² Here I am referring to post-conversion Lewis, and his imaginative writings, which indicate his affinity for the genre. See *OW*, 36-37.

seem a little thin and half-hearted.”²⁹³ Lewis then illustrates the Icelandic meter called the *Drapa* with a line he, presumably, fabricates himself: “Wildest burnt of winter / woke amidst the oak-wood.” He notes how the meter almost seems like a puzzle, but in fact it “works up a storm of sound which, when combined, as it usually is, with a tragic theme, and contrasting its rock-like form with the vain liquidity of sorrow, produces an almost unbearable tension of stoical pathos.”²⁹⁴ We therefore find stylistic elements of the literature, as well as the images and landscape within the literature, building into Lewis’s Northernness flavor.

Additionally, I believe it is also helpful to note Tolkien’s sense of Northernness “flavour” as described by Tom Shippey. Shippey suggests that Tolkien, in his seminal work *The Lord of the Ring*, was attempting to “retain the feel or ‘flavour’ of Norse myth, while hinting at the happier ending of Christian myth behind it.”²⁹⁵ Here we see “stylistic Northernness” interlacing with “conceptual Northernness.” Tolkien’s sense of Norse flavour, however, does not necessarily refer to his use of landscape description—though that is certainly part of it—or other physical aspects found in Middle-Earth, including the various species of people. Shippey proposes that Tolkien’s retention of Norse flavour was primarily to “retain the heroic quality of his Norse sources.”²⁹⁶ By “sources” Tolkien meant the prose and poetic *Eddas*. Tolkien held that northern literature’s

²⁹³ *CL2*, 197.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Tom Shippey, “Tolkien and the Appeal of the Pagan” in Jane Chance, *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, 152.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

great unique quality was the courage of its heroes.²⁹⁷ The Norse worldview looked grim, as the Norse people believed they and even the gods would meet their doom by the forces of evil, namely the giants, at Ragnarök—the apocalyptic final battle in Norse mythology. The Norse “theory of courage,” however, defines true heroism as someone who does not retreat even when possessing the knowledge of their own ultimate defeat. The Norse “theory of courage” does not allow for despairing, only the fight. It was enough for the Norse hero to be in the right (the way of good), to distinguish themselves from evil. Shippey suggests this outlook was integral to the speedy conversion of the Norse to Christianity, “a religion of hope.”²⁹⁸

I believe Lewis employs this tactic as well throughout his writing. In *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, for example, we find Lewis’s geographical layout as integral to his philosophical and theological exposition. He contrasts the southern and northern territories to show the polar cultural extremes of modern thought, extremes he found himself battling in his own journey to the Christian faith. He describes the north as the glib and shallow rationalism he came into as an undergraduate at Oxford, and the south as the land of the sensual and Romantic.²⁹⁹ The two extremes are divided by the narrow, yet hopeful and new, way of the Christian life. We will also examine how in *Perelandra*, for example, Lewis emphasizes beauty in the landscape as a way to communicate the conceptual and theological importance of Christian Joy.

²⁹⁷ E. V. Gordon notes how “The greatness in Icelandic literature lies primarily in its understanding of heroic character and the heroic view of life.” See *An Introduction to Old Norse*, Second Edition, in the “Introduction,” xxx.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ See Lewis’s explanation of geography in “Afterword,” C. S. Lewis, *PR*, 206-208.

By “conceptual-theological” I mean the theological influence possibly affected by Lewis’s grasp of Old Norse literature (such as the cosmology of Yggdrasil), the world Ash tree of Norse mythology, or the Romantic interpretation by writers (such as William Morris), who portrayed Northernness in their writings, yet without the central element in Lewis’s post-conversion work: hope for further Joy as experienced in relation with God.³⁰⁰ When considering stylistic, conceptual, and theological elements of Northernness it becomes apparent that this literary framework pervaded the Lewis corpus.

Next, we will examine the Romantic influence upon Lewisian Northernness and consider how the two coalesce into his language of beauty.

3.5 Romantic Vision: A Landscape Speaks Beauty

In defining Northernness I touched on the Romantic influence upon Lewis. In this section, I want to further expand this conception with regard to how it connects to beauty. In my view, it is precisely Lewis’s Romantic vision that helps us evaluate his conception of beauty and the primacy of Northernness and landscape within that conception.³⁰¹

Lewis does not hide his Romantic leanings whatsoever, especially with regard to the nature of the cosmos. He favored the Romantic view rather than the medieval view in that though he appreciated the harmony and beauty of the classical view, he preferred the *numinous* elements of the romantic perspective of

³⁰⁰ See 5.5, 8.2, and 8.3 of this thesis.

³⁰¹ See Eliane Tixier, “Imagination Baptized, or Holiness in the Chronicles of Narnia,” in *The Longing for a Form*, 137. Tixier notes the “classical passages” relating Lewis’s early aesthetic experiences, their inherent Romanticism, and the language which Lewis used to communicate his own experience of the beautiful.

the cosmos being expansive, unknowable, full of mystery—a creation that incited wonder and awe.³⁰² For Lewis, the cosmos must possess some amount of vagueness—less known-ness in the way of order and more twilight and by-ways. Though Lewis does grant vagueness to the medieval cosmos via the *Longaevi*, elven or fairie-type creatures, the spacial lack within the medieval cosmos affected perception as noted by Lewis. “Nature, for Chaucer, is all foreground; we never get landscape.”³⁰³ The Romantic view of the created order, according to Robert Barth, insists on nature working as a mediating source in the Divine relationship between God and humankind.³⁰⁴ The created world, for the Romantic, communicates the beauty of God; that beauty, in turn, reveals characteristics of God as both possessor and giver of beauty.³⁰⁵

The Romantics viewed beauty differently than the popular Kantian construction. Whereas Kant, in *The Critique of Judgment*, defined *beauty* (or beautiful) as “what pleases in the mere judging of it (consequently not by intervention of any feeling of sense in accordance with a concept of understanding),”³⁰⁶ (§ 29) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, on the other hand, “insists that the sense of beauty is, art not simply copying ‘the mere nature’ (*natura naturata*), but perceiving its essence (*nature naturans*) in the reconciliation of

³⁰² Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, 97-99; 121 (hereafter *DI*).

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 101.

³⁰⁴ J. Robert Barth, *Romanticism and Transcendence*, 11.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 97. Kant states the beautiful is the object of delight, connecting subjective pleasure to perception of beauty. (§ 5) Kant divorces reason with the apprehension of beauty, whereas Romantics, such as Coleridge, viewed beauty as apprehended by the constituent parts of reason, primarily the cognitive element of the imagination. Furthermore, Kant bifurcates the beautiful from the sublime in Book Two of the *Critique*; see § 23-24.

external and internal, the union of sameness and difference.”³⁰⁷ Whereas Kant insists that to look at and recognize an object of beauty, the subject (the viewer) must show disinterest,³⁰⁸ Coleridge says, “The sense of beauty is intuitive, and beauty itself is all that inspires pleasure without, and aloof from, and even contrarily to, interest.”³⁰⁹ The Romantic conception projects a worldview that “provides a new set of metaphors in which to convey the Romantic theme that art is a joint product of the objective and the projected.”³¹⁰ The Romantic approaches beauty intuitively,³¹¹ and though it considers the form of the object, it looks beyond the surface aesthetic of an object and into the quality,³¹² or character and essence, of that object.³¹³

³⁰⁷ David E Cooper, Joseph Margolis, and Crispin Sartwell, *A Companion to Aesthetics*, David Jasper, “Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772-1834),” 74.

³⁰⁸ Meaning that the mind operates in a state of “free play” whereby the viewer believes he or she is using their reason to describe the object in sight, but in reality the encounter with the beautiful object occurs within a consciousness that is outside the faculty of reason and is unique to the experience of delight in the object. This conception of beauty divorces the object from any metaphysical quality outside of itself.

³⁰⁹ Joseph Addison et al., *English Essays from Sir Philip Sidney to Macaulay: Addison, Steele, Swift, Defoe, Johnson and Others*. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “On Poesy or Art.” Both Coleridge and Kant seem to agree with a degree of disinterest when viewing an object of beauty. Coleridge, however, asserts the intuitive nature of our perception of beauty, implying disinterest, or free play, but in the context of the cognitive functioning of the imagination.

³¹⁰ M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 52. Abrams suggests Coleridge’s illuminating essay “On Poesy or Art” (1818) to be “grounded in the German idealist philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling’s metaphysics of a psycho-natural parallelism, according to which the essences within nature have a kind of duplicate subsistence as ideas in the mind.” Schelling was a prominent figure of the German Romantic movement, was close to the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and was college roommates with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

³¹¹ Lauren Arrington, Zoe Leinhardt, and Philip Dawid, eds., *Beauty*, Darwin College Lectures, 8-14. The isosceles triangle, in form and by definition, conveys perfect symmetry detectable without knowledge. See also Ian Stewart, *Why Beauty Is Truth: The History of Symmetry*, 118-120. Stewart states objects do not possess symmetry alone. Rather, they possess “many different symmetries.” A symmetry, therefore, “is a transformation that preserves the object’s structure.” (118) This concept of multiple symmetries constituting and preserving a whole form links to Coleridge’s view of beauty of multitude in unity and Augustine’s concept of the beautiful stemming from the pleasure an object gives, that pleasure derived from a unity of parts. This view is also reminiscent of the classical conception of beauty with which Lewis was familiar.

³¹² Wordsworth, “The Prelude,” Book 14: 444-454.

³¹³ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 313.

Furthermore, the Romantics approach beauty as something to be experienced as well as expressed. When Kant reduced the sublime to something that “is formless, exhibits no purpose and is apprehended in a state of excitement,”³¹⁴ the Romantics looked for the sublime in deep melancholy and restless wandering; an element intrinsic to the human condition; they sought to plunge into it.³¹⁵ The eighteenth century turned the study of beauty away from the classical and neo-classical formulations, that of beauty being the quality of the object that we perceive as beautiful,³¹⁶ (§ 211-212.A) from seeking to understand the rules for beauty’s production or recognition toward “a consideration of the effects that it produces.”³¹⁷ Thus we find when Lewis talks of beauty and the encountering of beauty he is referring to a type of beauty Roger Scruton calls “ravishing beauty.”³¹⁸ It is the kind of beauty that demands wonder and reverence and fills us with consoling delight.³¹⁹ The Romantics gravitated toward the sublime, in spite of Kant’s diminishing thereof,³²⁰ and it was in the inherent nature of the sublime where the notion of aspiration, or *Sehnsucht* emerged—that

³¹⁴ Edith Wyschogrod et al., *Theological Perspectives on God and Beauty*, Rockwell Lecture Series, 73.

³¹⁵ Carnell, *Shadow*, 80-81.

³¹⁶ Plato and W. R. M Lamb, (*Plato in 12 Volumes III*): *Lysis Symposium Gorgias*, 205-207.

³¹⁷ Umberto Eco, *On Beauty*, 275.

³¹⁸ Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, 262, 13.

³¹⁹ Philip Shaw, *The Sublime*, 150-152.

³²⁰ See Chapter 5, “The Romantic Sublime,” for more on Kant’s influence on Romanticism.

essence behind the natural landscape or *objet d'art* or experience that drew one toward the infinite; the intense desire for desire itself.³²¹

The Romantic conception of beauty guides us now into Lewis's language of beauty, for it is from the Romantic foundation that we see and better understand how Lewis treats beauty in his own work. This, therefore, is how Lewis views objects of beauty; they please the eye, but also touch the innerscape of a person, signaling "something far more deeply interfused."³²² For Lewis, however, the essence of an *objet d'art* does not merely carry a finite and physical form but, rather, points to something infinite. There is therefore an intrinsic constitution to beauty: a corporeal element and a Divine element. The former can be apprehended with human vision, the latter must be inferred through the imagination; thus implying a certain hiddenness extant in the material world. Such a hiddenness is what the Romantic poets sought to reveal by lifting the veil of beauty of the natural world so readers could see into the beauty of the Divine.³²³ Scripture concurs as the Psalmist reminds us, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." (Ps. 19:1, KJV)

Nature, indeed, acts as the stage, communicating heavenly glory and thus communicating understanding about God.³²⁴ The Romantic vision perceives nature in harmony with the Divine; reconciliation of two opposing realities is not

³²¹ Barth, *Romanticism and Transcendence*, 37; 40. Barth notes how Wordsworth looked towards objects of delight, such as books and nature, with affection but was compelled to look beyond such objects toward "something far more deeply interfused, / Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, / And the round ocean and the living air, / And the blue sky, and in the mind of man" (lines 96-99, from Book 5 of *The Prelude*).

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Barth, *Religious Imagination*, 5.

³²⁴ Trevor Hart, *Through the Arts*, 18-19.

needed. Coleridge helps us understand this concept through his notion of imaginative polarity. Coleridge claimed the “mind imbued ... with a ‘living and spiritual philosophy,’ there is not only a connaturality between the mind and the world it knows but an innate and active participation of the imagination in the eternal creative act that powers it.”³²⁵ Robert Barth suggests, as Coleridge suggests, that we must not view God’s intermingling with the world in bifurcated terms of immanent and transcendent. Rather, we must treat this divine incarnated reality within polar tensions. Coleridge viewed the imagination as working within the framework of “balance or reconciliation of opposites.”³²⁶ Barth agrees with James Cutsinger that it is the theologian’s task to “render intelligible man’s relationship to a God who is ‘forever overflowing custom’s bounds,’ [with] a vision that is both true to the divine reality and the human experience of that reality.”³²⁷ The theologian’s task, therefore, lies embedded in the *yet* of the polar tensions: “immanence *yet* transcendence.”³²⁸ Coleridge believed the universe, that is, the material world, to literally be God’s written language.³²⁹ “The Omnipotent,” writes Coleridge, “has unfolded to us the Volume of the World, that

³²⁵ Ibid., 7.

³²⁶ Ibid., 6.

³²⁷ Ibid., 7.

³²⁸ The Catholic Mass “Sanctus” expresses the “immanence yet transcendence” idea well in that it communicates the awe-inspiring God of heaven and indwelling of Jesus the Messiah. See Michael Powell, “Definitions for Medieval Christian Liturgy: Sanctus,” Education, *An Introduction to the History of Christian Liturgy in the West*, (1996), www.yale.edu/adhoc/research_resources/liturgy/d_sanctus.html.

³²⁹ Samuel Coleridge, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Lectures 1795*, ed. Kathleen Coburn and Bart Winner, vol. 1, Bollingen Series LXXXV, “Fragments of Theological Lectures,” 339. See also “Frost at Midnight” in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1994), 242; 58-60 where Coleridge writes: “ ... so shalt thou see and hear / The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible / Of that eternal language, which thy God / Utters ...”

there we may read the transcript of himself.”³³⁰ Coleridge viewed the objects of the material world as not merely evidence or Platonic shadow pointing to the source, but as a quite literal impression of the mind of God. “In Earth or Air,” he writes, “the meadow’s purples stores the Moon’s mild radiance, or the Virgin’s form Blooming with rosy smiles, we see pourtrayed [*sic*] the bright Impressions of the eternal mind.”³³¹

It is my view that Lewis also viewed the natural world as a volume to read and communicated such a leaning through his work. Nature’s preeminence in Romantic thought compels us also to look at Romanticism’s place and value within Lewis’s corpus. Such a perspective of nature would further align Lewis with Coleridge’s notion that even more than language, the sympathetic observation “of the beauties of nature enlarge and purifies the soul, and that the soul changes in conformity with its surroundings.”³³² This may push on Lewis’s Christian worldview and into a kind of naturalism, but Lewis provides us with a firm foundation with regard to his hierarchical view of nature: “Yahweh is neither the soul of nature nor her enemy. She is neither his body nor a declension and falling away from him. She is his creature. He is not a Nature God, but the God of nature—her inventor, maker, owner, and controller.”³³³

³³⁰ Galileo also viewed the world as a volume to be interpreted, though his volume was mathematics. He writes, “The grand book is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric objects.” For more on the mathematical view of natural beauty see Robert M. May’s “Beauty and Truth: their intersection in mathematics and science” in Lauren Arrington, Zoe Leinhardt, and Philip Dawid, eds., *Beauty*, Darwin College Lectures, 19. See also Ian Stewart, *Why Beauty Is Truth: The History of Symmetry*, 118-120.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

³³² *Ibid.*, 95.

³³³ *M*, 185.

By examining Lewis's emphasis of landscape (which I will do in section seven) we can further understand how he viewed beauty working through material medium, touching the innerscape. I believe Lewis would agree with Coleridge, to some degree, in that we must strive for a divine vision of temporal reality;³³⁴ that we should recognize both the fabricated objects/goods of man, along with the objects of Nature, speak to that tension of God among us (immanence), calling through the realm of the temporal toward the soul's true home in the infinite (transcendence).

Having noted Romanticism's vision of nature we can see why Northernness became such a strong influence in Lewis's early thought-shaping. Next, I want to further develop Lewis's Northernness influence by examining it chronologically in his life.

3.6 Tracing The North: Chronology and Influence

We find Lewis's usage of Northernness further embedded in his own chronology. Below I will use Lewis's chronology to not only assist our understanding of the term Northernness and how he applies it in his own writing, but also as an historical platform from which to comment on his early literary "Northern" influences. In this section, therefore, I will trace Northernness through handpicked letters and passages within Lewis's autobiography in an effort to

³³⁴ Lewis hints at this in his concluding comments in the essay "Is Theology Poetry" when he writes, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." See *WG*, 140.

further show that Northernness continued to flourish in the mature Lewis post-conversion.³³⁵

Shortly after Lewis's encounter with Wagner's libretto,³³⁶ he met his neighbor Arthur Greeves. Lewis began writing his friend Greeves at the age of 16, a practice that carried on throughout their friendship and into their adult years. Lewis referred to Greeves as his "first friend"³³⁷ and, after Lewis's father died in 1916, he wrote to Greeves and told him, "You are my only real Father Confessor."³³⁸ Their friendship would endure their entire lives, in part due to their shared love for Romantic literature and Northernness.

In his first letter to Greeves (June 5, 1914), two months after meeting him for the first time and discovering their shared love for Norse mythology, Lewis tells his friend about a new poet he found, W.B. Yeats, who "writes plays and poems of rare spirit and beauty about our old Irish mythology. . . . His works have all got that strange, eerie feeling about them, of which we are both professed admirers."³³⁹ Lewis then encourages Greeves to set the tragedy on which he was working, titled *Loki Bound*, to music. It was to be an opera, Norse in content, Greek in form.³⁴⁰ Within the same letter Lewis takes great pleasure in describing the landscape of County Down as he envies Greeves who is there while Lewis

³³⁵ Andrew Lazo, in his essay "Gathered Round Northern Fires: The Imaginative Impact of the *Kolbitar*," offers a fine survey of Lewis's early Norse influence and represents the most comprehensive inquiry into Lewis's chronological Northernness that I can find.

³³⁶ *SBJ*, 72-73.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.

³³⁸ *CLI*, Preface, x.

³³⁹ *CLI*, 59.

³⁴⁰ Heather O'Donoghue regards *Loki Bound* as a striking work by the teenage Lewis, one in which allusions to, the use of, and influence of Norse mythology is vivid. See Heather O'Donoghue, *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth*, 187-190.

must endure the “hot, ugly country of England.” Lewis suggests that he and Greeves “journey the Hollywood Hills, and the fresh stillness of the early morning are well worth the trouble of early rising,”³⁴¹ his description revealing his love for the northern country and landscape.

Following *Loki Bound*, which Lewis wrote at Malvern College, Lewis became the private pupil of W.T. Kirkpatrick at Great Bookham in Surrey. During his time with Kirkpatrick, Lewis wrote a cycle of fifty-two short poems then titled *Metrical Meditations of a Cod*. Later, fourteen of the original fifty-two poems constituted *Spirits in Bondage*, which he authored under his pseudonym Clive Hamilton. During this time, Lewis became more interested in Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and he also began a prose version of *Dymer*, as well as another narrative poem titled *Medea’s Childhood*.³⁴²

In his second letter to Greeves (September 26, 1914), Lewis describes his new “arrangement” with the Kirkpatrick family at Bookham to be a supreme delight, and Bookham to be a place that time forgot. He goes into detail about the contrasting beauty of Bookham to County Down, “the wide expanse of rolling hill and dale, all thickly wooded with hazel and pine that is called Surrey. . . . Seen at present, in all the glory of a fine Autumn, it may be better imagined than described.” Lewis, apparently, loved Autumn the way he loved Northernness.³⁴³ He goes on to describe how he felt upon reading “The Door in the Wall,” an H.G. Wells story in *The Country of the Blind, and Other Stories* (1911) and relates to how “‘the *SEEING ONE*’ walks out into joy and happiness unthinkable, where the

³⁴¹ *CLI*, 60.

³⁴² Hooper in “Preface” Lewis’s *NP*, ix.

³⁴³ *SBJ*, 16. See also *CLI*, 89.

dull, senseless eyes of the world see only destruction and death.” In reading Homer’s *Iliad* in the original Greek, Lewis tells Arthur how stirring the old poem is with “Those fine, simple, euphonious lines, as they roll on with a roar like that of the ocean, strike a chord in one’s mind that no modern literature approaches.”³⁴⁴ Here we see Lewis’s early scholarly development coalescing with his already formed and deeply seeded love for the beauty of Northernness, landscape, and poetry.

The next two letters are closer together and focus on Lewis’s proposed opera. The first, an extensive letter sent October 6 1914, Lewis outlines what he thinks could be an opera. It is based on his Norse tragedy manuscript *Loki Bound*. The beginning of the narrative poem opens:

This is the awful city of the gods,
Founded on high to overlook the world
And yonder gabled hall, whose golden roof
With two fold force, is Valhall. Yonder throne
That crowns th’ eternal city’s highest peak
Is Odin’s throne, whence once the impious Frey
With ill-starred passion eyed the demon maid.³⁴⁵

In the “musical points” Lewis offers to Greeves, he uses adjectives such as “somber” and “eerie,” “bright” and “tuneful,” as a way to contrast Loki’s opening speech. Lewis is intent on creating “atmospheric music” as well as a “swing ballad” for the giant, a bit of madness and then some “dawn” music. But Lewis highlights an “inexpressibly sad, yearning little theme where (Exodus) Odin

³⁴⁴ *CLI*, 71.

³⁴⁵ King, *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis*, 33. “Loki Bound,” a poem of 109 lines, was written between 1913-1914.

expresses his eternal loneliness.”³⁴⁶ In the following letter to Greeves, just ten days later (October 14, 1914), Lewis responds to Greeves’s “favourable criticism” of the *Loki Bound* manuscript. He discusses the proposed dance after the exit of Odin and suggests such an edit will require textual alterations. He then comments as to how dances add a “certain finish.” With regard to dance movements Lewis suggests a line he thought deserved such movements: “The moon already with her silvery glance, — the horned moon that bids the high gods dance.”³⁴⁷ Lewis then continues to discuss their opera by turning to Greeves’s inquiry to Lewis regarding the use of illustrations. Their illustration discussion makes sense given Lewis’s love for Wagner’s libretto that included Arthur Rackham’s illustrations.³⁴⁸

In these early correspondences with Greeves, Lewis’s deep love for Northernness shows itself not only in his excitement for their shared affinity for Norse literature, but also in Lewis’s descriptions of the landscape and his youthfully exuberant commentary on the effects of music. He comments on Mrs. Kirkpatrick’s musical ability by saying:

For the value of Mrs K’s music is to me two fold: first it gives me the pleasure that beautiful harmonies well executed must always give: and secondly, the familiar airs carry me back in mind to countless happy afternoons spent together at Bernagh or Little Lea!³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ *CLI*, 78.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁴⁸ As noted above; also see 4.3 of this thesis.

³⁴⁹ *CLI*, 82.

Here a sense of nostalgia surfaces as Lewis connects the beautiful quality of the music to a relatively recent memory of times spent with Greeves back in Little Lea, where Greeves then resided. The Northernness, from the beginning for Lewis, connected to Norse mythology,³⁵⁰ Wagner (i.e., music), and feelings of nostalgia. The nostalgia is important as it connects Lewis's sense of love and longing (*Sehnsucht*).

To further show Lewis's keen interest in Norse mythology that seemed to swirl into a love of sweeping music—perhaps music that mimicked northern landscapes—Lewis writes another letter to Greeves on October 20, 1914. Lewis tells him of his plans to write something utilizing the “Shee.” Greeves responds by asking what a Shee is. A week later (October 28th) Lewis writes Greeves to clarify the definition of a “Shee.” He informs Greeves, “There is no such thing as ‘A’ Shee. The word (shich, tho’ pronounced as I have spelled it, is properly in Irish spelled “Shidhe”) is a collective noun, signifying ‘the faerires,’ or the gods,—since, in Irish these powers are identical. There is a close resemblance between the Irish ‘Shee’ and the Norse ‘Aesir,’ both ‘indicating common origin for Celtic & Teutonic races.’”³⁵¹ The entire first lengthy paragraph of this letter is given to differentiating the exact definition of the Shee and other similar people or races. In the same letter Lewis also indicates his growing infatuation with the Russian Ballet. He also loves Chopin's Mazurkas and Beethoven's “Sonate Pathetique.”

Skipping ahead in Lewis's chronology to 1918, Lewis is recovering from his war wound. In a letter dated to Greeves on Monday 17 June 1918, from

³⁵⁰ In the same letter Lewis references the Norns—female Fates of Norse mythology. See *CLI*, 82.

³⁵¹ *CLI*, 86-87.

Endsleigh Palace Hospital, Lewis details a lifelong “thrill and delight,” viewing Wagner’s opera, *The Valkyrie*. Lewis notes a familiar, and apparently a favorite, scene. The “beautiful” scene depicts Northern flavor of “distant snow covered peaks and a wild valley. The lightning gave a really unusual impression of spring moon light, and that combined with the glorious love-music of the orchestra ... simply swept you away.”³⁵² Lewis further notes the magnificence of Wotan, and the “full-breasted” Brunhilde, and his favorite scene entailing Brunhilde hiding from Wotan; a scene with “flashes of lightning,” as “the angry god draws nearer ... and at last enters in a glare of red light, glinting on the huge raven-wings of his helmet.”³⁵³ Though Lewis had to leave early, he was “so full of delight that I could hardly find it in my heart to grumble.” The night he describes as a coalescing of pleasures; “all the poetic and romantic pleasure came to help the musical.”³⁵⁴

Finally, Lewis returns to Oxford after his time serving the British Army during World War I. Lewis returned to his studies and to preparing a poem titled *Medea’s Childhood* for publication. But Lewis became unhappy with the poem and used it to light his pipe. In December of 1918 Lewis writes to Greeves and describes to him his renewed interest in “our old friend ‘Dymer.’” Lewis wanted to develop the narrative to touch on the “development of self-destruction, both of individuals & species (as man produces man only to conquer her [*sic*], & man produces a future & higher generation to conquer the ideals of the last, or again as an individual produces a nobler mood to undermine all that to-day’s has done).”

³⁵² *CLI*, 381-382.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 382.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Lewis³⁵⁵ tells Greeves that he changed Dyer's name to Askr, which is a reference to the ash tree Ask and the elm tree Embla from Norse mythology.³⁵⁶ These were the names of the two forms that were cut into human form, and the Norse gods referred to them as man and woman.³⁵⁷ Northernness seemed ever-present in Lewis's academic and imaginative mind.

If we jump into the mid-1920s we find Lewis writing about the joy of Northernness in the journal he kept from 1922-1927. In an entry dated Tuesday, February 8, 1927, Lewis writes about spending his morning deep in translation on "the *Edda*." "It is an exciting experience, when I remember my first passion for things Norse under the initiation of Longfellow (Tegner's 'Drappa' [*sic*] 'Saga of K. Olaf') at about the age of nine," writes Lewis, "and its return much stronger when I was about 13, when the high priests were M. Arnold [*sic*], Wagner's music, and Arthur Rackham *The Ring*. It seemed impossible then that I shd. ever come to read these things in the original. The old authentic thrill came back to me once or twice this morning: the mere names of god and giant catching my eye as I turned the pages of Zoega's dictionary was enough ..."³⁵⁸

In 1919 Lewis describes to Greeves his customary swim in the River Cherwell, likening the experience to the writing of William Morris.

I always swim down to a bend, straight towards the sun, see some hills in the distance across the water, then turn and come again to land going on my back and looking up at the willow trees above me. It is a most

³⁵⁵ Hooper, "Preface" in *NP*, ix. Lewis first began *Dyer* as a prose work. He later published it in 1926 as a narrative poem. It was not well received by critics.

³⁵⁶ *CLI*, 419.

³⁵⁷ Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 18.

³⁵⁸ *AMR*, 448.

romantic bathe and rather like William Morris—as one of his characters would ‘wash the night off.’ I have been reading at breakfast lately ‘The Water of the Wonderous Isles,’ which is more romantic tho’ not so well-constructed as ‘The Well at the World’s End’ all the same I have enjoyed it immensely with quite the old thrill, his witches and wanderers I can usually rely on. He is so inexhaustible!³⁵⁹

William Morris, the English Victorian poet and architect, was the second poet, after Longfellow, who influenced Lewis’s Northernness infatuation. “Morris wrote by far the best Victorian poems on eddic and saga subjects.”³⁶⁰ Morris’s renown played a key role in opening the world of Norse saga and poetry to the English world and beyond. Like Longfellow, he too journeyed to Iceland and returned forever captured by the north. In his 1855 poem “The Dedication of the Temple” Morris reveals his heart for Northernness:

O, South! O, sky without cooling cloud;
O, sickening yellow sand without a break;
O, palm with dust a-lying on thy leaves;
O, Scarlet flowers burning in the sun:
I cannot love thee, South, for all thy sun,
For all thy scarlet flowers or thy palms;
But in the North forever dwells my heart.
The North with all its human sympathies,
The glorious North, where all amidst the sleet,
Warm hearts do dwell, warm hearts sing out with joy;
The North that ever loves the poet well.³⁶¹

Morris’s daughter, May, in the introduction to volume ten of *The Collected Works of William Morris: Three Northern Love Stories* remarks that her father possessed a love for Iceland that was not shared by many of his friends. Indeed, a “flavour of

³⁵⁹ *CLI*, 453.

³⁶⁰ Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 249.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 249.

Iceland” hung about him after his trip there. A friend commented that Morris returned from Iceland enslaved with passion for ice and snow and raw fish.³⁶²

Morris’s influence on Lewis is striking. Looking again at Lewis’s journal we find him reading “Morris’s translation of *Volsunga Saga* in the Union”³⁶³ after buying his own copy of the saga and working on translating it with *Kolbitars*.³⁶⁴

In a letter to Greeves dated September 22, 1931, Lewis states that Morris influenced him in ways Morris probably did not intend:

I feel more and more that Morris has taught me things he did not understand himself. These hauntingly beautiful lands which somehow never satisfy, — this passion to escape from death plus the certainty that life owes all its charm to mortality—these push you on to the real thing because they fill you with desire and yet prove absolutely clearly that in Morris’s world that desire cannot be satisfied.³⁶⁵

This letter to Greeves seems to evidence the baptized mind and imagination with utter clarity.

Elsewhere in this letter, Lewis compares George MacDonald to Morris, and suggests his understanding of MacDonald was crystallized by first having read Morris. To Lewis, MacDonald is the answer to Morris’s conception of death and hopelessness; Morris is “an unwilling witness to the truth.”³⁶⁶ Morris, perhaps more than any other writer, showed Lewis the disparity between the world of the atheist and the world of the Christian God. Morris’s world was one entrenched in

³⁶² May Morris in “Introduction” to William Morris, *Collected Works of William Morris: Three Northern Love Stories, The Tale of Beowulf*, vol. X, xiiij.

³⁶³ *AMR*, 449.

³⁶⁴ In February of 1927 Lewis almost daily references his translations of the Old Norse texts, William Morris, or other related aspects of Northernness.

³⁶⁵ *CLI*, 970.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

the mundane, in objects of beauty without the fulfillment of their source. Morris's point of view would "sting you wide awake into uncontrollable longing and to make you feel that everything is worthless except the hope of finding one of his countries. ... All he has done is rouse the desire: but so strongly that you *must* find the real satisfaction."³⁶⁷ Also illuminating is the fact that this letter to Greeves was written one week prior (September 28) to the famous motorbike ride to the Whipsnade Zoo from which Lewis returned as one who now believed that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.³⁶⁸

Northernness remains quite strong in Lewis from his early teenage years into his mid-thirties³⁶⁹ as we discover in these final two examples of Lewisian Northernness. In a letter to one of his former students, Dom Bede Griffiths, Lewis relays his sustained interest in Northernness as he speaks to the value of Paganism. "On the contrary," writes Lewis, "it is only since I have become a Christian that I have learned really to value the elements of truth in Paganism and Idealism. I *wished* to value them in the old days; now I really do." Some scholars, such as Heather O'Donoghue, suggest that Northernness waned greatly after Lewis's conversion to Christianity. But Lewis seems more eager to *use* Paganism to better illuminate the truths of his own faith. Perhaps what O'Donoghue touches on here relates to Lewis's inordinate affection for Northernness pre-conversion versus his now ordinate *use* of Northernness post-conversion. Northernness

³⁶⁷ *CLI*, 971.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 972.

³⁶⁹ Indeed, we yet find a positive reference to Snorri Sturluson as a top rate historian in *CLIII*, 680 (in a letter to Miss Dunbar dated 7/12/55).

remains strong in Lewis, then, and only wanes in the sense that Lewis finds ordinate use for it in his writing.

Finally, on December 7, 1935, Lewis writes to Greeves about Wagner's successor and this "quite real" Northern influence: "The only successor to Wagner (since we've got onto the subject), the only man who has exercised the same enchantment over me since the old days, is Sibelius. This bent to 'Northern' things is quite real and one can't get over it—not that I ever thought of trying!" Lewis then continues into a dramatic description of the day—describing the "early morning light ... the bit of wood, bare and brown, and furiously agitated ... the pond half skinned with ice ... a terrific wind is roaring [with a literary allusion to Beatrix Potter as a means to describe the wind's ferocity]." Lewis finishes his description by saying how he has "enjoyed the whole of this winter."³⁷⁰

I have shown, in a way that is meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, how Northernness influenced Lewis as a young boy and teenager. I have also shown how that early literary and theological influence remained through his early adult life, what Lewis termed his "Norse Complex." Next, I sketched a working definition of Northernness to show that Northernness extends beyond mere literary affection for Lewis. Indeed, it extended into his theology and was expressed in his literary work. I then examined the Romantic vision of landscape and beauty as a way to help us connect Lewis's own Romantic leanings

³⁷⁰ *CL2*, 171.

to Northernness and beauty to him. In further tracing Northernness in Lewis's life chronologically, we discovered its influence in Lewis in terms of his love for landscape. Next, I want to further develop the importance of landscape within Lewis's thought and work.

3.7 Terrae Incognitae

Landscape holds a place of primacy for Lewis. As I noted earlier, many Lewis scholars refer to Northernness in Lewis's own terms as "a vision of huge, clear spaces hanging above the Atlantic in the endless twilight of Northern summer."³⁷¹ Northernness for these scholars typically ends with the physical reference to the landscape. Lewisian Northernness, however, refers to a Romantic vision of landscape³⁷² that expands into a theology of landscape.³⁷³ As discussed above, other writers, such as William Morris and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, also described a similar love for the north. When referring to the north they invariably are referencing places in Scandinavia or Iceland—places they actually visited. Likewise, Lewis reveled in his memories of County Down in Northern Ireland. In a letter Lewis wrote to his lifelong friend Arthur Greeves on March 30, 1915, Lewis reveals his great love for landscape:

Already one's mind dwells upon the sights and sounds and smells of home, the distant murmuring of the 'yards,' the broad sweep of the lough, the noble front of the cave hill, and the fragrant little glens and breezy {sic} meadows of our hills! And the sea! I cannot bear to live too far way

³⁷¹ *SBJ*, 73.

³⁷² See Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art*, 30-31. Clark notes the Romantic shift in fifteenth century artists towards a more mythical expression of landscape which possessed the ability "to excite a pleasing horror."

³⁷³ Ronald Bresland, *The Backward Glance: C.S. Lewis and Ireland*, 14.

from it. At Belfast, whether hidden or in sight, still it dominates the general impression of nature's face, lending its own crisp flavour to the winds and its own subtle magic to horizons ...³⁷⁴

In *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961) Lewis reaffirms his youthful exuberance for landscape when he writes:

I am probably one of many who, on a wakeful night, entertain themselves with invented landscapes. I trace great rivers from where the gulls scream at the estuary, through the windings of ever narrower and more precipitous gorges, up to the barely audible tinkling of their source in a fold of the moors. But I am not there myself as explorer or even as tourist. I am looking at that world from outside.³⁷⁵

There is a direct correlation between what we see and experience in the physical world and what we express through artwork.³⁷⁶ In the case of Lewisian Northernness, it finds its impetus in landscape but its expression stems from within the mind and onto printed page, be it poetry, prose, or painting. Carnell points out that "literary description by its very nature emphasizes the separateness of Joy and Melancholy."³⁷⁷ What we have, then, is literary atmosphere, created by the author through description and dialogue that sets off the deeper significance of the symbols within the work.

Northernness in landscape, therefore, not only plays a vital role in setting literary atmosphere but it also cultivates the human psyche. I would like to make two main points regarding the importance of landscape understood in the context of our Northernness discussion. First, I want to note the fact that the encounter of

³⁷⁴ C. S. Lewis, *They Stand Together* (1914-1963), 68 (hereafter *TST*).

³⁷⁵ *EC*, 52.

³⁷⁶ Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 241.

³⁷⁷ Carnell, *Shadow*, 77.

landscape evokes strong human emotion and that emotion possesses the power to shape a person's thought. Second, I want to connect the discussion of landscape's power to evoke strong human emotion with the theological Augustinian notion of *liber naturae*, a vision of landscape as a book to be interpreted.

Landscape as Evocative of Emotion

Geographer Richard Muir reminds us that different landscapes evoke different psychological responses. Early in the twentieth century geographer John K. Wright suggested that the field of geography should expand its scope to include the *terrae incognitae* of the imagination. In his paper "Terraes Incognitae: *The Place of the Imagination in Geography*," Wright states that the unknown world of our ancestors was literal and vast; from those unknown places the imaginations of poets and myth-writers and eventually novelists were stirred, thus creating geographies of the mind ("geosophy").³⁷⁸ Wright thought the most fascinating discoveries to be made in unknown lands were in the unknown lands of the human mind.³⁷⁹ According to Muir, William Kirk developed Wright's notion of "geosophy" and sought for geographers to adopt modes of inquiry that mirrored the German school of Gestalt psychology, that is, "the whole as being greater than the sum of its parts."³⁸⁰ Using this perspective for geographic inquiry reversed the normal fragmented approach. Kirk believed that to understand geography was to also consider human perception of the land as well as cultural developments in the area. The influence of Wright and Kirk upon the discipline of

³⁷⁸ Richard Muir, *Approaches to Landscape*, 118.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 119.

geography was enhanced in more recent developments regarding the interplay with the human mind and landscape. David Lowenthal built upon the advances of Wright and Kirk adding “that while individuals have personalized behavioural environments, there are also consensus views of the nature of the milieu—to form the nucleus of a humanistic approach to the subject.”³⁸¹ Muir shows how Lowenthal’s observation plays out by using the influence of the novel with regard to landscape perception in the eighteenth century.

In the eighteenth century the novel replaced the epic and drama as the main literary vehicle. These literary expressions differed in that epic and drama forms used universals, communicating broadly held truths across “timeless settings.” The novel, however, was time specific and painted landscape into stories specific to certain times in history. The American novelist James Fenimore Cooper gained notoriety with his novel *The Spy*, which was set in the time of the American Revolutionary War. The novel found European success and caused international readers to perceive America as “a remarkable and fascinating place.”³⁸² The novel invited the creation of perceived geographic stereotypes: the hard and stern landscape and people of the north, the genteel and prejudiced people of the south, the untamed people and landscape of the west.³⁸³

The mind’s ability and inherent nature to perceive is so strong that even in the face of overwhelming environmental or cultural evidence to the contrary, a person’s mind may remain locked into specific stereotypes.³⁸⁴ This

³⁸¹ Ibid., 123.

³⁸² Ibid., 125.

³⁸³ Ibid., 127.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 126.

interconnectedness between landscape and the human mind helps us further understand the rich value of landscape within works of fiction; how it establishes not only literary mood and atmosphere but also helps communicate themes, as well as establishes precedent for using landscape as a means of theological interpretation.

Landscape plays a vital role in Lewisian Northernness³⁸⁵ and, in light of Muir's commentary on the link between physical landscape (phenomenal environment) and landscape of the mind (behavioural environment), we must view Lewis's literary depictions of landscape as one of several primary aspects of Northernness.

Interpreting Liber Naturae

The primacy of landscape, indeed, stands as a hallmark of Romanticism but has its origins in the latent Neo-Platonism of Augustine's *liber naturae*. Augustine's inquiry³⁸⁶ into nature as being the object of his love is the classic³⁸⁷ passage for the ancient concept of nature acting like a book to be interpreted. "I asked the earth and it said: 'It is not I.' I asked all that is in it; they made the same confession (Job 28:12f.). I asked the sea, the deeps, the living creatures that creep,

³⁸⁵ Lewis noticed how landscape also affected the work and imaginative powers of Edmund Spenser, author of *The Faerie Queene*, a work that had a profound influence on Lewis. See McGrath, *C.S. Lewis*, 12.

³⁸⁶ Stephen Prickett, *Words and the Word: Language, Poetics, and Biblical Interpretation*, 96. Prickett notes the similarities (contra Abrams) between Augustine's conception of *Liber Naturae* and Wordsworth's. M.H. Abrams suggests that in Augustine, God possesses and maintains the initiative as the first and final cause, whereas in Wordsworth, God fills the role of spectator. Prickett, however, states that Wordsworth is not attempting to break free from the Judeo-Christian cultural influence but is, in fact, interpreting Augustine and the self-consciousness of the metaphor of nature itself; an important connection as we consider Lewis among these theological romantic thinkers.

³⁸⁷ T.S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets*, 54.

and they responded: ‘We are not your God, look beyond us.’”³⁸⁸ Sense perception and human discernment factor into Augustine’s inquiry into *liber naturae*, and assist in rendering the beauty of the natural world as self-evident.³⁸⁹

In the modern world this Augustinian vision of nature became known as the “emblematic world view,” a phrase coined by William B. Ashworth in his essay “Natural History and the Emblematic World View.” Ashworth suggests that a contemporary view of natural history renders the physical world as “an intricate language of metaphor, symbols and emblems.”³⁹⁰ As previously noted above and in the analysis of the Romantic vision as it regards landscape, Lewis is at home with landscape unfolding like a textbook.³⁹¹ Indeed, like William Wordsworth, he is adept at “finding moral and theological meanings in the aesthetic qualities of landscape.”³⁹² In Lewis’s poetry, for example, we find three moral poems critical of the modern use of nature and landscape: “The Future of Forestry,” “Under Sentence,” and “Pan’s Purge.” We do not have the space to look at each poem in detail, so I will list their themes to show Lewis’s concern for nature in the moral context:

³⁸⁸ St. Augustine, *Saint Augustine Confessions*, 183-184, X.vi.

³⁸⁹ It should be noted that John Ruskin also viewed landscape as a text to be interpreted. In 5.2 of this thesis I note the special influence Ruskin had upon Lewis in this regard. George Landow observes how Ruskin “conceives himself living in an allegorical universe in which natural fact reverberates with further meanings. Ruskin is concerned with “allegory, reading ‘Nature-Scripture (5.191, *Modern Painters*) as he had been taught to read God’s written Word—in terms of type and shadow.” See Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin*, 331.

³⁹⁰ David C. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman, *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*, 305. It should be noted that in this particular essay he limits his inquiry into the zoological aspect of natural history. This limitation is due to space constraints and Ashworth implies that even by examining zoology in the context of natural history there is enough evidence to show the scope of Renaissance natural history. Ashworth then suggests the demise of the “emblematic world view” is due to the Scientific Revolution.

³⁹¹ See also 6.3 in this thesis, in which I expound upon Lewis’s understanding of nature as portal in “The Weight of Glory.”

³⁹² M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 102.

1. "The Future of Forestry" asks, "When all the trees are gone, sacrificed to roads and shops, who will tell the children what trees were?"
2. "Under Sentence" is written from the animal's perspective and "considers the destruction of the landscape and all its creatures."
3. "Pan's Purge" is a dream poem that depicts an apocalyptic "vision of the revolt of Nature against mankind."³⁹³

Staying with Lewis's poetry as examples of Lewis's love and care for landscape and its ability to disperse "moral and theological qualities through its aesthetic qualities" we turn to a poem in *The Pilgrim's Regress* that explores the difficulty of living the Christian life. "My heart is empty, All the fountains that should run / With longing, are in me / Dried up. In all my countryside there is not one / That drips to find the sea."³⁹⁴ Here the pilgrim, John, admits the dryness of his soul as symbolized by dry fountains along the countryside. The poem, however, turns from despair. "The vigor of his faith in Christ," writes King, "is seen in his belief that if God will intervene in his own Lazarus-like life, he may survive for later rebirth, much as a seed "which grows / Through winter ripe for birth."³⁹⁵ In the poem "Caught" we find more evidence of the lingering influence of Northernness in his work: "Oh, for but one cool breath in seven, / One air from northern climes, / The changing and the castle-clouded heaven / Of my old Pagan

³⁹³ Don W. King, *C.S. Lewis, Poet*, 187. Don King also notes that Lewis deals with the theme of "man's destruction and violation of the natural world" in part three of his Cosmic Trilogy *That Hideous Strength*.

³⁹⁴ Lewis, *PR*, 156.

³⁹⁵ King, *Poet*, 206. Implicit in this poem is the pagan (Northern) motif of the "Corn King." For more on the "Corn King" motif, which echoes through several of Lewis's works, see Lewis, *M*, 178-188.

times!”³⁹⁶ Don King states that this poem recalls, “Lewis’s affection for Norse myth and literature in terms of both its religious and metaphorical influences on his youth and young adulthood.”³⁹⁷ In terms of its theological implications the poem depicts the post-conversion Lewis struggling with what King suggests is a possessive and jealous God. King further suggests that Lewis pines for his earlier days where his passions held more satisfaction.

Liber naturae assumes a central role in Lewis’s thought as it not only highlights Lewis’s affection and fascination with landscape—specifically a “northern” landscape—but it also provides a theological portal through which we can further understand his use of literary atmosphere as a way to create the Romantic *numinous* elements required to enchant readers, leading them along the bright pathway of Northernness, of beauty.

Furthermore, in Jared Lobdell’s examination of the “scientification” of Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy novels he calls for readers to consider Lewis’s *Englishness*. Lobdell points to “the English light touch, the English consciousness of landscape, the English view of painting as psychological interpretation.”³⁹⁸ I suggest, therefore, we must consider the depth and extent to which Northernness shaped not only his love for open, mysterious, and beautiful spaces in the

³⁹⁶ *P*, 115.

³⁹⁷ King, *Poet*, 205.

³⁹⁸ Jared Lobdell, *The Scientification Novels of C. S. Lewis*, 11-12. It should be noted that Lobdell does recognize Lewis’s northern Irish heritage. Yet he continues to use the word “Englishness” when in fact Lewis was Irish/English. Lewis did not think of himself as English (see McGrath, *C.S. Lewis*, 12). Lobdell suggests that *Englishness* is not a matter of birth. “It is a matter of the didactic purpose of art and the fulfillment of that purpose by the detailed description of daily life—moral pageant in the foreground, detailed observation behind, as in a book of hours.” (Lobdell, 13)

landscape but also how the physical beauty of the landscape factored into his “innerscape.”

We have looked at some general themes regarding Lewisian Northernness. We noted Lewis’s early experience with Northernness and show how it developed throughout his teenage and early adult years. We noted the Romantic influence upon Northernness and beauty in general and then connected that Romantic worldview to Lewis’s love for landscape. In the next chapter I want to examine three case studies spaced out chronologically so that we can see how Lewis communicates Northernness. I believe these case studies will help us see how Lewis expressed Northernness literarily and theologically.

Chapter 4: To The North

Three Case Studies of Lewisian Northernness

*“The sun turns black, earth sinks into sea,
the bright stars vanish from the sky;
steam rises up in the conflagration,
a high flame plays against heaven itself.”*

—“*Voluspa*,” The Poetic Edda³⁹⁹

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3 we defined Lewisian Northernness by examining Lewis’s self-described Norse Complex, his initial experiences with Northernness as a boy and young man, and his correspondence with his lifelong friend Arthur Greeves. We also learned how the concept of Northernness has, in the fifty-three years since his death, been largely ignored by Lewis scholarship. This neglect has, therefore, allowed me to pioneer a new strand of Lewis scholarship. To use a Northern image, one might say we are now journeying through virgin snows, laying tracks where previous scholarship has not ventured.

We also discussed the importance of landscape within the Lewis corpus. Landscape aids the Northernness atmosphere within Lewis’s fiction works and connects the visible world with the invisible world of personal innerscape. In fact, Lewis highly regarded literary atmosphere within a story.⁴⁰⁰ Finally, we settled on a suitable working definition for Lewisian Northernness that considers the multidimensional influence it continued to have upon Lewis over his lifetime.

³⁹⁹ Carolyne Larrington, ed., *The Poetic Edda*, 11.

⁴⁰⁰ *CLII*, 487.

Our definition posits two major elements to Lewis’s writing that we need to consider in our overarching analysis of Lewisian beauty. The elements are: stylistic and conceptual-theological. When we consider stylistic elements of Northernness, we are in essence discussing literary atmosphere as well as the role literary atmosphere has in creating the felt experience of beauty within a reading episode. When we consider conceptual-theological elements of Northernness, we are in essence discussing the eucatastrophic elements of Lewis’s writing; those of “Joy,”⁴⁰¹ hope, and the Incarnation. These concepts imply a strong relational quality Lewis believed inherent in the Christian faith. It is my view that Lewisian Northernness employs the elements of pagan austere beauty by way of literary atmosphere but flips the Norse theological (i.e., eschatological) worldview around, by way of eucatastrophe, as a means to communicate the “pursuedness,” or movement, inherent within the Christian notion of beauty.

Now that we have considered the enduring influence of Northernness in Lewis’s life and thought, as well as sketched a usable definition for Northernness, let us turn our attention to three examples of Northernness within the Lewis corpus: *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, *Perelandra*, and *The Last Battle*.

I will be suggesting possible semantic Northernness echoes, which is to say I will be looking at the language within certain Lewis works that carries strong literary echoes of Northernness, as well as commenting on the conceptual-theological Northernness implications in each of these books. We begin our examination, in section two, with Lewis’s first post-conversion work, *The*

⁴⁰¹ Lewis capitalized “Joy” in his autobiography. I will, therefore, do the same when referring to Lewisian Joy.

Pilgrim's Regress (1933). This allegory offers semantic hints of Northernness, as well as a conceptual-theological Northernness by way of Lewis's thematic use of *Sehnsucht*, or intense longing. *The Pilgrim's Regress* also reveals Lewis's use of Norse caricature, an element we will discuss in some detail. Some reference this use of caricature as evidence that Lewis moved on from his Northernness infatuation. Our examination, however, suggests otherwise.

In section three, we shall primarily examine the conceptual-theological strands of Lewisian Northernness in the second volume in Lewis's science fiction fantasy, *Perelandra* (1943). Lewis's prose in *Perelandra* is, perhaps, some of his most beautiful. In fact, Lewis scholar Don King refers to *Perelandra* as a work of poetic prose.⁴⁰² I am concerned with what makes the prose beautiful. I suspect Lewis's use of movement contributes to the aesthetic experience of reading *Perelandra*. Furthermore, *Perelandra's* "Great Dance" finale swells with a Wagnerian operatic beauty with the exception of the Wagnerian outcome. Lewis's operatic finale reveals his Northernness while maintaining his signature Christian hopefulness.

This theme of hopefulness recurs in the final installment of his fantasy series *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Last Battle* (1956), which we examine in section four. In *The Last Battle* we discover myriad semantic echoes of Northernness combined with a conceptual-theological echo—similar to that found in *Perelandra*—in the final chapters of the series finale. I chose these three examples in order to show the implicit chronological influence of Northernness on Lewis, with each one symbolizing a decade or more of maturation in his thought

⁴⁰² King, *Poet*, 229-232.

and Christian faith. I view Northernness as central to Lewis's expression and understanding of beauty, as well as his self-described journey to find where all the beauty came from. This journey, for Lewis, arguably began as a young boy as he stood next to a currant bush, but we find Lewis's post-conversion journey starting in literary fashion with the publication of *The Pilgrim's Regress*, to which we now turn.

4.2 Blood From Skulls: Northernness in *The Pilgrim's Regress*

In Book Six of *The Pilgrim's Regress*, titled "Northward Along the Canyon," the protagonist, John, along with his companions Drudge and Vertue, travel "into the sterner regions of the mind."⁴⁰³ Lewis portrays this sterner intellectual region with austere northern qualities: "There was little vegetation—here a shrub, and there some grass: but most of it was brown earth and moss and rock, and the road beneath them stone. The grey sky was never broken ... and it was so bleak that if they stopped at any time to rest, the sweat grew cold on them instantly."⁴⁰⁴ The northern qualities Lewis employs here, however, communicate as tepid and seemingly devoid of the "pure Northernness" that so gripped Lewis.

Heather O'Donoghue suggests Lewis's Northernness by this time had regressed in accord with his "reversion" to Christianity. "After his reversion to Christianity in 1929," writes O'Donoghue, "Lewis continued to reflect Old Norse

⁴⁰³ *PR*, 89.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

material in his poetry, but with significant differences.”⁴⁰⁵ But did Lewis’s Northernness regress as O’Donoghue suggests in her commentary on Lewis’s poetry? It is assumed O’Donoghue uses the term “reversion” instead of “conversion” here in order to highlight Lewis’s religious heritage. Lewis was, indeed, reared in a Protestant home,⁴⁰⁶ but at no point do we find Lewis making a personal commitment of faith other than his assumed obligatory assent to the family faith. Furthermore, Lewis himself uses the term “conversion” to describe his transition from atheism, to theism, and finally to the Christian faith.⁴⁰⁷ I find this distinction important in that if Lewis was simply reverting to his first faith, then O’Donoghue’s commentary finds stronger footing. A person returning to their former faith would, perhaps, be more apt to disregard the frivolities of a prodigal lifestyle, and Lewis’s disdain for Northernness would be more easily justified. Though Lewis does refer to his early paganism as the “childhood of religion” and “a prophetic dream,” he yet views it as part of his religious journey, with Christianity being “the thing full grown.”⁴⁰⁸ Lewis does not lop off the Northernness branch of his spiritual life so that the Christian trunk can grow unimpeded. Rather, Lewis sees Northernness for what it is theologically and continues to appropriate it for his own literarily baptized purposes. It must also be noted, as I hinted above, that Paganism played a vital role in Lewis’s conversion to the Christian faith and dramatically so. This tug of war within his spiritual life

⁴⁰⁵ O’Donoghue, *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth*, 190. It should be noted that O’Donoghue errs in her dating of Lewis’s conversion to the Christian faith. She places his conversion, or reversion as she puts it, in 1929, when in fact it is 1931. See McGrath, 155-156.

⁴⁰⁶ McGrath, *C.S. Lewis*, 4.

⁴⁰⁷ *SBJ*, 230-232; also see Hooper, *CLI*, 974: “... I have just passed on from believing in God to definitely believing in Christ—in Christianity.”

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 235.

is well documented in Lewis's discussion with friends J.R.R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson on September 19, 1931, which focused on the connection and importance of metaphor and myth with the Christian faith, and provides the insight and substantiation needed to suggest that Lewisian Northernness did not recede but, in fact, swelled and remained a literary and theological anchor throughout his life.⁴⁰⁹

In her commentary on Lewisian Northernness, O'Donoghue contrasts Lewis's pre-conversion Northern writings *Loki Bound*—a libretto that was “Norse in content and Greek in form”⁴¹⁰—and his first published work, the long form narrative poem *Dymer*, with his post-conversion work, namely *The Pilgrim's Regress*. O'Donoghue shows the extent to which Northernness had engulfed Lewis, who was barely sixteen years old when he wrote it, as evidenced in his Norse libretto.⁴¹¹ She notes Lewis's significant focus on the theme of spiritual bondage (which is also prevalent in Lewis's poetry cycle *Spirits in Bondage*) and shows how Lewis aptly connects his own struggle with the existence of divinity to the chaotic loosing that occurs at Ragnarök, perhaps aligning himself with the previously bound monsters (giants, dragons, etc.) who will be loosed to destroy the world. She writes, “The prevalence of binding imagery in these titles and in their content is striking. In Norse poetry, Ragnarök will be a time of chaos when what had been bound hitherto—Loki, the wolf Fenrir, the giants' ship Naglfari,

⁴⁰⁹ See Hooper, *CLI*, 970-977 and McGrath, *Lewis*, 146-151.

⁴¹⁰ *TST*, 48.

⁴¹¹ Lewis and Arthur Greeves intended to produce *Loki Bound* as an opera using Lewis's libretto (of which only a few fragments remain) and set to music by Greeves, himself an accomplished musician. Evidently nothing came of their plans, though their letters bear witness of their schemes. See *TST*, 48.

and even the cosmos itself ... will come loose.”⁴¹² Regarding *Dymer*, she states, “By beginning and ending *Dymer* with two great divine deaths in Old Norse myth, Lewis definitely situates his own hero *Dymer* in this mythic tradition.” O’Donoghue’s aim here⁴¹³ is, with regard to twentieth and twenty-first century poets, to track and show how and why poets will continue to draw on Old Norse myth to influence their own work. “In the twentieth century,” writes O’Donoghue, “we can see central figures of Old Norse myth itself redeployed as new symbols in modernist poetry.”⁴¹⁴ With regard to religious writing, O’Donoghue states “... the religious symbolism of Old Norse myth is revived by association with Christian theology. This same connexion is rather differently made by C.S. Lewis in his early poetry.”⁴¹⁵ That is to say, O’Donoghue suggests Lewis used religious symbolism not to show the positive associations between Old Norse myth and Christianity but to display the opposite; that in his early pre-conversion poetry his allusions to Old Norse myth bear witness to his being engulfed in pure Northernness, whereas his post-conversion work does not bear this out, and indeed reveals Lewis’s disdain for the paganism of his youth. O’Donoghue uses *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, Lewis’s first post-conversion publication, as an example of her thesis that Northernness in Lewis was reduced to caricature. For example, with regard to the fight of the two dragons John and Vertue near the end of the book, she writes, “This dragon is a grotesque and even a grimly comic creature

⁴¹² O’Donoghue, *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth*, 188.

⁴¹³ O’Donoghue’s newest study, *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth*, is by far the most lucid and in-depth treatment of Lewisian Northernness that I have found. I am indebted to Dr. O’Donoghue for her gracious gift of time and lively discussion on Lewisian Northernness while I studied in Oxford.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

who only regrets having eaten his wife ... a second dragon poem is a long cry of victory from a dragon-slayer, but there is no allusion to Sigurd or anything Norse apart from the dragon-slaying itself.”⁴¹⁶ Next, she also notes how Lewis’s “Northernness has come to mean ‘tension, hardness, possessiveness, coldness, anemia,’”⁴¹⁷ in a reference to the running titles in the third edition of *Regress*. Finally, she remarks that for Lewis, Northernness “is now situated in the actual, human sphere” and that with his reference to men of “decent blood” and “tall women with yellow plaits” Lewis evokes Nordic racial stereotypes.”⁴¹⁸

I too find it curious that Lewis would paint such a muted picture of Northernness, with regard to his depictions of landscape and his obvious caricature of Viking culture, and surmise that he must be up to something. As I stated above, it seems more likely that Northernness in Lewis did not immediately recede in prominence upon his conversion. Rather, it took on new form and significance in his writing, both in his atmospheric styling and his theological underpinning. It became what O’Donoghue herself claimed Old Norse myth was for other religious writers: a way to revive the religious symbols of Old Norse myth in order to connect tenets of the Christian faith. This is exactly what we find Lewis doing throughout his post-conversion corpus,⁴¹⁹ and particularly through the form of allegory in which the landscape represents channels of modern thought more than it communicates aesthetics. What I wish to show here,

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 190-191.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 190.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 191.

⁴¹⁹ See *TST*, where Lewis suggests, “... if you take the sacrificial idea out of Christianity you deprive both Judaism and Paganism of all significance.” (437)

therefore, is 1) the lexical substantiation for Lewisian Northernness continued within his first post-conversion work, and 2) the extent of the Norse mythological influence upon Lewis's literary style and theology.

Here we see the landscape working in the allegory for Lewis and his satirical commentary on modern philosophy, for it is in this region that John, Drudge, and Vertue meet three Pale Men, known in the land as "Stewards," Mr. Neo Angular, Mr. Neo-Classical, and Mr. Humanist. Mr. Neo Angular, according to Chad Walsh, represents T.S. Eliot, "It is Eliot's dry anti-Romantic approach to literature as well as religion that Lewis is satirizing." Mr. Neo-Classical represents Irving Babbit, "an American scholar who vigorously opposed Romanticism." Mr. Humanist represents George Santayana, "an atheist who lived to oppose optimism, Romanticism, transcendentalism and humanitarianism."⁴²⁰ These Northerners, according to Lewis are, "men of rigid systems whether skeptical or dogmatic, Aristocrats, Stoics, Pharisees, Rigorists, signed and sealed members of highly organized 'Parties.'"⁴²¹ Lewis's use of the symbolic North and South extremes is curious given his love of Northernness and beauty in landscape, and potentially problematic in that it does not seem to align with an aesthetic interpretation of the allegory for my purposes here. But, as stated above, this is understandable here as we consider the genre above aesthetic atmosphere. The description of the land, however, along with the parallel vision of the Pale Men, juxtapose the result of John's dive into the pool at the bottom of the chasm in

⁴²⁰ Kathryn Ann Lindskoog, *Finding the Landlord*, 60-62.

⁴²¹ Lewis in "Afterword to the Third Edition," *PR*, 206.

Book Nine, “Across the Canyon.” John sees everything anew once he rises from the waters of the chasm.

Lewis’s caricature of the modern philosophy in the Pale Men is paralleled by his apparent caricature of Viking culture. John, Vertue, and their newest companion, Drudge, converse with the Pale Men and then stay the night with them in a cold narrow hut. The next morning Drudge and Vertue travel farther northward while John remains behind with the Pale Men. Later that evening Vertue returns exhausted, in fear, and without Drudge. He pleads with John and the Pale Men, telling them they are in grave danger. Then he proceeds to tell the story of his experience in the area “Furthest North.” Vertue describes the landscape as similar to the area where the Pale Men live, but then describes a road that runs up into the foreboding mountains. Once beyond the mountain pass a valley opens up and it is inhabited by dwarves—“a black kind with black shirts and a red kind who call themselves Marxomanni.”⁴²² Snorri Sturluson records in *The Prose Edda* that the dwarves were created from the flesh of the primeval giant Ymir. “The dwarves emerged first, finding life in Ymir’s flesh. They were maggots at that time, but by a decision of the gods they acquired human understanding and assumed the likeness of men, living in the earth and the rocks.”⁴²³ In “The Sibyl’s Prophecy,” found in *The Poetic Edda*, the dwarves are said to have been created “from waves of blood / and from Blain’s limbs.” Marxomanni, the term Lewis uses to name the red dwarves is, most likely, a derivative of “Marcomanni” which is a Germanic tribal confederation whose

⁴²² *PR*, 97.

⁴²³ Snorri Sturluson and Jesse L. Byock, eds., *The Prose Edda*, 22-24.

name means “frontier men,”⁴²⁴ and more obviously is a play on the name Karl Marx. It is unclear if Lewis is simply using the term to refer to the dwarves’ geographic location within his allegorical *mappa mundi*, as in northern-most “frontier,” or if he is actually referencing this Germanic tribal confederation that disappeared near the fourth century. What does seem clear, however, is Lewis’s leveraging of the caricature of Germanic and Old Norse myth, as it relates to the character “Mr. Savage,” as a device to paint Mussolini and Hitler into a feral frame. Savage is a massive Nordic figure and leader of the dwarves, presumably a *goði* (*godi*) or Norse Chieftain.⁴²⁵ For a glimpse at Lewis’s literary intention for Savage, consider a letter dated November 5, 1933, to Arthur Greeves in which Lewis comments on the insidious character of Hitler. “He [Hitler] is as contemptible for his stupidity,” writes Lewis, “as he is detestable for his cruelty. For the German people as a whole we have to have charity: but for dictators, ‘Nordic’ tyrants and so on – well, read the chapter about Mr. Savage in the *Regress* and you have my views.”⁴²⁶ Lewis, here, exposes the contemporary German northern antiquarianism of the twentieth century. According to O’Donoghue, though “post-Victorian interest in Vikings did not continue as a

⁴²⁴ It is helpful to note that Lindskoog labels Savage’s warriors: “dwarf warriors called Mussolimini (Italian Fascists), Swastici (Hitler had just been elected chancellor of Germany when Lewis wrote this), Gangomanni (gangsters), and many others: the Cruels.” (Lindskoog, 65) She further comments, “Since this was to be a world of destruction, he [Savage] planned to be a destroyer rather than a mere victim of destruction. Heroic violence was all that counted.” It is interesting to note Lindskoog’s comments in that, as stated above, the Norse hero did not value violence for violence’ sake. Furthermore, history bears out that Mussolini and Hitler did not engage in violence for the sake of heroism but for diabolical domination.

⁴²⁵ Jesse L. Byock, “Saga Form, Oral Prehistory, and the Icelandic Social Context,” *New Literary History* 16, no. 1 (October 1, 1984): 153–73, accessed August 14, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/468780>. It should be noted, according to Byock, that chieftains did not control territories, they were “leaders of interest groups,” which rings true with Lewis’s portrayal of Savage.

⁴²⁶ *CLII*, 128.

popular phenomenon” in Great Britain, it did continue to “contribute to popular political movements – most notoriously, national socialism.”⁴²⁷

The caricature extends as Lewis paints the scene and offers further commentary on National Socialism. The dwarves in Lewis’s north region serve Savage. When Vertue and Drudge encounter the dwarves, Drudge joins the red dwarves while Vertue is escorted high up into the mountain to meet Savage. “Savage’s nest is a terrifying place. It is a long hall like a barn and when I first caught sight of it—half-way up the sky from where they were leading me—I thought to myself that wherever else we were going it could not be there; It looked inaccessible.”⁴²⁸ It appears as if Lewis here weaves in images of Valhalla in Asgard. Valhalla is the great hall where the Valkyries (“choosers of the slain”) take slain warriors to meet and feast with Odin.⁴²⁹ In the Norse cosmology Asgard sits just below the branches of the great ash tree, Yggdrasil.⁴³⁰ It would, therefore, be located in the heavens, situated in an inaccessible place. Savage’s long hall seems to further deepen the Norse echo in this scene. Once in Savage’s “nest,” Vertue describes him as “almost a giant . . . dressed in skins and had an iron helmet on his head with horns stuck in it.”⁴³¹ Though I will comment more on giant motifs within the Lewis corpus below, it should be noted here that giants in Old Norse mythology lived in opposition to the gods, and were responsible for their ultimate demise at Ragnarök, the Norse apocalypse. Furthermore, Norse mythological

⁴²⁷ O’Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 126.

⁴²⁸ *PR*, 97.

⁴²⁹ Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 46-50; 178. See also Carolyne Larrington, “Introduction” in *The Poetic Edda*, xiv.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, “Introduction,” xxv-xxvii.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

giants share little in common with modern day giant characterizations as being oafish and dumb. Rather, they exude not only strength, but also great cunning and wisdom (i.e., Loki), albeit they do maintain the literary symbolism of chaos.⁴³²

Lewis's Savage follows the Norse giant characterization while also revealing the Victorian barbaric caricature evidenced in his dress: skins and an iron-horned helmet. Andrew Wawn suggests the romanticizing of Norse sagas and mythology led to common stereotyping, with regard to Viking iconography, that persists in the modern world; one such stereotype being the horned helmet of the Vikings.⁴³³ Another such caricature appears in this Lewis passage when Savage says, "I shall drink the blood of men from skulls."⁴³⁴ Wawn attributes this common misconception of Viking culture to erroneous translations of Thomas Percy in his ubiquitous *Northern Antiquities*, a book with which Lewis was familiar.⁴³⁵ Wawn notes how Grenville Pigott, author of the vastly read *A Manual of Scandinavian Mythology, Containing a Popular Account of the Two Eddas and of the Religion of Odin* (1839), "may have been the first British scholar to give a detailed explanation of the seventeenth-century Latin mistranslation which had prompted belief that Vikings and Valholl revelers drank wine out of the skulls of their slain foes."⁴³⁶

Moving on, in the same passage, along with the caricatured description of Savage, Lewis includes a direct quotation from *The Poetic Edda*; an excerpt that

⁴³² See section 4.4 of this thesis.

⁴³³ Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 25; 314; 372.

⁴³⁴ *PR*, 98. See also Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 190-191.

⁴³⁵ O'Donoghue, *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth*, 187.

⁴³⁶ Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 190.

is also quoted in “The Saga of the Volsungs.” Wawn suggests this particular excerpt to be the benchmark Eddaic lines⁴³⁷ that show the evolution of Old Norse translation that would form the Victorian Viking literary ethos. Lewis’s version reads thus:

Wind age, wolf age,
Ere the world crumbles:
Shard age, spear age,
Shields are broken. ...

East sits the Old’Un
In Iron-forest;
Feeds amidst it
Fenris children. ...⁴³⁸

Compare Lewis’s version with the original shown below:

Axe-age, sword age, shields are cleft asunder,
wind-age, wolf-age, before the world plunges headlong;
no man will spare another. [45]

In the east sat an old woman in Iron-wood
and nurtured there offspring of Fenrir;
a certain one of them in monstrous form
will be the snatcher of the moon. [40]

Lewis seems to appropriate the excerpt in order to make it fit the scene as Savage sings these lines. In *The Poetic Edda* these lines contribute to “The Seeress’s Prophecy,” also known as *Voluspá*. It is apocalyptic in nature and depicts the twilight of the gods.⁴³⁹ The scene with Savage also carries an apocalyptic theme

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 192-207.

⁴³⁸ *PR*, 98.

⁴³⁹ O’Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 70. See also Carolyne Larrington, *The Poetic Edda*, 3.

as Savage revels in his plan to destroy those in the southern lands, including the Pale Men.⁴⁴⁰

With regard to Lewis's Eddaic paraphrase, we should also take note of the character "Fenris." This will not be the last time Lewis incorporates "Fenris" into his fiction. Fenris, also known as Fenrir or Fenrisworlf, is the monster offspring of the giant Loki. He is the terrible wolf who will be loosed at Ragnarök and will swallow Odin, killing the all-god.⁴⁴¹ We find Fenris Ulf again in Lewis's U.S. edition of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* as a servant of the White Witch. In the first British edition, however, Lewis used Maugrim.⁴⁴² A second change to the American version of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* worth noting regards the Yggdrasil (the "World Ash Tree"). In the scene when Aslan challenges the Witch to tell him of the "Deep Magic," she lists three places in which the words of the Deep Magic are written: the "Table of Stone," the "fire stones," and, in the British version, the "Secret Hill." Lewis changed the "Secret Hill" in the American version to "the trunk of the World Ash Tree."⁴⁴³ Walter Hooper notes that with this change Lewis was noting his own appeal to Odin's self sacrifice for, "He hung upon the sacred tree Yggdrasil for nine days and nights, self-wounded by his spear."⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴⁰ PR, 98-101.

⁴⁴¹ Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 20.

⁴⁴² Peter J. Schakel, *The Way into Narnia*, 125.

⁴⁴³ LWW, 138.

⁴⁴⁴ Hooper, *Companion and Guide*, 413. Hooper also notes the line from *Hávamál*, one of the poems in *The Poetic Edda*, which Lewis quotes in his narrative poem *Dymer*.

We also meet Grimheld in this mountaintop scene with Savage. Grimheld is the “great big woman with yellow hair and high cheek bones”⁴⁴⁵ standing alongside Savage. Humanist refers to Grimheld as a Valkryie.⁴⁴⁶ Valkyries serve Valhalla; “they bring drink and see to the table and the ale cups.”⁴⁴⁷ They are “sent by Odin to every battle, where they choose which men are to die and they determine who has victory.”⁴⁴⁸ Lewis presents Grimheld in Valkyrie fashion, but gives her a curious name. Contrary to what Kathryn Lindskoog suggests in *Finding The Landlord*, that Grimheld was a “murderous character Lewis borrowed from *The Nibelungenlied*”—which is the Germanic counterpart to *The Saga of the Volsung*—Lewis more likely appropriated the name from the Norse version of the saga.⁴⁴⁹ In Norse mythology Grimheld was the beautiful, yet extremely evil, wife of King Gjuki as depicted in *The Saga of the Volsungs*.

Lewis read the saga, and indeed was quite familiar with it as it was one of the texts he translated from the original Old Norse while in the *Kolbitars* under the guidance of Tolkien.⁴⁵⁰ In a letter to Arthur Greeves dated November 10, 1914, Lewis tells Arthur how excited he was to pick up a copy of William Morris’s version of *Sigurd The Volsung*. Lewis describes it as “a narrative poem,

⁴⁴⁵ *PR*, 98.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴⁴⁷ Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 44.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁴⁹ Lewis, however, was familiar not only with *The Saga of the Volsung*, but with Wagner’s libretto *The Ring* cycle as well as *The Nibelungenlied*. New scholarship shows that Wagner’s *Ring* was in fact more heavily influenced by Old Norse mythology. Both Lewis and Tolkien enjoyed Wagner’s operas and attended them each year, though Tom Shippey suggests that Tolkien viewed Wagner as an amateur. The chronology debate continues as to which saga appeared first; the German *Nibelunglied* or the Old Norse versions. Shippey suggests the Old Norse version to have come first. See Shippey, *Roots and Branches*, 97-114.

dealing with Siegfried (=Sigurd) & Brunhilde, as described in the legends of Iceland, earlier than those of Germany.”⁴⁵¹ Then, later in life, Lewis writes Greeves again on June 26, 1927, and tells him about his Icelandic Club at Oxford with Tolkien and how they have read “the Younger Edda and the Volsung Saga.” With much delight Lewis writes:

*You will be able to imagine what a delight this is to me, and how, even in turning over the pages of my Icelandic Dictionary, the mere name of god or giant catching my eye will sometimes throw me back fifteen years into a wild dream of northern skies and Valkyrie music: only they are now even more beautiful seen thro’ a haze of memory—you know that awful poignant effect there is about impression *recovered* from one’s past.*⁴⁵²

As Vertue continues his story he tells of his conversation with Savage.

There are two points that need to be made here with regard to conceptual Northernness. First, speaking of the Pale Men, Savage says, “They are always thinking of happiness. They are scraping together and storing up and trying to *build*. Where will any of them be a hundred years hence? ... Can’t you see that is all bound to come to nothing in the end?”⁴⁵³ Savage unveils the Norse mindset of apocalypse. The Norse perspective of the apocalypse is important to note in that it determines the Norse lifestyle and view of heroism. Even though the Norse peoples viewed the end of time being a complete annihilation of everyone, even the gods, this view did not diminish their vitality. On the contrary, they maintained a high moral code and healthy optimism in the face of sure

⁴⁵¹ *TST*, 60.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 298.

⁴⁵³ *PR*, 100.

destruction.⁴⁵⁴ As we will see later in our discussion of William Morris's influence on Lewis, this viewpoint was integral to the development of the Northern melancholia that was so alluring to some Victorian writers and thematically in the Romantics as well. Lewis and Tolkien also adopted this Norse apocalyptic melancholia flavor in their work, yet with a distinct Christian turn. Tolkien refers to this turn as the *eucaastrophe*: "the Consolation of the Happy Ending,"⁴⁵⁵ which we will discuss in further detail below.

This observation, then, brings me to my second observation and that is of the aforementioned heroism. Savage continues his diatribe and says, "The excellent deed ... is eternal. The hero alone has this privilege, that death for him is not defeat, and the lamenting over him and the memory is part of the good he aimed for; and the moment of battle fears nothing from the future because it has already cast security away."⁴⁵⁶ In the third edition of *The Pilgrim's Regress* Lewis added running headlines to help readers better understand the text. In this section Lewis writes the headline, "Heroic Nihilism laughs at the less thoroughgoing forms of Tough-Mindedness."⁴⁵⁷ This provides apt insight into what Lewis was about in many of his later works, as well as reinforces the comment above about his own way of taking such heroic nihilism and reframing it with a more eucastraphic perspective. Icelandic literature's primary strength is its heroism, but a heroism that went beyond mere courage. The Icelandic-Norse hero understood the reason for his courage. "He [the hero] had a very definite

⁴⁵⁴ Gordon, "Introduction" in *An Introduction to Old Norse*, xxx-xxxi.

⁴⁵⁵ Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf*, 68.

⁴⁵⁶ *PR*, 100-101.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

conception of the evil of life, and he had courage to face it and overcome it; he had a creed of no compromise with anything that gave him shame or made him a lesser man.”⁴⁵⁸ The hero knew he could not preserve his body, but he believed he could maintain an undefeated spirit. The Norse heroic spirit never relented. Relenting meant to compromise and so they resisted in order to gain “satisfaction from fate.”⁴⁵⁹ The heroic self-will, then, grew according to the opposition. As the stakes rose, so did the resolve of the Norse hero. Lewis, here, presents the heroic spirit well but perhaps overstates—quite possibly for hyperbolic effect—the bloodthirsty nature of the Vikings. E.V. Gordon explains that death by sword was the ultimate evil to the Norse people. The violent culture helps explain why so many Norse authors framed their stories in feuds and battles. Gordon further explains, however, that “their motives for doing so are often misunderstood, for many critics have attributed to them a delight in battle and killing for its own sake; but, on the contrary, they saw in it the greatest evil, the one that required the most heroic power to turn into good. The author’s delight was only in the man who had this power.”⁴⁶⁰

Lest we think this heroic mindset paints too grim a picture, the lighter side of Norse heroism should be noted as well. According to Gordon, the hero was far from gloomy in their steadfastness when facing overwhelming odds. Rather, they “had the cheerfulness of a man who feels that he is a master of life.”⁴⁶¹ The Norse hero stood large as a character; the heroic literature depended upon stout heroes

⁴⁵⁸ Gordon, “Introduction” in *An Introduction to Old Norse*, xxx.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, xxxi.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*,

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, xxxii.

who displayed an unusual power of will, along with all their spiritual, intellectual, and physical instincts, in addition to their great passion. Such robust characters possessed this heroic mindset; the same mindset that Lewis pits against the “less thoroughgoing forms of Tough-Mindedness.” Both Lewis and Tolkien employed the Norse heroic idiom in their work, borrowing from the saga genre, yet turning the catastrophic element of it into the so-called “happy ending.”⁴⁶²

One final brief observation of the *Regress* regards form, specifically the divisions of the book itself. It consists of ten “books” or divisions, each book containing chapters, with the whole allegory totaling 79 chapters. The short “books” along with the short chapters give the *Regress* an episodic feel with each chapter building on the previous in strict chronology. One feels as if the chapters can be read aloud in daily succession just as Norse sagas might have been orally distributed over time.⁴⁶³ Furthermore, the sequence in which Lewis lays out his allegory rings with a saga echo. The term “saga” derives from the Norse verb *sedja*, “to say,” thus indicating the mode in which sagas were recorded but “very little about the form of what is told.”⁴⁶⁴ Norse saga literature appeared suddenly “at the end of the twelfth century, and their production ended abruptly in the early

⁴⁶² Richard Purtill attributes the fantasy heroism within the works of Lewis and Tolkien to the authors themselves, thus failing to notice the deep and central influence of Old Norse literature on the two Oxford writers. “Another aspect of the sort of heroism celebrated by Lewis and Tolkien is that it is preeminently a heroism for hard times and seemingly hopeless situations.” See Richard L. Purtill, *Lord of the Elves and Eldils*, 187-189.

⁴⁶³ See O’Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 44. “... events are told in the order in which they happen. They stand in a completely naturalistic chronological relationship to each other.”

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 44. When referencing “saga” here I am referring to “family saga” since they represent the bulk of the Icelandic sagas, “the most celebrated,” the “saga of the Icelanders.” See O’Donoghue, 22.

decades of the fourteenth century.”⁴⁶⁵ Though some debate about saga form exists, it is helpful for my observation on the *Regress* to note that Theodore Anderson suggests, “heroic poem and saga have a basic structural identity. They both adhere to a heroic literary pattern, from which they derive the same standard of values and the same sense of dramatic pitch.”⁴⁶⁶ For Anderson, the saga structure divides into a six-part structure: *introduction, conflict, climax, revenge, reconciliation, and aftermath*. In *Regress* we find John, the main protagonist, as a young boy incited into a quest by the vision of a beautiful island: *the introduction*. John grows into a young man and sets out to find his island; along the way he is sidetracked into various towns and deviations from his path: *the conflict*. John eventually finds his way to Mother Kirk, strips off his ragged clothes, jumps into a deep pool, and must swim beneath the underwater cavern to emerge on the other side: *the climax*.⁴⁶⁷ Once John emerges from the water he sees the landscape anew and must destroy, along with Vertue, the North and South Dragons: *the revenge*. John (and Vertue) then regress their journey, now noticing the true nature of the landscape and the related pitfalls: *the reconciliation* and *aftermath*. Though more can be said of *Regress*’s structure, for our limited space it is interesting, with

⁴⁶⁵ Byock, “Saga Form,” 153.

⁴⁶⁶ Theodore Murdock Andersson, *The Icelandic Family Saga*, 83. Byock contends that Andersson, as well as other saga scholars, offers a structure that fails to consider the cultural audience and local context. See Byock, “Saga Form, Oral Prehistory, and the Icelandic Social Context,” in *New Literary History*.

⁴⁶⁷ Lewis employs a similar story structure in *Perelandra*. Ransom must go beneath the surface of Perelandra to defeat the Un-man. He then reemerges weakened but victorious. His reemergence transitions, then, into the “Great Dance,” the Wagnerian operatic climax of the book. This story structure is indeed a common structure, one Lewis employed with great skill. He discusses this structure further in his essay “Is Theology Poetry?” In this essay Lewis shows the similarities between pagan myth and the Christian myth and how both follow the story pattern of descending then ascending. This motif Lewis expands in his chapter “The Grand Miracle” found in *Miracles*.

regard to the Northernness influence, to simply note the similarity in literary form.⁴⁶⁸

In conclusion, Lewis utilizes a Northernness infusion in *The Pilgrim's Regress* by way of direct lexical references, ironic use of caricature, and atmospheric description as a way to show conceptual contrasts and distinctions. He employs dwarves, giants, Valkyries, and paraphrases *The Poetic Edda*. The conceptual contrasts and distinctions are evident in the interplay of the Pale Men and Savage. The Pale Men, for example, think they live furthest north—a barren austere landscape—even though they know Savage lives even further in the fierce landscape of the mountains. Lewis paints the Pale Men in weak hues, even as their own dialog with John and Vertue shows them to be silly and meaningless.⁴⁶⁹ Savage builds an army perhaps in the same way Mussolini and Hitler built theirs, with the intention of crushing those with weak philosophical approaches to life. The Northernness echo adds a dramatic atmosphere that intensifies after John jumps into the pool of water and is, in a sense, baptized as he emerges on the other side of the deep underwater cavern.⁴⁷⁰ After he emerges from the water, the same geography through which he previously journeyed looks different—as if he sees it all for the first time. The North and South regions divide sharply, with a narrow way running between them—a purely Christian echo; Jesus describes his “Way” as narrow.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ It should be noted that Lewis carefully considered form, especially as it pertained to his fiction. Even as a young man of 16 Lewis noted how his libretto *Loki Bound* was Norse in content and Greek in form. See Lewis, *CLI*, 20.

⁴⁶⁹ *CL2*, 93.

⁴⁷⁰ *PR*, 169.

⁴⁷¹ Matthew 7:13-14

Though I have shown the Norse influence upon the *Regress* by a kind of semantic analysis, the strength of the allegory's Northernness comes in the Romantic notion of *Sehnsucht*—intense longing, and its consummation with the thing desired. This, however, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6 and section four of Chapter 8 when we look at *Sehnsucht* on its own, how it relates to conceptual-theological Northernness as well as its Romantic underpinning. That is not to say, however, that *Sehnsucht* does not relate at all to Lewisian Northernness. On the contrary, the very nature of Northernness offers readers a kind of beauty that incites wonder and elicits melancholic longing.

In section three, I will not only show possible semantic Northern echoes in *Perelandra*, but I will also discuss the very structure of the book's finale and how that structure was meant to engender a Romantic response. Lewis, however, pushes his prose beyond mere aesthetic experience and reveals his eucatastrophic vision of reality.

4.3 Twilight Theology of Ragnarök: Northernness in *Perelandra*

Though Lewis's cosmic trilogy—consisting of *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1943), and *That Hideous Strength* (1945)—according to Martha Sammons, contains lexical Northernness echoes in words “derived from Old Norse words for *horse*, *lowlands*, and *highlands*,”⁴⁷² the strength of

⁴⁷² Downing, *Planets in Peril*, 25. Here Downing references Martha Sammons's work *A Guide Through C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy* (1980), a work that has been updated to include Lewis's major works of fantasy fiction. See Martha C. Sammons, *A Far Off Country*, 330-331. Sammons suggests Lewis's “hross” stems from the Old Norse *hrossa*, the word for horse. The *hrossa* (the Icelandic horse) is quite common, found throughout Iceland and bred for show. As Sammons states, Lewis seems to be unaware of the similarity of his “hross” to the Icelandic *hrossa*. Sammons states *har* is an Old Norse prefix that means: high. According to E.V. Gordon *har*, as a noun means hair, as an adverb means high, lofty; tall. (Gordon, *Old Norse*, 352)

Northernness within the science fiction novels comes through sheer poetic atmosphere, literary style, and *eucatastrophe*. In this section, I will look at these Northern elements in Lewis's *Perelandra*, and highlight Northernness echoes in the famous final scene referred to as the "Great Dance." In *Perelandra* we more vividly see aesthetic (stylistic, atmospheric) Northernness than in the allegory, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, previously discussed. In *Perelandra* we find atmosphere and conceptual-theological elements more germane to the genre.

Lewis considered *Perelandra* influenced by his self-described Norse Complex, with special attention given to Wagner's operatic influence on the climax of the novel.⁴⁷³ As such, I will briefly point out potential semantic echoes in this passage, keeping in mind Lewis's stated literary origin of the work: "The starting point of the second novel, *Perelandra*, was my mental picture of the floating islands. The whole of the rest of my labours in a sense consisted in building up a world in which floating islands could exist."⁴⁷⁴ So, with Lewis's literary intent in mind, I want to look at three major aspects of Lewisian Northernness; first, the primordial nature of *Perelandra* and its Norse echo; next, I want to note the potential significance of the Green Lady's color and its qualities of movement coupled with the climactic Wagnerian nature of the final scene, the

Sammons also states *mit* is a suffix that means "low" in Old Norse, thus rendering the *hrossan* word *handramit* to be lowlands. However, the Old Norse-Icelandic word for "low," according to Cleassy and Vigfusson, is *hlóa* (v.) and/or *láger*, while "lowland" is rendered *láglandr*. (See "List of English Words: An Appendix" in Gudbrand, M.A. Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 10.)

⁴⁷³ *CLII*, 629.

⁴⁷⁴ Lewis, "Unreal Estates," 87. Lewis's comment here in this recorded discussion with novelist Kingsley Amis and science fiction writer Brian Aldiss not only reveals the genesis of *Perelandra* in his own imagination, but the entirety of the discussion should give any scholar pause before endeavoring to interpret Lewis texts with a predetermined agenda. See page 93 in the volume referenced above.

“Great Dance”; finally, I want to examine Lewisian Northernness as it relates to the worldview of William Morris.

Primordial Beauty

The primordial nature of Perelandra curiously finds an echo in the *Voluspá*, an “allusive and mysterious”⁴⁷⁵ example of *Eddaic* verse⁴⁷⁶ in Norse literature, which gives account of the primordial Norse cosmos as well as the Norse apocalypse. Perelandra is a planet of floating islands, a watery land of beautiful yet tempestuous oceans. Lewis describes the watery world through the eyes of Ransom riding the waves. Lewis uses the angular features of waves rising and falling, rising slants falling into horizontal lines, the lines heaving up and down. The waves were not akin to earthly waves in their size or ferocity; these waves rose up taking Ransom “till it seemed as if he must reach the burning dome of gold that hung above him instead of sky.” The waves “rushed furiously towards him” and there was “a wave ahead of him now so high that it was dreadful. . . . There was no land in sight.”⁴⁷⁷ Lewis’s watery planet, which the reader later discovers is just at the beginning of its existence with regard to its male and female inhabitants, is similar in form to landscapes described in the creation account.

⁴⁷⁵ O’Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 70.

⁴⁷⁶ In Old Norse-Icelandic literature two forms of poetry exist: Eddaic and Skaldic. Eddaic is “stanzaic, alliterative poetry on mythological and heroic subjects. . . . [it] is anonymous and virtually undatable, and concerns itself with the distant past, whether mythic or legendary, typically framing its material in dramatic, even theatrical monologues or exchanges; its speakers are gods, or giants, or heroes. See O’Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 62-63.

⁴⁷⁷ *P*, 31-32.

In the Pentateuch, for example, Genesis 1:2 describes the state of the earth during God’s creating of the heavens and the earth. “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”⁴⁷⁸ The “deep” comes from the Hebrew, meaning “the deep, depths, with the associative meanings of darkness and secrecy, controlled or inhabited by mysterious powers; ‘the depths of the earth’ is the abode of the dead.”⁴⁷⁹ The inferred parallel word “waters” literally refers to “water; in nature: ocean, lake, flood, river.”⁴⁸⁰ The primordial scene carries heavy *numinous* qualities of darkness, secrecy, mystery, and depths along with avian language that infuses the mysterious watery earth with haunting imagery of a spirit preparing to do work.

The primordial world of pagan Norse mythology carries strong Christian echoes with its own watery origins. According to “Vafþrúðnismál,” the third poem in *The Poetic Edda*, “the first giant body ... grew out of freezing spume of waves”⁴⁸¹ The lines read: *From Snow Storm / Waves sprang venom-cold drops: / that so grew, till a giant emerged.* For the Norse reader of the time, the water imagery found also in “Völuspá” carried familiar meaning. Along with the primordial element of water, there is the superstitious and mythical *Ginnungagap* “with the wildest of real oceans known to Norse sailors, the ‘vast chasm of the abyss’, *immane baratrum abyssi* ... that surged at the northern limits of their

⁴⁷⁸ Genesis 1:2, ESV.

⁴⁷⁹ Kohlenberger/Mounce, *Concise Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament*, n.p.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, n.p.

⁴⁸¹ Ursula Dronke, ed., *The Poetic Edda*, 33-34. I am using a second translation of *The Poetic Edda* here because Dronke’s translation also contains highly regarded critical commentary on the poems.

world, like a remnant of the bleak gulf at the state of time that the ancient myths told of.”⁴⁸² It is from the ocean the Norse earth emerges and, after Ragnarök, the second earth will rise from the depths of the ocean. The watery world of Perelandra remains iconic for Lewis readers and no doubt finds part of its imaginative genesis in Lewis’s own reading, and translating, of the *Voluspa*.

The Green Lady and Wagnerian Movement

It is also worth noting the possible parallel with the Green Lady, the Queen Tinidril,⁴⁸³ with the “eternal green” of the *Voluspa*. The Norse term for “green” is *gróa*, which also means: “(1) to grow (of vegetation); (2) to grow together, become joined to; (3) of wounds, to be healed.”⁴⁸⁴ The final definition for *gróa* can also be used relationally, “to be reconciled.”⁴⁸⁵ There is a motherly aspect to *gróa*. Tinidril refers to herself as *Mother*.

“I am the *Mother*,” she says to Ransom when he asks if she has a mother.⁴⁸⁶ She is the first, the Eve of Perelandra. The animals run to her, but why? Surely she is not their creator, but is her role Adamic—one of keeper, namer, or cultivator? “The beasts raced forward to greet her ... She turned as they approached her and welcomed them ... There was in her face an authority, in her caresses a condescension, which by taking seriously the inferiority of her adorers

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ See letter 276 To Dick Plotz, ‘Thain’ of the Tolkien Society of America 12 September 1965 in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Tolkien notes that Lewis’s Tor and Tinidril most likely echoes his own Tuor and Idril, who are parents of Eärendil, major characters in “The Fall of Gondor.”

⁴⁸⁴ Geir T. Zoega, *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*, 173.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ *P*, 53.

made them somehow less inferior.”⁴⁸⁷ In the Green Lady, Lewis attempted to combine elements of a Pagan goddess with the Blessed Virgin Mary, along with the obvious parallel of Eve.⁴⁸⁸

The use of green may, arguably, ring with echoes of pagan fertility along with a Christianized concept of nurture. The “eternal green” from the *Voluspa* also connects to the watery landscape of Perelandra. According to *The Poetic Edda*, upon the re-creation (second creation) of the earth, the earth rises and is “eternally green”: She sees come up / a second time / earth out of ocean.⁴⁸⁹ As I mentioned above, the Norse term for green means “to grow” or “to heal.” It is interesting to note Lewis’s use of green with “Green Lady,” Tinidril, in conjunction with the birth of a race and even all of creation on the planet of Perelandra. After Ragnarök the new earth rises from the water. The remaining Æsir, Thor’s sons Modi and Magni along with Mjollnir, Baldr and Hod, will gather on Iðavöllr, which some translate to “Splendour Plain,” “a field where Asgard was earlier.”⁴⁹⁰ From Iðavöllr they will watch the rising land emerge from the waters. Iðavöllr, a compound proper noun, utilizes the word Iða (pronounced ee-dtha) and translates “to eddy, or perpetual motion, restless motion, to move to and fro like mercury,”⁴⁹¹ which adds a visual moving element to the action of the water during the re-creation. This constant and restless eddying water present at the rise of the

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁸⁸ *CLII*, 496.

⁴⁸⁹ See “Seeress’s Prophecy” [Voluspa] in Byock, *The Poetic Edda*, 12; Stanza 59.

⁴⁹⁰ Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 77.

⁴⁹¹ Gleasby and Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 313.

new world in Norse mythology finds a visual echo in the constant movement of the floating islands in Perelandra.⁴⁹²

The Northernness in *Perelandra*—conceptually and within the aesthetic flow of the narrative itself—was influenced by Wagner’s libretto and his music; in particular, the final scene called the “Great Dance.” Wagner himself was greatly influenced by the Old Norse original sources just as Lewis was. Byock suggests Wagner’s deep love of Old Norse is clearly evident in the final section of the Ring cycle, *Goetterdaemmerung*, Wagner’s translation, which traditionally means “twilight of the gods.”⁴⁹³ It should be noted that though Wagner did draw from the German version of *The Saga of the Volsungs*, (known as *Nibelungenlied*), more recent scholarship indicates that Wagner’s use of the German version is overstated.⁴⁹⁴ Stanley R. Hauer, for example, points us to Wagner’s own autobiographical comments in which Wagner discloses that it was not until he dove deeper into the medieval myths of antiquity (i.e., Norse sagas) that he considered making Siegfried the hero of the Ring cycle.⁴⁹⁵ In this final cycle Wagner’s nineteenth century romanticism contrasts the original text in language

⁴⁹² I am indebted to Heather O’Donoghue for this insight into the eddying nature of the water at the beginning of the re-creation following the twilight of the gods.

⁴⁹³ Byock states that more recent translations translate to mean, “the fate of the gods.” See “Introduction” in *The Saga of the Volsungs*, 29.

⁴⁹⁴ See Byock in “Introduction” to *The Saga of the Volsungs*, p.26; see also Stanley R. Hauer, “Wagner and the ‘Völospá,’” *19th-Century Music* 15, no. 1 (July 1, 1991): 52–63, doi:10.2307/746298.

⁴⁹⁵ Hauer, “Wagner and the ‘Völospá,” Hauer further supports Byock’s assertion of the exaggerated influence of *Nibelungenlied*: “Instead of the familiar German account, Wagner chose the more remote Norse recension which retains elements of a primitive origin, at least when compared with the courtly *Nibelungenlied*. In the Northern recension, for example, a prior relationship between Siegfried and Brtinnhilde is frankly acknowledged; whereas in southern Germany, Siegfried’s adultery is prudishly suppressed, and his murder motivated by the comparatively feeble device of a quarrel between the wives of Siegfried and Gunther over first place in a court procession. Wagner’s choice was for the more rigorous—even if the less familiar—of the two traditions.” (p. 53)

form as well as the ending of the cycle itself. Unlike the original saga that has the hero, Sigurd (Siegfried in the German version), killed in bed, Wagner has him killed in the beauty and grandeur of the forest “providing the composer with an opportunity to have his music reflect forest and mountain scenes.”⁴⁹⁶ We need only look to at the “Great Dance” scene in Lewis’s *Perelandra* to see the parallel. Lewis’s operatic scene, in the Wagnerian fashion, takes place in the magnificence of mountains and a great valley. “Paradise itself and its two Persons, Paradise walking hand in hand, its two bodies shining in the light like emeralds yet not themselves too bright to look at, came in sight in the cleft of two peaks, and stood a moment with its male right hand lifted in regal and pontifical benediction, and they walked down and stood on the far side of the water.”⁴⁹⁷ Like Wagner, Lewis’s *Perelandra* is a mixture of Christian and pagan glory. Again we see, this time through Wagner’s translation of the Norse saga into the medium of music, Lewis’s Northernness emerge.⁴⁹⁸

Lewis’s “Great Dance” mimics Wagner’s musical atmosphere but instead of the downturn of tragedy, Lewis highlights hope and glory. “Wagner’s outlook is strongly conditioned by *Völuspá*,” writes Byock, “a powerful Eddic poem that presents all of cosmic history as inevitably leading to the cataclysmic doom.”⁴⁹⁹ Lewis utilizes the beauty and pageantry of pagan Northernness for his own more hopeful purposes. In the next section I want to look at another example of

⁴⁹⁶ Byock, *The Saga of the Volsungs*, 28.

⁴⁹⁷ *P*, 175.

⁴⁹⁸ For more on Lewisian Northernness in *Perelandra* see 8.2 in this thesis.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

hopefully apocalyptic Northernness found in the Lewis's final installment of the Chronicles of Narnia: *The Last Battle*.

4.4 Further Up: Northernness In The Last Battle

Next, I want to examine Northernness in Lewis's young adult fantasy novel *The Last Battle*. Like *Perelandra*, which is similar in genre with regard to fantastical elements, *The Last Battle* displays Norse echoes primarily in the way of semantic references, and subtler *numinous* forms—as the book was written for children. Of all the visible signs of Northernness in Lewis none show themselves as dynamic and full of conceptual-theological meaning as Lewis's portrayal of the end of days, of heaven, and re-creation. In discussing Lewisian heaven we must first consider the now popular and almost uniquely Lewisian phrase “Further up and further in!” The phrase surfaces in Chapter XIV “Night Falls on Narnia” of *The Last Battle*, which is the second to last chapter of the book. Lewis describes the Narnian apocalypse, as well as its re-creation, over two chapters at the close of the novel. Consider the following possible Northern parallels.

Chapter XIV opens with “the hugest of all giants” following Aslan's commands, making an end of the celestial bodies in Narnia. First, the giant, named Father Time,⁵⁰⁰ determined by the children to be standing “on the high

⁵⁰⁰ Michael Ward makes a strong case for Father Time as a representation of Saturn, the Roman mythological god, when he points to Lewis's early typescript draft of *The Silver Chair* where Lewis wrote: “That is the god Saturn, who once was a King in Over-land. . . . They say he will wake at the end of the world.” (Ward, *Planet Narnia*, 200). Ward points out that the typescript was not amended so Lewis must have changed it before the final publication. Ward further suggests the change was made from Saturn to Father Time so as to “keep his planetary theme more carefully hidden.” Ward's Lewisian code hypothesis notwithstanding, I would simply like to suggest that even if Lewis did wish to camouflage his so-called greater planetary theme, it does not subtract from an overlaying Norse giant motif throughout *The Silver Chair*. The Narniad is known

moorlands that stretch away to the North beyond the River Shribble,”⁵⁰¹ wipes the stars from the sky. This is the same giant Jill Pole and Eustace Scrubb encounter beneath the northern wasteland beyond Ettinsmoor on their way to Harfang (a French term meaning “snowy owl”)⁵⁰²—the home of the “gentle giants”—in *The Silver Chair*.⁵⁰³

It is useful to note, before moving on with the apocalypse in *The Last Battle*, not only the connection of the giant, Father Time, but the dominant giant motif found throughout *The Silver Chair*, and its connection to Norse mythology, as well as a brief remark about the novel’s Norse-inflected episode regarding Puddleglum’s heroic speech. I will begin with the latter since it does not directly relate to the theme of apocalypse.

The Norse-inflected episode in *The Silver Chair* comes in Chapter Twelve: The Queen of Underland when Puddleglum gives a heroic speech. He throws off the witch’s enchantment, defies her, and commits himself to his friends, his homeland Narnia, and Aslan, though it will surely cost him his life. His speech exudes the kind of heroism for which the Norse warriors were known. As discussed earlier (see section 3.4), the Norse “theory of courage” did not allow for despair, only fight; a fighting spirit that stemmed from a deep and loving allegiance. It can be argued that Puddleglum’s speech is directly influenced by the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Battle of Mardon* in which Saxon warriors, led by their

for its supposed “jumble of unrelated mythologies” (see Sayers, *Jack*, 312) so it is not surprising that Lewis might be using several mythological allusions to suit his own purposes.

⁵⁰¹ C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, 149 (hereafter *LB*).

⁵⁰² Oxford Dictionaries. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/translate/english-french/snowy-owl> (accessed March 07, 2016).

⁵⁰³ C.S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair*, 128 (hereafter *SC*).

commander Byrhtnoth, confront the “Northmen [invaders] under Anlaf, at Maldon in Essex, in 991,”⁵⁰⁴ and fight for their homeland. The Vikings offer to pay off the Saxons, but Byrhtnoth defies them, inciting a fight. During the battle Byrhtnoth dies, but his men keep fighting. Here the Saxon's show true heroism and, even in the face of sure defeat, allow their actions to prove their allegiance through their love and obedience to their lord. Tolkien describes their heroism as such: "In their situation heroism was superb. Their duty was unimpaired by the error of their master ... [consequently] it is the heroism of obedience and love not of pride or willfulness that is the most heroic and the most moving."⁵⁰⁵ The Maldon echo also rings in *Perelandra* when we find Ransom, while fighting the Un-Man in *Perelandra*, “shouting a line out of *The Battle of Maldon*.”⁵⁰⁶ Lewis also references Maldon in his essay “Talking About Bicycles,” in which he makes the point, among others, that it is important to distinguish between Enchantment from Re-enchantment. The poet who wrote *The Battle of Maldon* is communicating Re-enchantment. “You see in every line that the poet knows ... the horrible thing he is writing about,” writes Lewis. “He celebrates heroism but he has paid the proper price for doing so. He sees the horror and yet sees also the glory.”⁵⁰⁷ The Re-enchantment Lewis discusses here we see quite literally in Puddleglum as he shakes off the enchantment of the witch and gives a heroic speech: “I’m on

⁵⁰⁴ C. S. Lewis, *Present Concerns*, 70.

⁵⁰⁵ “Tolkien: Archetype and Word,” accessed September 23, 2016, <http://www.crosscurrents.org/tolkien.htm>.

⁵⁰⁶ P, 132. See other references to *The Battle of Maldon* in Lewis’s *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*, 121; 218; “Shelley, Dryden, and Mr Eliot” in *SLE*, 187 (untranslated epigraph, *Maldon* 55-8: “To us it would be shameful / that you with our coin should get away / without a fight, now you thus far / into our homeland have come.)

⁵⁰⁷ Lewis, *Present Concerns*, 70.

Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia. ... We're leaving your court at once and setting out in the dark to spend our lives looking for Overland. Not that our lives will be very long, I should think; but that's small loss if the worlds as dull a place as you say."⁵⁰⁸ Puddleglum embodies the Norse code of courage through the heroic act: putting himself at risk, refusing to give up hope, and facing sure death in order to do what is needed.

Next, I want to examine the dominant giant motif found throughout *The Silver Chair*, and its connection to Norse mythology. The land of the giants known as Ettinsmoor lies to the north of Narnia. Before the mountains, which lay farthest north, the moors of Ettinsmoor stretch out; a desolate land uninhabited by humans.⁵⁰⁹ The description of the land hearkens back to "North Beyond the Canyon" in *The Pilgrim's Regress*. It is "vast and lonely,"⁵¹⁰ with a strange foreboding quality until finally giving way to the fierce grandeur of mountains: "... they looked down from the top of the cliffs at a river running below them from west to east. It was walled in by precipices on the far side as well as on their own, and it was green and sunless, full of rapids and waterfalls. The roar of it shook the earth even where they stood."⁵¹¹ The name Ettinsmoor is a compound proper name using "ettins" and "moor." "Ettins" traces its origins to the Old Norse *jötunn* (or *thursar*) from the Anglo-Saxon words *eoten*, *ent*, and *entise*,

⁵⁰⁸ *TSC*, 156-157.

⁵⁰⁹ See "Map of the Wild Lands of the North," in the front matter of *SC*; and 72.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72

⁵¹¹ *TSC*, 76-77.

meaning “a giant.”⁵¹² Giants hold a central role within Norse mythology. It is from the dead corpse of the giant Ymir the earth was made:

From Ymir’s flesh the earth was made,
and from his blood, the sea,
mountains from his bones, trees from his hair,
and from his skull, the sky.

And from his eyelashes the cheerful gods
made the earth in the middle for men;
and from his brain were the hard tempered clouds
all made.⁵¹³

The giant home is called *Jotunheim* (Giant Land) or Utgard, which means “Outer Enclosure.” Lewis’s Ettinsmoor curiously echoes the Norse *Jotunheim* as an “outer land” only inhabited by giants and from which a possible uprising may emerge: Lewis’s Earthmen against Narnia,⁵¹⁴ and in Norse mythology with the giants rising against the Æsir (gods) at Ragnarök.⁵¹⁵ Furthermore, Lewis describes the Earthmen as an eclectic brood, “from little gnomes barely a foot high to stately figures taller than men.”⁵¹⁶ The Norse giants also varied in sizes, some were human-like in stature, and the *Edda* describes them as “complex social beings ... Sometimes they are oafish, troll-like beings, but other times giant women are of such beauty in the eyes of the gods that they wish to marry them.”⁵¹⁷ As previously noted, Lewis’s Ettinsmoor lies to the north of Narnia, and Underland

⁵¹² Gudbrand, M.A. Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 328.

⁵¹³ From “Grimnar’s Sayings” in *The Poetic Edda*, 57, stanzas 40-41.

⁵¹⁴ *SC*, 137.

⁵¹⁵ Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 71-72,

⁵¹⁶ *SC*, 123.

⁵¹⁷ Byock in “Introduction” to *The Prose Edda*, xxiv.

lies beneath the surface of Narnia;⁵¹⁸ it is where the Green Witch builds her army of Earthmen. There is also an “underworld” in Norse cosmology.⁵¹⁹ Might a link exist between the construction of Narnia and the Norse cosmos? To gain further insight let us briefly sketch the Norse cosmos.

The world ash tree, Yggdrasil, is a complex symbol⁵²⁰ of the Norse cosmology; a symbol Lewis knew well enough to have claimed scholarly knowledge of the subject. “I knew my way about the Eddaic cosmos, could locate each of the roots of the Ash and knew who ran up and down it. . . . I could have faced a pretty stiff examination in my subject.”⁵²¹ Indeed, we find Lewis’s familiarity and apparent affection for the Norse cosmological symbol on display in editorial changes he made to *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. Lewis made two changes worth noting here. The first regards Lewis’s Eddaic paraphrase in *The Pilgrim’s Regress* discussed above. We should also take note of the Norse character “Fenris.” This will not be the last time Lewis incorporates “Fenris” into his fiction. Fenris, also known as Fenrir or Fenrisworf, is the monster offspring of the giant Loki. He is the terrible wolf who will be loosed at Ragnarök and will swallow Odin, killing the all-god.⁵²² We find Fenris Ulf again in Lewis’s U.S. edition of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* as a servant of the White Witch. In the first British edition, however, Lewis used Maugrim.⁵²³ A second change to the American version of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* worth noting

⁵¹⁸ *SC*, 123.

⁵¹⁹ Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 121.

⁵²⁰ O’Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 201.

⁵²¹ Lewis, *SBJ*, 165.

⁵²² Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 20.

⁵²³ Peter J. Schakel, *The Way into Narnia*, 125.

regards the Yggdrasil (the “World Ash Tree”). In the scene when Aslan challenges the Witch to tell him of the “Deep Magic,” she lists three places in which the words of the Deep Magic are written: the “Table of Stone,” the “fire stones,” and, in the British version, the “Secret Hill.” Lewis changed the “Secret Hill” in the American version to “the trunk of the World Ash Tree.”⁵²⁴ Walter Hooper notes that with this change Lewis was noting his own appeal to Odin’s self sacrifice for, “He hung upon the sacred tree Yggdrasil for nine days and nights, self-wounded by his spear.”⁵²⁵ We find the ash tree once more in *The Last Battle* when King Tirian gives himself up for murdering a man who was beating a Narnian horse. The Calormenes tie him “against an ash tree.”⁵²⁶ In both cases, with Odin and with Tirian, the ash tree becomes a symbolic place of self-sacrifice.

Lewis’s knowledge of the Norse *axis mundi* may, indeed, have significantly influenced the Narnia cosmology. Consider the Yggdrasil structure:

Above the branches and foliage of the tree are the heavens, formed from the skull of the primordial giant Ymir ... In the heavens, Sun and Moon are pulled by chariots and chased by wolves ... Below the tree’s branches lies Asgard, the home of the gods and the prophetic women called norns. From Asgard, the Rainbow Bridge, Bifrost, leads down to Midgard (Middle Earth), the home of men. A wall encloses Midgard, separating it from the outer region, Utgard, the land of the giants. ... Below is the underworld, containing monsters, serpents, and a great hound, as well as the realm of the dead and seething rivers.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁴ *LWW*, 138.

⁵²⁵ Hooper, *Companion and Guide*, 413. Hooper also notes the line from *Hávamál*, one of the poems in *The Poetic Edda*, which Lewis quotes in his narrative poem *Dymer*.

⁵²⁶ *TLB*, 34.

⁵²⁷ Byock, “Introduction” in *The Prose Edda*, xxvii. It should be noted that continuing debate surrounds the actual geography of the Norse cosmological symbol, Yggdrasil. For another view see Carolyne Larrington in “Introduction” to *The Poetic Edda*, xiii-xiv.

Observe how Narnia geography reflects the geography of Midgard, with Lewis's Ettinsmoor, the land of giants, located on the borderland of Narnia just as Utgard, the land of giants, lies on the outer region of the Norse cosmology. Likewise, compare Narnia's underworld where Jill and Eustace discovered a sleeping Father Time (giant) and "dozens of strange animals lying on the turf, either dead or asleep ... mostly of a dragonish or bat-like sort,"⁵²⁸ with the Norse underworld where "the huge serpent Nidhogg, lying among smaller, gnawing snakes too numerous to count"⁵²⁹ makes its home.

So far Narnia geography, arguably, mirrors two of the three root destinations of the ash tree Yggdrasil.⁵³⁰ There is Middle Earth (Midgard) where one root extends into Utgard. In this world both humans and giants co-exist—the giants living on the borderlands. This root destination mirrors Narnia, and its various realms, as a type of middle earth, with the giant land of Ettinsmoor lying on the border. There is also an underworld where another root extends. As noted above, it is home to dark creatures, giants, and dark elves. Similarities can be seen in Lewis's Underland where the Gnomes live.⁵³¹ They are an eclectic band of odd giant-like creatures living amongst a great sleeping giant and dozens of dragon-type creatures.

⁵²⁸ *SC*, 126.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁵³⁰ Each root leads to a different world. A well waters each root. In Asgard the Well of Urd feeds the ash tree. A root does, however, lead to the frost giants in Utgard and the Well of Mimir feeds that root—this is the well where Odin famously exchanged one of his eyes for wisdom. Utgard and Midgard share the same geographic location, but the root leads to Utgard rather than Midgard. There is speculation with regard to the exact location of these two "realms" along with the placement of the sea. For more, see Byock, "Appendix 1," *The Prose Edda*.

⁵³¹ *SC*, 122-135.

The third root destination of Yggdrasil brings us back to our initial query into Lewis's *The Last Battle*, for it is this root that leads to Asgard, the great hall of slain warriors and the home of Odin.⁵³² Asgard, however, is not quite located in the branches of the great ash tree but according to the *Prose Edda*, this root leads to heaven.⁵³³ Asgard sits just close enough for the goat that stands on the roof of Valhalla to eat its branches. Asgard connects to Midgard via a rainbow bridge, known as the Bifrost. The Æsir travel Bifrost daily and the red color in the rainbow is fire, which repels the frost giants and the mountain giants—one of the many safeguards of the Norse heaven.⁵³⁴ Asgard, however, only represents one “world” or “realm” in the Norse heaven.

Keeping the Norse heaven in mind, let us return to Father Time's reawakening in *The Last Battle*. He blows his horn—a “high and terrible, yet of a strange, deadly beauty”⁵³⁵—and the night sky fills with fire as the stars fall to the ground.⁵³⁶ In Narnia, however, stars are people.⁵³⁷ Therefore, the landscape shown from the “crowd of stars behind them” casting a “fierce, white light over their shoulders.”⁵³⁸ The starlight was so strong that it lit up the Northern Moors, where

⁵³² Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 120-121.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁵³⁵ *LB*, 150.

⁵³⁶ Ward frames this scene with gloom and disaster. He writes that Father Time was given free rein to “wreak literal disaster.” (Ward, *Narnia*, 200) It should also be noted that though Lewis walks the reader through an apocalyptic scene, beauty persists throughout: the horn blow possesses a strange beauty, the sky was filled with shooting stars that looked like “silver rain,” the spreading blackness of the night sky was as wonder filled as it was terrible, and the scene climaxes with all the stars standing on the ground with them, their light illuminating the forest all around them. It could be argued that though apocalyptic in nature, the event occurred with a *numinous* beauty germane to Lewis. See *LB*, 150-151.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

the giant stood. Myriad beasts walked out from the forests, past the children and toward Aslan. The beasts that loved Aslan carried on through the doorway behind him. The beasts that looked at Aslan with fear and hatred carried on into Aslan's shadow that cast off to the left of the open doorway. Then, Roonwit the Centaur passed the children and shouted, "Further in and higher up!"⁵³⁹ The children and remaining animals followed and the sun subsumed the moon, gathering into one massive ball of flame. "Then Aslan said, 'Now make an end.' The giant threw his horn into the sea. Then he stretched out one arm—very black it looked, and thousands of miles long—across the sky till his hand reached the Sun. He took the Sun and squeezed it in his hand as you would squeeze an orange. And instantly there was total darkness."⁵⁴⁰ Notice the stark similarity in *The Voluspa* ("The Seeress's Prophecy") in the description of the final scene of Ragnarök:

The sun starts to blacken,
land sinks into sea,
the radiant stars
recoil from the sky.
Fume rage against fire,
forester of life,
the heat soars high
against heaven itself.⁵⁴¹

The dramatic end to Narnia continues and is equaled only by its glorious rebirth, emphasized in the constant refrain, "Further up and further in!" This refrain is perhaps the most notable Norse echo in these final chapters of Lewis's novel. First, Roonwit shouts it and gallops on toward the West. The "call" sent a

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 154.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid, 157.

⁵⁴¹ Larrington, *The Poetic Edda*, 11, stanza 57.

“tingling” through the children. Next, at the close of Chapter XIV, Aslan himself roars, “Come further in! Come further up!”⁵⁴² In the following chapter, titled “Further Up and Further In,” the children and the animals shout this many times as they enter the new Narnia.⁵⁴³ Indeed, this proclamation has arguably become one of Lewis’s most recognizable mantras, quoted by scholars and laymen alike.⁵⁴⁴ It is, in many ways, the embodiment of Lewis’s quest to find where all the beauty came from, for, in this final scene in the final installment of the Narniad, Aslan reveals to the children and the animals and the reader that even though his story is coming to a close, it is just the beginning for those who enter into Aslan’s new Narnia. This “beginning” hearkens to the cosmological restart noted above in *Perelandra* as Ransom inquires about his own planet’s moral failure at creation and its subsequent placement in the broader scope of the universe.⁵⁴⁵ Lewis’s depiction of an end giving way to a beginning not only carries Christian overtones, but, as discussed in the previous section, Norse echoes as well. “Yet this is not the end,” writes H. Davidson, “Earth will rise again from the waves, fertile green, and fair as never before, cleansed of all its suffering and evil. . . . Such is the picture of the beginning and the end of the world of gods and

⁵⁴² *LB*, 158.

⁵⁴³ The repetitive nature of the mantra echoes with the Great Dance scene in *Perelandra*, which was discussed earlier as emblematic of Lewisian Northernness and a direct echo of Wagner’s *The Ring*. See 4.3 of this thesis.

⁵⁴⁴ See for example pastor and author John Piper’s study guide with a section titled “Further Up and Further In” in, *Battling Unbelief Study Guide*, 16. See also Carol Zaleski, “‘Further Up and Further In!’: C.S. Lewis on Heaven,” *Communio: International Catholic Review*, no. 42 (Spring 2015): 26–35. In this example Zaleski uses the Lewisian mantra “Further up and Further In!” but only as a launching point for her article on the topic of heaven.

⁵⁴⁵ *P*, 182-183.

men.”⁵⁴⁶ This picture of a new heaven and a new earth unveils Lewis’s concept of Joy with a fresh perspective.⁵⁴⁷

Early in Lewis’s life Joy came to him in stabs, pangs of nostalgia that pointed to something beyond the desiring.⁵⁴⁸ Now a mature novelist and Christian, Lewis, in *The Last Battle*, reveals the mystery of Christian Joy as he sees it unfolding into complete newness. We find a similar vision of Joy at the close of *Perelandra* in the “Great Dance” where creation begins on this strange beautiful planet drenched in light, and song, and worship, and Joy.⁵⁴⁹ Furthermore, in *Till We Have Faces* we find two overt uses and expression of Lewis’s notion of Joy. The first depicts Orual finding her sister Psyche on the mountain when she believed her dead. After the Joyous scene when Orual sees her sister for the first time, Orual must make her way across the river. Psyche guides her by saying, “A little further up, Orual.” Orual’s fording of the river begins her ascent into the Psyche’s palace, which Orual cannot see.⁵⁵⁰ The second is the final scene of the mythic novel, which ends with Orual and Psyche awaiting the god of the mountain, and the anticipation overwhelming Orual with a *numinous* sense of unearthly Joy.⁵⁵¹ Lewis’s phrase “Further up and further in!” invites the reader to explore heaven itself. The new Narnia opens up before the children. They do not recognize it at first, but as they travel further in they realize they are seeing Narnia

⁵⁴⁶ H. Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, 38.

⁵⁴⁷ For more on Lewisian Joy as it relates to his language of beauty, see Chapter 5 and 8.3 of this thesis.

⁵⁴⁸ *SBJ*, 78.

⁵⁴⁹ See 8.3 of this thesis.

⁵⁵⁰ *TWF*, 103.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 307.

again, but with a fresh perspective.⁵⁵² Lewis’s power of mythmaking here brings the reader into the collision of worlds; a device common to fairy stories.⁵⁵³

The Northernness echo for this mantra appears to be quite strong. In *The Prose Edda* Snorri Sturluson describes heaven like this: “It is said that a second heaven lies to the south and above this heaven. It is called Andlang [Long and Wide]. Still *further up*, there is a third heaven called Víðbláin [Wide Blued]. We believe that this region is in heaven, but now only the light-elves live there.”⁵⁵⁴ In describing the upper regions of Yggdrasil, Sturluson states that in “the upper reaches shine the heavenly bodies, and some of them—the ones that appear to the naked eye remain steady—were thought to be *furthest up* in the heavens, while the heavenly bodies that were visibly moving were thought to be lower in the sky.”⁵⁵⁵ Furthermore, John Lindow notes that Andlang is the second of three heavens in Sturluson’s *Gylfaginning* and “appears to mean ‘stretched out’ but might conceivably derive from a longer form meaning ‘spiritual heaven.’”⁵⁵⁶ Lindow

⁵⁵² *LB*, 167. The High King remarks: “It reminds me of somewhere but I can’t give it a name. Could it be somewhere we once stayed for a holiday when we were very, very small.” Lewis echoes himself here as the new Narnia embodies his specialized sense of Joy. “All joy reminds.” (*SBJ*, 78) Lewis is describing the point in time in which the thing longed for becomes a reality. When a person becomes aware of their “fragmentary and phantasmal nature” and is confronted by the reality of a reunion with that which can annihilate them. See *SBJ*, 22.

⁵⁵³ Matthew Dickerson and David O’Hara, *From Homer to Harry Potter*, 39-42.

⁵⁵⁴ Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 29.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Appendix 1, 119 (italics added). The “further up” region is called Alfheim or Elf World. “The people called the light elves live there, but the dark elves live down below the earth. ... The light elves are more beautiful than the sun.” (Snorri Sturluson, *Edda*, 28) Elven influence marks modern examples of Northernness. It should also be noted that Tolkien’s “west-elves” are referred to as the Eldar, from which Tolkien suggests that Lewis formulated his own *Eldil* (*P*, 166), found in the cosmic trilogy, further suggesting that Lewis, too, employs the divine characters. See Tolkien, “Appendix F” in *The Return of the King*. See also Lindow, *Norse Mythology*, 109-110.

⁵⁵⁶ John Lindow, *Norse Mythology*, 58. Lindow also notes the possibility of Andlang and Víðbláin being places conjured by the historian Sturluson. There is, however, little evidence for this view. Andlang and Víðbláin are both mysteriously mythical expression of deep reaches of heaven.

also notes Víðbláin, or Wide Blued, as being the third heaven and home to the light-elves.⁵⁵⁷

It seems highly probable that, with Lewis's vast knowledge of Norse mythology and his familiarity with Yggdrasil (as previously discussed), he appropriated "further up" from the Norse cosmological heavens for his characters in *The Last Battle* (as well as other works)⁵⁵⁸ as they travel further into the new Narnia, or heaven. With "further up" being a geographical area in the Norse heaven, Lewis's new or re-created Narnia finds intensified meaning. Luis Giussani also references this concept of "further up" when he positions the world as a *logos* to be encountered; from his encounter a voice "draws him towards a meaning which is further on, further up – *ana*." *Ana* is the Greek expression for "up."⁵⁵⁹ "The new one [Narnia] was a deeper country; every rock and flower and blade of grass looked as if it meant more."⁵⁶⁰

Just as the Norse "further up" is a place flooded with light and inhabited by mysterious, even mythical, elves, so too does Narnia open up even more magical than before: the landscape shows itself afresh even as the children, mythical creatures, and animals discover the rules of travel changed the further in they venture.⁵⁶¹ They also discover renewed strength; they are not tired as they run.⁵⁶² They find the magical ability to run up the falling waters of a "Waterfall"

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 315.

⁵⁵⁸ Mr. Beaver beckons the children through a whisper, "Further in, come further in." before he talks with them. See *LWW*, 72.

⁵⁵⁹ Luigi Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, 109. For more on the Romantic notion of the world as a volume to be read by human sense, see chapter three of this thesis.

⁵⁶⁰ *LB*, 171.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

that, as they “went on, up and up, with all kinds of reflected light to be made of light—which is itself a possible Norse allusion to the rainbow bridge Bifrost which connects the Norse middle earth to Asgard.”⁵⁶³ The faun Mr. Tumnus said, “The further up and the further in you go, the bigger everything gets. The inside is larger than the outside.”⁵⁶⁴ Lucy described this new and improved Narnia like this: “This is still Narnia, and, more real and more beautiful than the Narnia down below, just as *it* was more real and more beautiful than the Narnia outside the Stable door! I see . . . world within world, Narnia within Narnia.”⁵⁶⁵ Perhaps the Unicorn describes it best: “I have come home at last! This is my real country. I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for my whole life, though I never knew it till now. The reason why we loved the old Narnia is because it looked a little like this. Bree-hee-hee! Come further up, come further in!”⁵⁶⁶

The new Narnia is indeed their destination, but it is a destination that is not static. Rather, it is a heavenly destination with no limitation to its size and scope. Like *Perelandra*'s “Great Dance,” it is alive itself and beckons the travelers to explore every nook and cranny of the new world. Is this new Narnia a symbol of heaven or God himself? Perhaps it is a bit of both. Either way we find the new Narnia curiously present in Psyche's mountain of doom—the place she had waited for her entire life; the place where all the beauty came from.⁵⁶⁷ As it so happens, this place is a living, never-ending place.

⁵⁶³ Ibid., 173.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 180.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 180.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 171.

⁵⁶⁷ Here I am references the similarity of place in *TWF* (102-116), *P* (176-190), and *LB* (161-184). In each story a “place” of utter Joy emerges signifying communion, emblematic of the

In the last two sections we have examined two examples of Northernness within the Lewis corpus that curiously end in euphoric scenes of Joy. The imagery of landscape and otherworldliness moves powerfully in both final scenes and does its work in moving the reader along a deeply aesthetic experience. Lewis once remarked to his friend Arthur Greeves that a story may be full of “ridiculous improbabilities, but how little that matters when a book has got atmosphere and gusto.”⁵⁶⁸ In these examples Lewis draws upon his love of Northernness as he creates grand scenes of iconic wonder and showcases his profound ability to create atmosphere. Furthermore, we find Lewis also employing Northernness in a conceptual-theological manner. The seeming discordant use of pagan mythological elements and, perhaps more stunningly, worldview, does not detract from Lewis’s storytelling ability; nor does it pose difficulties with Lewis’s Christian faith. What we find, then, is a writer utilizing the full use of his literary tools. Lewis draws on the Northernness that shaped him, that inspired him via its sheer beauty, and its compelling questing element that drew him into such tales in his youth.⁵⁶⁹

I have examined Northernness first, here, for two reasons. First, I have examined Northernness due to the historic neglect of it within Lewis scholarship. I

source of desire, for which beauty is the catalyst, and embodying the meeting place of divine and human, i.e., home.

⁵⁶⁸ *CL2*, 487.

⁵⁶⁹ Carnell, *Shadow*, 41; 78-90. See also 2.2 and 3.2 of this thesis.

wanted to show how significant an oversight this is, and to start what I hope is the beginning of further examination of Lewisian Northernness within the academic community. What I have offered here is meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive. Second, I wanted to begin the analysis of Lewis's language of beauty with what I believe operates as its framework. Northernness offers us more than mere lexical echoes, such as use of Old Norse language and imagery echoes. Lewis draws upon the *feeling* that Northernness bestows upon literature by way of literary atmosphere. Lewis also utilizes Northernness to create a conceptual-theological framework in terms of juxtaposing the hopelessness of the Old Norse worldview with *eucatastrophe*.

With these two aspects of Northernness in view, I want to use the next two chapters to further develop Lewis's language of beauty by examining the thematic elements of the aesthetic progression inherent in Lewis's literature: 1) the encounter of beauty (via an *objet d'art* or natural phenomenon) which incites 2) Joy, as an aesthetic gasp, which awakens 3) *Sehnsucht*. I will discuss the first two elements of this progression within the same chapter, followed by a chapter examining *Sehnsucht*. I will then analyze Lewis's use of the *numinous* as one of the modes in which he communicates his language of beauty. I will then, in a subsequent chapter, offer specific literary examples of Lewis's language of beauty.

Chapter 5: Pangs of Delight

The Vitality of Joy as Aesthetic Jubilation

“Joy has the very taste of primary truth.”

—*J.R.R. Tolkien, On Fairy-stories*⁵⁷⁰

5.1 Introduction

I want to begin this chapter with a brief word on the apologetic significance of discussing Lewis’s language of beauty and the aesthetic notion of Joy, as Lewis uses it. An apologetic wormhole, so to speak, has arisen in recent years that allows a discussion of Lewis’s language of beauty to thrive. This apologetic wormhole emerges, notably, via concessions of academic atheists⁵⁷¹ and quantum theorists.⁵⁷² Discussions on what beauty suggests and how so many of the unanswerable questions of the universe fall into the category of aesthetics and theology continue to emerge. Theoretical physicist Alan Lightman, for example, who has served on the faculties of Harvard and MIT, believes in the immutability of the central doctrine of science. This unspoken doctrine states, “All properties and events in the physical universe are governed by laws, and those laws are true at every time and place in the universe.”⁵⁷³ Such a doctrine does not allow for a God “that intervenes after the cosmic pendulum has been set in

⁵⁷⁰ Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-Stories*, 78.

⁵⁷¹ See Alan Lightman, *The Accidental Universe: The World You Thought You Knew*.

⁵⁷² See Frank Wilczek, *A Beautiful Question: Finding Nature’s Deep Design*.

⁵⁷³ Lightman, *Universe*, 39.

motion.⁵⁷⁴ Lightman believes, therefore, that orthodox religions, which assert the existence of an interventionist God—such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism—are not compatible with science.

But even Lightman notes that dismissing orthodox religion in such a way is not so simple. He admits accomplished men and women of science, working at world-class institutions, firmly hold orthodox religious beliefs. Furthermore, unanswerable questions exist. For example, Lightman admits to having trouble trying to explain the *numinous*, such as the haunting feelings one has after reading a novel.⁵⁷⁵ Lightman cannot explain why humans possess the irrepressible desire an adult has to sacrifice their own life for their child's. Lastly, he cannot explain the ambiguous ethical dilemmas like stealing to feed one's family. These unanswerable questions emerge from the fields of humanities, namely aesthetics, morality, and philosophy. They are questions that relate to the innerscape (or inner experiences) of a person.⁵⁷⁶

When we examine beauty as apologetic, we are probing the area of humanities Lightman refers to when he notes the inexplicable nature of the *numinous*. Beauty, therefore, carries an intrinsic mystery primarily because of our experience of it. We encounter an object, person, or event that possesses a quality we refer to as beauty, and then that encounter incites certain emotional, spiritual, or psychological responses—responses that emerge from our innerscape.⁵⁷⁷ I am suggesting that, in the Lewisian language of beauty, such encounters spark an

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 117.

aesthetic progression: encounter of an object, followed by the aesthetic gasp or “Joy,” concluding with the awakening of *Sehnsucht* or “intense desire” or longing. Such a progression contributes to our understanding of how beauty affects us as human beings, and also helps establish a foundational framework for a working phenomenological apologetic. The questions that affect our innerscape emerge from our experiences with the physical world in its various manifestations.⁵⁷⁸

In this project we are looking at one of the areas Lightman suggests to be fair game for the mysterious—the unanswerable questions of life, such as the source of beauty. We are examining how the landscape and certain artistic expressions by C.S. Lewis, namely the novel, poetry, and even rhetorical non-fiction, can work on our innerscapes, providing clues concerning a divine “Being,” who Lewis referred to as the “One Thing,” or God. Indeed, Lightman professes to be an atheist, but despite his unbelief in the God of orthodox religion, he leaves room for the transcendent.⁵⁷⁹ Beauty as apologetic, therefore, provides a unique and powerful portal into the twenty-first century milieu because it stems from a discipline of inquiry left open by even the strongest atheists, such as Lightman. Beauty possesses profound value because it prompts faith in the possibility of the unknown, the transcendent, the Divine; faith allows the subject to fully engage “with this strange and shimmering world”⁵⁸⁰ and ask, “What if God *does* exist?”

In Chapter 2 I sketched Lewis’s language of beauty, which I am proposing is active in Lewis’s work, and suggested it possesses value as an apologetic tool.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Lightman, *Accidental Universe*, 52, 54.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 52.

We turn now to the aesthetic progression itself; the progression inherent in Lewis's language of beauty. The progression stems from the aesthetic experience of the beautiful.⁵⁸¹ As it relates to Lewis, this aesthetic experience generally finds itself in some way influenced by Northernness.

As we discovered in the previous two chapters, Lewis first encountered beauty as a boy and associated the aesthetic experience with the feeling of "Joy."⁵⁸² This same feeling reemerged as an adolescent through his discovery of Northernness. Northernness, for Lewis, served as one of his initial primary aesthetic experiences⁵⁸³ and is categorized by rapture and what may be described as a ravishing austere beauty: "... a vision of huge, clear spaces hanging above the Atlantic in the endless twilight of Northern summer, remoteness, severity ..."⁵⁸⁴

Lewisian scholarship, however, has emphatically neglected Northernness in Lewis's thought and relegates it to a mere biographical footnote. I have, therefore, provided a first of its kind thematic examination of Lewisian Northernness in order to show that A) Lewisian Northernness further emphasizes Lewis's own love of landscape, B) that over the course of his writing career it remained a dominant theme for Lewis stylistically, and that C) Lewisian

⁵⁸¹ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 147. It is worth noting that Starr states this about "aesthetic experience": "Aesthetic experiences [of beauty] ... are events; they will and must disappear. But the relations of value they evoke produce new possibilities. ... Aesthetic is human experience, and it draws on extraordinary resources within us." Bruno Forte also refers to beauty as an event. See Forte, "Introduction" in *The Portal of Beauty*, vii.

⁵⁸² *SBJ*, 18.

⁵⁸³ Lewis experienced Northernness twice. First as a young boy when he happened to read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Tegner's Drappa* and the line "I heard a voice that cried / Balder the beautiful / Is dead, is dead—" The second time was as an adolescent when he read the lines "Siegfried and The Twilight of the Gods" on a magazine cover, accompanied by an illustration from Arthur Rackham.

⁵⁸⁴ *SBJ*, 73.

Northernness consists of more than mere literary atmosphere in that Lewis reverses the theological implications of the Norse eschatological cycle of doom. If we, therefore, view Lewisian Northernness—which I am using as inclusive of his affection for landscape—as constituting the aesthetic framework from which feelings of aesthetic engagement stem, then we must define the feelings produced by the literary atmosphere and characters Lewis creates.

Moving on from the framework of Northernness, then, we find the aesthetic progression previously mentioned: encounter, Joy incited, and *Sehnsucht* awakened. As further introduction to this chapter, I want to revisit Lewis’s initial experience with beauty in order to show how the aesthetic progression occurred in his life, and set up the rest of the chapter for a discussion about the interplay of Joy and *Sehnsucht*. Following my analysis of these two themes, I will in a subsequent chapter examine the *numinous*; one of the methods Lewis routinely employs to communicate beauty.

5.2 Three Glimpses of Beauty

To better understand the relationship between beauty, Joy, and *Sehnsucht* as Lewis treated the terms, it is important to parse Lewis’s actual original encounter with beauty.⁵⁸⁵ It should first be noted, however, that Lewis appears deeply existential and mystical⁵⁸⁶ in his spiritual and aesthetic formation.⁵⁸⁷ With

⁵⁸⁵ Scholars interpret these encounters differently. Schakel, for example interprets them as imaginative encounters; see Schakel, *Imagination and the Arts in C.S. Lewis*, 8;5 (see also 5.6 of this thesis). McGrath interprets these early aesthetic experiences as Lewis’s “First Encounters with Joy”; see McGrath, *C.S. Lewis*, 18-19.

⁵⁸⁶ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 382-393. James’s analysis of the subject’s “deepened sense of significance” supports my suggestion that Northernness acts as a framework for Lewis’s language of beauty. “This sense of deeper significance is not confined to

regard to his spirituality, George Sayer states most of Lewis's life experiences were not literary, but "mystical experiences of the presence of God."⁵⁸⁸ Furthermore, Lewis's spiritual life was nourished by not only daily scripture meditation, and, again, mystical experience, but also through his "habit of communing with nature."⁵⁸⁹ Sayer notes Lewis's habit of walking the garden before breakfast in order to drink in "the beauty of the morning, thanking God for the weather, the roses, the song of the birds, and anything else he could find to enjoy."⁵⁹⁰ Aesthetically, his love for nature he reveals to Sayer via his comments concerning his love for Ruskin's *Praeterita* and *Modern Painters*, of which, Lewis says: "... there is no writer who achieves so perfect a synthesis of the scientific with the poetic or romantic. Some of his descriptions of nature are the most satisfying I know."⁵⁹¹ Perhaps most notably, and germane to the intermingling of the notions of Northernness and beauty within this thesis, Ronald Bresland notes how his early aesthetic experiences, and subsequent *feelings of Joy*, were "mediated through nature" and help explain "the attachment Jack had with his homeland."⁵⁹² Bresland sees the "combination of his [Lewis's] poetic sensibility and affinity with the Irish landscape" as indicative of "Lewis emerging

rational propositions. Single words, and conjunctions of words, effects of light on land and sea, odors and musical sounds, all bring it when the mind is tuned aright." This deeper sense James likens to Tennyson's notion of mystic gleams or sense of home.

⁵⁸⁷ McGrath rightly points out the congruity with Lewis's first experiences with beauty with William James's "four characteristic features of such experiences." 1) Ineffability, 2) Noetic quality, 3) Transcendency, 4) Passivity. See McGrath, *C.S. Lewis*, 19-20. See also William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 380-381.

⁵⁸⁸ Sayer, *Jack*, 52.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 416.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 344.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 401.

⁵⁹² Ronald W. Bresland, *The Backward Glance: C.S. Lewis and Ireland*, 14.

as a topographer of the imagination.” This combination allowed Lewis “to embrace the concept of *Northernness*, intellectually and spiritually.”⁵⁹³ These initial aesthetic experiences, therefore, matter insofar as they show how Lewis initially encountered beauty, and the resulting influence upon his thought shaping.

Between the ages of six and eight Lewis admits to living solely in the world of his imagination. Lewis distinguishes his imaginative world⁵⁹⁴ as consisting of three parts: one, a world of daydreams and reverie, and, two, a land in which he invented worlds, such as his beloved Animal-Land. But, oddly, Lewis admits that these two realms within his imaginative world were not highly imaginative at all. The imagination, according to Lewis, possesses a third sense which is also its highest. He intimates that since his daydreaming and inventing lacked poetry and romance, they also lacked true imagination. Lewis’s third sense (or level) of his imaginary world was achieved in what I will call Lewis’s “Three Glimpses of Beauty.”⁵⁹⁵

The First Glimpse Lewis calls “a memory of a memory.” He describes a summer scene where he is standing next to a flowering currant bush. The encounter with the currant bush then triggers his earliest remembered encounter with beauty, which was a toy garden his older brother Warren made from the lid

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Robert DeMaria, Heesok Chang, and Samantha Zacher, eds., *A Companion to British Literature*, 259-60.

⁵⁹⁵ Lewis uses the word “glimpse” to delineate the third sense of the imagination in *SBJ*, 16-17. It is interesting to note that editor Walter Hooper frames Lewis’s “glimpses” as the three mediating experiences of Joy for Lewis rather than beginning at the root of the experience, which Lewis clearly states is beauty. Understandably, Hooper is summarizing the theme of Joy in *Surprised by Joy*, but it is editorial direction of this sort that tends to frame the reading of Lewis into predetermined categories, such as Joy or desire. Thus we find beauty discussed only as a secondary or even tertiary concept within Lewis’s thought. See Walter Hooper, *C.S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*, 187-189.

of a biscuit tin, moss, sticks, and flowers. He fondly describes the toy garden as “the first beauty I ever knew.”⁵⁹⁶ Lewis describes this beauty as not just a small collection of forms and colors, but as “something cool, dewy, fresh, exuberant.”⁵⁹⁷ We can employ these descriptors to illuminate Lewis’s encounter with the beauty of the currant bush. Lewis, for an instant of pure rapture, found himself lost within the feeling of desire, “but desire for what?”⁵⁹⁸ The experience was grand and rendered everything else insignificant.

The Second Glimpse of beauty came through reading Beatrix Potter’s *Squirrel Nutkin*. Lewis admits to rereading the book to feel the tremendous sense of desire and describes this feeling as longing for the season of autumn.⁵⁹⁹ In reading Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *Saga of King Olaf*⁶⁰⁰ Lewis came upon the *Third Glimpse*. “I heard a voice that cried, / Balder the beautiful / Is dead, is dead—.”⁶⁰¹ With this glimpse Lewis describes experiencing the aforementioned

⁵⁹⁶ *SBJ*, 7. It is interesting to find flashes of Lewis’s first experience with beauty. In *LWW*, for example, he references the currant bush from his boyhood when he describes the once frozen and snowy woods experiencing the great thaw and coming alive with foliage: “They walked on in silence drinking it all in passing through patches of warm sunlight into cool green thickets and out again into wide mossy glades where tall elms raised the leafy roof far overhead and then into the dense masses of flowering currants ...” (p. 119.)

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.* Lewis himself indicates that this encounter took place when he was approximately six years old. See Lewis in “Preface” to *NP*, 4.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁰⁰ Longfellow published the saga as part of a larger collection titled *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863). He used the famous British travel writer Samuel Laing’s translation of “King Olaf Tryggvesson’s saga.” Andrew Wawn also notes Longfellow’s heavy use of northern imagery. See Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 111-112, 191.

⁶⁰¹ Balder (in the Norse fashion it is spelled “*Baldr*”) was Odin’s second and presumably favorite son, and in many ways untouchable by the other gods. It is possible that Longfellow’s poem affected Lewis deeply since he was so infatuated with Norse mythology at the time. For Balder “is so beautiful and so bright that light shines through him. ... He is the wisest of the gods. He is also the most beautifully spoken and the most merciful.” See “Gylfaginning” in Sturluson, *The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology*, 33.

“Northernness” and, like the previous glimpses, as quick as the rapture comes he at once is tossed out of it, only to long for his return to that place of desire.

Note the inciting “glimpses” of beauty and how they each propelled Lewis into a *numinous* place of wonder and fierce delight: *encounter*. One of the aesthetic encounters also marked the advent of Lewis’s Norse Complex, his lifelong infatuation with Northernness. As previously discussed in chapter three, when Lewis saw one of Arthur Rackham’s illustrations in *Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods*, Lewis admits to being engulfed in a vision of austere beauty.⁶⁰² The illustrations prompted a significant aesthetic response from him; a Joy that was located in the *numinous* experience of “Northernness.”

Lewis’s *Three Glimpses* originate in the natural world: a flowering currant bush, as well as the tertiary realm of human derivative, a book and a poem. Each glimpse propelled the young Lewis from the initial encounter of beauty, to the response of Joy, and finally into a place of *Sehnsucht*; but not just the desire of an object—it was the desire *for* desire, of longing after something unattainable.⁶⁰³ Furthermore, the encounter with the ravishing beauty of Northernness, pre-conversion, matured into an understanding of *Sehnsucht*, accompanied by the Romantic notion of *werden*, that would mature into the movement of eucatastrophic vision.

I have included Lewis’s *Three Glimpses* for two reasons. First, to show that, from Lewis’s experience as a young boy, beauty was interpreted

⁶⁰² Lewis, *SBJ*, 72-73.

⁶⁰³ In the previous chapter I made the distinction between *Sehnsucht* and Lewisian Joy. Joy is not *Sehnsucht*. Rather, the act of desiring, for Lewis, became a desire. It was the desire to feel desire that was Joy to Lewis. It is incorrect to say that *Sehnsucht* is Joy. A more accurate description is that *Sehnsucht* for Lewis was so intense and consuming he associated the feeling with the delight that awakened it, namely Joy.

existentially. A person encounters beauty; that simple encounter results in two intense responses: Joy and *Sehnsucht*. Second, we find this aesthetic progression at work within Lewis's work. He employs Northernness elements, as well as the *numinous*—which we will examine later—in order to elicit the same responses within his readers that he experienced when encountering beauty.

This chapter, then, deals with the inherent aesthetic progression found in Lewis's *Three Glimpses*. I aim to define the two by-products I consider germane to the Lewisian aesthetic experience: Joy and *Sehnsucht*. I consider their order important to the aesthetic experience since Lewis himself describes his own experience as consisting of a specific kind of Joy that is the object of *Sehnsucht*.⁶⁰⁴ In section three I aim to situate Joy as the initial feeling of aesthetic experience by comparing Lewis's concept of Joy to William Wordsworth's understanding of the term. In section four, I will develop the Romantic and biblical conceptions of joy. In section five I aim to define Lewis's mature understanding of Joy by showing how he appropriates J.R.R. Tolkien's notion of eucatastrophe. In section six, I briefly discuss how some scholars elide the terms Joy and *Sehnsucht*. When discussing Lewis's notion of Joy we must not fall into the trap of simply relying on his conversion narrative and biographical chronology to define Lewisian Joy, which too often leads scholars to elide the terms Joy and *Sehnsucht*.

5.3 Aesthetic Gasp: Defining Joy As Initial Feeling of Aesthetic Experience

Lewis, the man and writer, can scarce be separated from the term Joy. Biographically, Lewis sensed Joy's depth early in his life. In a letter to Arthur

⁶⁰⁴ *SBJ*, 73.

Greeves dated March 14, 1916, Lewis compares the difference between music and books to the difference between friendship and love. He writes of the difference between friendship and love that, “the one is always pleasant, the other in its greatest moments of joy is painful.”⁶⁰⁵ Kathleen Raine, on the other hand, notes how Lewis embodied Joy as he carried a “freshness and joyousness”⁶⁰⁶ in his learning. Raine’s comment prefaces one of the points I hope to make in this chapter; that, as part of Lewis’s language of beauty, Joy signifies the celebration of vitality. Biographically, as Raine notes, Joy is the very vitality Lewis exemplified just weeks before his own death on November 20, 1963, that marks the tone of his non-fiction and the hope within his fiction.⁶⁰⁷

Lewisian Joy, however, must be considered thematically in order to locate it within Lewis’s language of beauty. Lewis’s notion of Joy as a theological and literary theme links it closely with *Sehnsucht*. Both themes constitute variant aspects of aesthetic experience in general. Moreover, the “feeling” of Joy was so germane to Lewis’s lived experience, with relation to the shaping of his faith and life, that Lewis used it as the focus of his spiritual memoir.

Joy operates within Lewis’s language of beauty as the initial by-product of aesthetic experience. In the same way we observed how Lewis communicates beauty through Northernness and landscape, so too do we find beauty

⁶⁰⁵ *CLI*, 174.

⁶⁰⁶ Jocelyn Gibb, ed., *Light on C.S. Lewis*, 103.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

communicated through interaction with what I have termed “innerscape.”

Innerscape consists of ontological elements of a human being such as Joy and desire. In Lewis’s language of beauty, a person’s innerscape is awakened through objects of beauty, be they natural events or phenomenon, or an *objet d’art*.⁶⁰⁸ In this section I hope to communicate two main points. First, I hope to strengthen the assertion that Lewisian Joy works as part of an aesthetic progression. Second, Joy, in the post-conversion sense, operates as a pointer to the Divine.

Naturally, any study on the theme of Joy should begin with Lewis’s spiritual memoir *Surprised by Joy*. I believe the title to Lewis’s spiritual memoir reveals vital insight into Lewis’s conception of Joy.⁶⁰⁹ The book’s title, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*, originates from the first line of William Wordsworth’s sonnet “XXVII”⁶¹⁰ which Wordsworth composed after the death of his second daughter, Catherine, on June 5, 1812. The poem was later published in 1815.⁶¹¹ Obviously Lewis knew the poem, and I believe he used the opening line for more than a convenient imaginative title. I believe he is implying a thematic “gasp” in order to communicate the Romantic nuances of Joy. Joy, to Lewis,

⁶⁰⁸ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 134-135. Viladesau states that crucial to the experience of beauty is the “delight in form.”

⁶⁰⁹ I will use Lewis’s emphatic styling of the term “Joy” throughout this chapter, allowing the capitalization to denote the term’s Lewisian meaning. When quoted by others I will default to their own particular use, i.e., whether “joy” or “Joy.”

⁶¹⁰ Oxford’s complete *Poetical Works* divides Wordsworth’s poetry, with one section titled “Miscellaneous Sonnets.” The sonnet in question here is not titled “Surprised By Joy,” but rather is simply numbered as “XXVII.” See page 204.

⁶¹¹ From the secondary literature I have read I have yet to find scholarly commentary regarding the relation between Wordsworth’s sonnet, “XXVII,” as a whole, not just the opening line, and Lewis’s conception of Joy in general. Are we to believe the thorough-minded Lewis chose the epithet simply because he liked the line? James Prothero and Donald T. Williams do this very thing in their short book on Romanticism and C.S. Lewis. See James Prothero and Donald T. Williams, *Gaining a Face: The Romanticism of C.S. Lewis*, 2013, 5.

contains the pang of initial aesthetic experience as well as his own eucatastrophic vision of salvific hope.⁶¹²

Furthermore, I believe my consideration of Lewis's intent with Wordsworth's line of poetry is consistent with Alister McGrath's analysis of Lewis's writing style in the memoir. McGrath notes that Lewis wrote *Surprised by Joy* in a way that forces readers to step into his Oxford world. For example, Lewis leaves maxims and epigrams from the German, French, Italian, and Latin untranslated, he uses jargon specific to Oxford University, and he assumes readers are steeped in western literary tradition.⁶¹³ Is it not out of the question to consider the origin of his title to be more than an imaginative borrowing, and quite possibly containing an intended depth?

Wordsworth's sonnet opens with the line, "Surprised by joy – impatient as the wind."⁶¹⁴ The line, which Lewis includes in the opening flyleaf of his memoir, is striking in its composition, emphasizing, first, the experience of the subject ("I" i.e., the poet). The dash signifies rapture, a gasp-like pause from the subject while he (Wordsworth) finds himself caught between an unknown aesthetic experience (joy) that he wishes to share with his daughter, and the realization that she is not present to share it with him. The opening line, however, should be read unbroken, noting the realization of the poet, which occurs between the dashes. "Surprised by joy – impatient as the wind / I turned to share the transport – Oh! With whom /

⁶¹² See 4.4 of this thesis. I noted how "Further up and further in!" became a mantra emblematic of experiencing the embodiment of Joy.

⁶¹³ McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*, 22.

⁶¹⁴ William Wordsworth, *Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, 204.

But thee, long buried in the silent tomb.”⁶¹⁵ Carol Rumens suggests the sonnet “activates a series of ‘pangs.’” First, the moment of delight, which some unrevealed natural beauty incites, is offset by the desolate realization that the person whom the poet desires to share it with is no longer there to partake. Second, the poet experiences the pang of guilt when he reflects on the possibility of some day forgetting his daughter. Finally, the pang of the poet reliving the moment of rapture with the accompanying sorrow that he cannot share the moment with his daughter.⁶¹⁶ So, the poet’s experiential progression begins when the aesthetic moment strikes—this perhaps being a vision of natural beauty—but the moment turns to ashes due to the permanent absence of a loved one.

I have given this short explanation of the sonnet, to which Lewis refers, because I believe it helps illuminate his own use of the term “Joy.” Lewis, like Wordsworth, means to situate the concept of Joy with intentional poetic divergency. This bears out in two ways.

In the first place, and most directly analogous to Wordsworth’s conception, Lewisian Joy begins as a description of a specific aesthetic experience. For example, in the poem “An Expostulation,” Lewis describes beauty as a stark aesthetic experience that elicits feelings of Joy. He writes: “Beauty that stabs with tingling spear⁶¹⁷ ...” In another poem, titled “These Faint Wavering

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Carol Rumens, “Poem of the Week: Surprised by Joy - Impatient as the Wind,” *The Guardian*, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2008/sep/22/poem.of.the.week.wordsworth>.

⁶¹⁷ *P*, 55. Don King dates this poem between the years 1950 and 1963. See King, *The Collective Poems of C.S. Lewis: A Literary Edition*, 373.

Far-travell'd Gleams,"⁶¹⁸ Lewis refers to his initial feeling when he hears the song of the thrush as a "sweet stabbing" and "leap of the heart."⁶¹⁹ Again, in his essay "Transposition" Lewis assigns the terms "Joy" and "delight" to intense aesthetic pleasure.⁶²⁰ Similarly, Lewis intimates aesthetic experience to be on the level of pleasure and delight (i.e., Joy) in *The Pilgrim's Regress* when John decides to leave Vertue and pursue aesthetic experience for itself.⁶²¹ Furthermore, as I previously noted, from the outset of his memoir Lewis positions Joy as part of the aesthetic experience⁶²² when he references how he felt as a boy when he first encountered three specific objects of beauty—as I have positioned them—namely, a flowering currant bush, a book (Beatrix Potter's *Squirrel Nutkin*), and a poem (Longfellow's "Saga of King Olaf").⁶²³ But Lewis unfolds this conception throughout the personal narrative. Joy as aesthetic experience acquires significant value for the young pre-conversion Lewis. The feeling of Joy itself becomes a desire: "There was no doubt that Joy was a desire."⁶²⁴ These examples from Lewis's post-conversion writing show a range of genre, spanning his fiction,

⁶¹⁸ Walter Hooper previously titled this poem "Sweet Desire" in the early poetry collection *C.S. Lewis: Poems*, in 1964.

⁶¹⁹ Don W. King, ed., *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis*, 419. King dates this poem between the years 1950 and 1963.

⁶²⁰ "Transposition" in *TWG*, 97-99. This was an address Lewis preached at Mansfield College, Oxford, which was subsequently published in the collection *They Asked For A Paper* in 1962.

⁶²¹ *PR*, 27. Lewis published this novel shortly after his conversion to Christianity in 1933.

⁶²² It is common to treat Lewis's use of Joy as synonymous with *Sehnsucht*. But this generalization neglects the distinguishing nuances between the two concepts. Moreover, it overlooks Joy as an element of the aesthetic experience. It should also be noted that Lewis referred to Joy as "aesthetic experience" and "talked much about it under that name and said it was very valuable." Understandably, this reference to Joy was part of Lewis's "New Look," a cautionary way of life, with regard to Romanticism, supernaturalism, etc., he took up upon his return to Oxford. See *SBJ*, 202-205.

⁶²³ *SBJ*, 16-18.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 220. Emphasis added.

poetry, and memoir. The examples also span the entire length of Lewis's post-conversion life, from 1933 to 1962. The chronology illuminates Lewis's literary use of Joy in that he maintained its aesthetic use throughout his life, thus suggesting that even though Lewis states in his memoir that Joy was of no value to him anymore,⁶²⁵ this statement should be understood theologically rather than aesthetically. That is to say, Lewis reconsidered the importance and value of Joy, from what it had meant to him pre-conversion, to what now meant to him post-conversion.

Second, Joy develops into a Romantic complex term initiating contrasting feelings of rapture and regret, longing (*Sehnsucht*) and sorrow. We find rapture and regret present in Lewis's narrative when he writes, "And with that plunge back into my own past there arose at once, almost like heartbreak, the memory of Joy itself, the knowledge that I had once had what I now lacked for years ..."⁶²⁶ The memory of his initial aesthetic experiences penetrate Lewis deeply, showing his desire for that rapture again in his life with, perhaps, the regret that it has eluded him for so long. Lewis experienced the simultaneous and unendurable "sense of desire and loss."⁶²⁷ Is not Wordsworth experiencing the same? Wordsworth is at once experiencing the pang of initial delight, "Surprised by joy—"; followed by the pang of loss, "I turned to share the transport—Oh! With whom ..."; along with the regret of nearly forgetting his loss in such a time of rapture, "But how could I forget thee?"; and finally the longing to be reunited with his daughter, "Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more; / That neither

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 73.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

present time, nor years un- / born / Could to my sight that heavenly face
restore.”⁶²⁸

The climax of Lewis’s memoir reveals a similar progression of theme, which contributes to a tertiary development of Joy as progressing the term to signify not only aesthetic experience but also to indicate the source of the aesthetic pleasure. In Chapter 14, Lewis, like Wordsworth before him, arrives at a significant realization. Wordsworth, on the one hand, struggles with the realization that reality consists of a tension of aesthetic experience alongside personal loss. Lewis, on the other hand, realizes that his life journey, in which he repeatedly experienced aesthetic moments of Joy and even deliberately sought out such moments of aesthetic rapture, turned out not to be a pursuit of objects that give Joy, but rather the experience of the remnants of Joy itself. Lewis writes, “I knew now that they were merely the track left by the passage of Joy—not the wave, but the wave’s imprint on the sand.”⁶²⁹ This reality suggests a potential futility inherent within beauty and Joy. Lewis admitted, “Joy itself, considered simply as an event in my own mind, turned out to be of no value at all.”⁶³⁰

But what does Lewis mean by this? Does he mean to suggest that Joy as constitutive of the aesthetic experience was useless?

Lewis here is not discounting Joy altogether. On the contrary, he is asserting the idea that Joy alone as aesthetic experience, interpreted as without a source, possessed no value. The authentic “Joy”⁶³¹ Lewis experienced as a child

⁶²⁸ Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, 204.

⁶²⁹ *SBJ*, 219.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

was associated with a shallow Joy not unlike naked pleasure, but, as the post-conversion Lewis states, he realized that it possessed a deeper quality, thus suggesting Lewis to be distinguishing between the theological value of Joy as a deeper quality, and Joy understood merely as aesthetic experience. For Lewis, the latter separated from the former held no value.

In order to further develop this Joy of the deeper quality, it is helpful to briefly note Wesley Kort's study on the subject. Kort refers to Joy's deeper quality in his study on pleasure and Joy; how Joy relates to pleasure and how both draw one's attention away from the self and into the beyond.⁶³² Lewis, according to Kort, understood pleasure in a way that, viewed properly, should serve as a gateway to Joy. Joy, in this regard, is supremely Romantic in its conception, according to M.H. Abrams.⁶³³ Lewis waited for that "pang" of Joy—that aesthetic rapture—to return, this time in a mature form but return nonetheless, as that which signifies the beyond and by its composition elicits deep desire. It was the pang that hit with such force that it caused Lewis to desire it again.

Kort suggests Lewis drew a line between the modern version of pleasure, which tends to fall on the side of "pleasure as the only good,"⁶³⁴ and a version of pleasure Lewis referred to as hedonics, the "science or philosophy of pleasure."⁶³⁵ The former perspective views pleasure as an end, a goal. The latter looks at pleasure and how the use of it can and does affect our everyday experience. According to Kort, "Pleasure draws the attention of a person outward toward

⁶³² See Wesley A. Kort, *C.S. Lewis Then and Now*, 124-126.

⁶³³ Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 431-433.

⁶³⁴ Kort, *Then and Now*, 122

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*

something external. It counters self-preoccupation.”⁶³⁶ Taking pleasure in an object, such as a cup of coffee, acknowledges its value. So, there is an initial pleasurable reaction to the cup of coffee and, arguably, the pleasure ends there.

But beyond pleasure stands Joy. Joy, according to Kort, is the “exhilarating moment when one is drawn out of oneself by the lure of something grander, higher, and elusive.”⁶³⁷ Kort’s positioning of Joy within the aesthetic progression supports my own assertion that Joy operates within Lewis’s language of beauty as the initial aesthetic experience.

Furthermore, this deeper quality of Joy, according to Kort, intimates life beyond life; a vitality of the infinite that quickens the finite. This concept emerges in Lewis’s memoir in that first aesthetic experience with the miniature toy garden his brother,⁶³⁸ Warren, built for him, as well as his first encounter with the currant bush.⁶³⁹ These and other early encounters elicited great Joy—pangs of Joy, even. A potential quickened within him.⁶⁴⁰ It was elusive because he was unable to seize it, though he was keenly aware of its existence.⁶⁴¹ Starr notes that commonality of response is germane to the aesthetic experience, not necessarily the beautiful object itself, which may vary to degree between people. Lewis’s response to the toy garden and currant bush, et al., therefore, should be noted as the primary

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 124. Abrams echoes Kort in saying, “pleasure conduces to joy.” See Abrams, *Natural Supernatural*, 433.

⁶³⁸ *SBJ*, 7.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 16. This later experience prompted a memory of this early experience of beauty with the toy garden.

⁶⁴⁰ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 66.

⁶⁴¹ Kort suggests that for Lewis there was no gap between our minds—what our minds (and presumably, our imaginations) experience—and what lies outside of them. For Lewis life was about all of it, together. We could, in fact, “know” through the combined engagement of pleasure and imagination (the mind).

indicator of the experience of beauty. Furthermore, Starr holds that the experience of beauty (feeling it) can and does create an ontological⁶⁴² awareness within the subject.⁶⁴³

Lewisian Joy, therefore, is an intense aesthetic experience, which occurs upon the engagement of something we usually consider beautiful. Lewis is “surprised by Joy” because it turns out to be something more than a shallow aesthetic experience. Lewis reveals that his own perceived journey to discover Joy was not a “waiting” and a “watching” for Joy itself. Rather, the objects he sought along the path were simple images.⁶⁴⁴ Interestingly, Lewis admits the same realization with regard to desire. If the desire for the object remains focused on the object itself, it turns the desiring to idolatry.⁶⁴⁵ The aesthetic experiences of Joy and desire, initiated by an object of aesthetic pleasure, i.e., beauty, spoke not of the object of beauty itself but of something beyond. The feeling of Joy points to the source of Joy. Furthermore, the Joy Lewis ultimately discovered possessed a deep theological quality that possessed the ability to awaken desire. This quickening aspect of beauty cannot be overlooked. In it, we discover the strong ties to the Romantic and biblical notion of Joy, to which we now turn.

⁶⁴² Forte, *The Portal of Beauty*, 21. Forte suggests the pervasiveness of beauty within reality as evidence of beauty’s comprehensive expression of all the transcendentals (Unity, Truth, Goodness), which are metaphysical aspects of Being. The omnipresence of being in the world is echoed by the omnipresence of beauty; both equally and seemingly infinitely distributed, both diversified.

⁶⁴³ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 66.

⁶⁴⁴ *SBJ*, 219.

⁶⁴⁵ Lewis refers to desires for the object itself as a “false Florimell” in *The Pilgrim’s Regress*. See Lewis, *PR*, 203. See also Meilaender, *Other*, 18, 21. Lewis borrows the name of one of Spenser’s characters from *The Faerie Queene*, Florimell. Florimell’s character symbolizes the false quest. See Lewis, *Spenser’s Images of Life*, 122-123.

5.4 A Romantic Theological Precedence

Next, I want to examine the thematic resonance found in Romantic and biblical joy as well as Lewis's Joy. In doing so I hope to show two common threads. First, I want to expose the thread of vitality shared by both the Scriptures and Romanticism. Second, the feeling of Joy operates as an aesthetic reaction to its object. In the Christian tradition this object is the God of the Bible, while in Romanticism the object may intimate divine qualities but not maintain so specific a definition as in Christianity.

Joy Biblically

Beauty, Joy, and The Creative Act: In the Scriptures, life, or vitality, connects to beauty profoundly. For example, the writer of the Pentateuch begins the book of Genesis with the story of creation.⁶⁴⁶ On day three God commanded the waters to gather together in one place so that the dry land could appear. The waters he called Seas. The dry land he called Earth. God saw what he created and called it, *tov*,⁶⁴⁷ or "good." Unfortunately, "good" poorly conveys the nuance of the Hebrew *tov*, which can mean pleasant, agreeable, or good to the senses; "to the sight, fair, of daughters of men; of a son, young men ... to the taste, good, sweet, agreeable for eating pleasant to the higher nature, giving pleasure, happiness, prosperity, and so agreeable, pleasing, well."⁶⁴⁸ The aesthetic intention of the

⁶⁴⁶ Viladesau notes that though "there is no systematic approach to the 'ascent' of the mind of God through beauty in the scriptures, there are a few openings toward such a line of thought," one of which is through the "splendor of creation." See Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 105.

⁶⁴⁷ Karl Elliger, Wilhelm Rudolph, and Institute for NT Textual Research Munster, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Compact edition (German Bible Society, 1997), Genesis 1:10.

⁶⁴⁸ BDB (Abridged), s.v. "*tov*" n.p.

adjective, *tov*, seems clear, carrying the idea of enjoyment and satisfaction in an object or person. The Septuagint, perhaps more accurately, uses the term *kalos*: “*kai eiden ho theos hoti kalon.*”⁶⁴⁹ (Genesis 1:10) *Kalos* can also mean “good,” but in this case that is not the intended use. In Greek two terms convey the idea of good. *Agathos* is the more common word associated with good: good, profitable, generous, upright, virtuous.⁶⁵⁰ *Kalos* is most often associated with beautiful: “... pertaining to having acceptable characteristics or functioning in an agreeable manner, often with the focus on outward form or appearance.”⁶⁵¹ Also, “... beautiful; good, of good quality or disposition; fertile, rich ... it is pleasant, delightful.”⁶⁵²

When one substitutes the English “beautiful” for “good” throughout the Genesis 1 account of creation, one sees how beauty and vitality, or life, are so closely associated. “God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was beautiful.” (Genesis 1:10) And God made man and woman, and he called them “very beautiful.” The creative act, which God called “beautiful,” possesses an intrinsic quality of vitality and joy.⁶⁵³

Physical Nature of Joy: A smiling face, upright shoulders, gleaming eyes—all are physical, bodily actions (or symbols) that convey Joy. The

⁶⁴⁹ Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta*.

⁶⁵⁰ MGD, “*agathos*” n.p.

⁶⁵¹ L&N, “Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains,” n.p.

⁶⁵² MGD, “*kalos*” n.p.

⁶⁵³ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 135. Viladesau notes the joy inherent in existence and its connection to beauty.

Scriptures tell us the gesture of a smile and the image of light, when given from a king, communicate a life-sustaining sunshine (Prov. 16:15; Ps. 89:15; Num. 6:25; Is. 60:1-15). The Old Testament describes Joyful worship with images of animals, such as an ox flinging its head back and forth in wild jubilation.

It is suggested that the “the zest of life is stored in the eyes.”⁶⁵⁴ In 1 Samuel 14:27,29 Jonathan eats wild honey and his “eyes brighten” (NIV). The prophet Ezra records: “Our God has brightened our eyes and granted us some relief from our slavery” (9:8, NLT).

Both the Old and New Testaments possess strong uses of the term “joy” with regard to its lexical meaning. The Old Testament Hebrew provides a more varied use while the New Testament Greek offers a more limited, but no less dynamic, use of “joy.” However, the Old and New Testaments convey vitality as well as an emotional response to an object (i.e., God). The Hebrew root *simcha* (used as noun and verb), for example, conveys “the state of joyful well-being, but also its expression, rejoicing.”⁶⁵⁵ Other, less-used terms convey exultation and sounds of joy (i.e., cheering, shouting).⁶⁵⁶ The New Testament terms *chara* and *agalliasis* mean “intense joy” with *agalliasis* commonly aligning more with the Old Testament usage of *simcha*, thus denoting a personal reaction from the individual to the object of jubilation.

Relational Sense of Joy: Interestingly, joy also carries a relational sense. In the Old Testament, joy marks the nation of Israel and emphasizes an exuberant faith; it describes the community as well as the individual. The fact that the most

⁶⁵⁴ *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, “Gestures,” 327.

⁶⁵⁵ *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, “Joy,” n.p.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

significant emphasis of Jewish weddings was joy provides further relational nuance to the term.⁶⁵⁷ It should be noted that biblical joy is not only an emotion but is also a quality of the believer.⁶⁵⁸ God as the primary object of a community and a person's joy is inherent in both the Old Testament and New Testament conceptions of the term.

Eschatological Joy: Moreover, the term carries strong Messianic and eschatological applications. Israel's hope in future joy serves as a prelude and anticipates Messianic salvation. The poetry of the Psalms and the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, for example, look toward a new fullness from heaven in the form of messianic deliverance that will end suffering and provide a solution to sin (Ps. 19:4-5; 89:5-18; Is. 35:1-10; Jer. 33:9). Interestingly, this new object of joy affects not only the human condition but that of nature, such as the mountains, rivers, and animals, and the cosmos, such as the stars and planets, as well. The anticipatory prophecies in the Old Testament, therefore, determine the New Testament conception of the term, which is completely identified with the person of Jesus Christ. The New Testament mirrors the Old Testament usage of joy in that there is a personal and ecclesial (community) response to the object of joy. Joy marks the birth of Christ and highlights his ministry (Luke 2:10; Luke 12:19; 16:19).⁶⁵⁹ Joy as response to the person of Christ manifests itself in personal rejoicing for salvation in addition to a secondary joy, that which comes from the

⁶⁵⁷ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, Accordance electronic ed., n.p.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

power to expel demons and heal the sick (Luke 10:17; 20).⁶⁶⁰ The advent of the church is founded upon a response of joy (Acts 2:26; 46).

Conclusion: Joy, therefore, from a biblical perspective, conveys personal and even communal vitality. Joy can describe a person's countenance, nature's mood, and denotes a responsive vitality toward its object, namely God. Joy is also a response to its object, such as joyful praise at the birth of Jesus Christ. Next, I want to note the primacy of joy within the Romanticism that influenced Lewis.

Joy Romantically

Specialized Meaning: Joy is a central theme to the Romantic poets.⁶⁶¹ Joy, according to M. H. Abrams, consists of pure vitality. It is the artist speaking through his art so much so that his life soars through the medium and into the viewer.⁶⁶² It carries "a specialized meaning."⁶⁶³ Coleridge, for example, defined joy as "reconciliation of subject and object in the act of perception, 'joy' signifies the conscious accompaniment of the activity of a fully living and integrative mind."⁶⁶⁴ For Coleridge, joy is "the state of abounding vitality"⁶⁶⁵ that allows a person to relate to the outside world and to one another. Something effusive accompanies Romantic joy; it is the bursting of life along with the relational element that creates a beautiful sense of humanness to joy. Similar to the biblical conception, it is both feeling and action. Coleridge considered joy to be the

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 432.

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., 276.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

shaping spirit of the imagination; it is the “inner power that unites the living self to a living outer world.” Coleridge⁶⁶⁶ employs the figure of marriage to illustrate this union of self with the outer world.

Joy Signifying Hope: The Romantics viewed joy as that to which all art, and even philosophy, is dedicated.⁶⁶⁷ It is a high ideal, which transcends mere pleasure. It signifies a gushing vitality.⁶⁶⁸ Thus was Blake’s refrain, “Everything that lives is holy, life delights in life⁶⁶⁹ ...” And we see Friedrich Schlegel’s use of the term as one of hope and eternal becoming.⁶⁷⁰

Joy as Gushing Vitality: Wordsworth’s poem “Ode: Intimation of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood” emphasizes the Romantic view of gushing vitality the term Joy captures. The joyous song of the birds, along with the bounding vitality of the young lambs juxtaposes the poet’s sorrowful thoughts on the limits of life.⁶⁷¹ Yet sullen thoughts fail to overcome the joyous moment of springtime. “Thou child of Joy, / Shout round me, let me hear thy

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., 277. For a sample of Coleridge’s use of joy within his work, see his poem “Dejection,” in which he sees joy unifying Nature with humanity. In this way, again, we see the *numinous* quality of Joy.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 433.

⁶⁶⁸ Coleridge employs this “gushing” visual in “Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” when he writes: “O happy living things! ... A spring of love gushed from my heart.” See Abrams, *Natural Supernatural*, 434. See also Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 99.

⁶⁶⁹ Abrams, *Natural Supernatural*, 435.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 432. Abrams suggests that Schlegel and the German Romantics viewed Joy and *Sehnsucht* as operating in unison. The *Sehnsucht* elicited through the Romantic expression of art also produces Joy, a hopeful bursting of feeling in response to the beautiful. Schlegel’s conceptions of both joy and *Sehnsucht* are important to aid our understanding of the Romanticism that influenced Lewis. I have found few Lewis scholars who have ventured into German Romanticism in order to define these primary Lewisian themes. In the next chapter I will further delve into Schlegel’s contribution to *Sehnsucht* in order to show a more fully orbbed conception of the term.

⁶⁷¹ Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works*, “Ode,” Canto III.19, p. 460.

shouts, / Thou happy Shepherd-boy!"⁶⁷² With joy the poet hears the sounds of life within nature, as well as the poetically expressed maternal relationship between babe and mother.

As Wordsworth reflects on the boundless vitality of nature, he also acknowledges the utter frailty and cycle of death and life. His refrain, however, lifts in jubilation at the thought that even in our mortal diminishing something of our lives remains.⁶⁷³ Wordsworth concludes his reflections with further rejoicing. Though nature's cycle shows no mercy, there is cause for joy in the vitality of the moment, and that joy, that bursting of life through the countryside and, indeed, in humankind, cannot fall dark beneath the current of death.⁶⁷⁴

Conclusion: Joy, in the Romantic sense, denotes vitality; an effervescence associated with life, particularly new life (i.e., createdness). Constitutive of joy is jubilation and praise for life and creation, or the bursting forth of life. The cycle of death found in nature cannot quench Romantic joy due to the fact that life will continue to burst forth. Joy signifies an eternal becoming; movement toward a goal, but not an end.

Biblical joy and Romantic joy, taken together, coalesce well with Lewis's expression of Joy. Both biblical joy and Romantic joy associate with creation and the bursting of life and Lewis's aesthetic gasp. Previously we noted how Lewisian

⁶⁷² Ibid., Canto 111.35.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., Canto IX.133-135, p. 461.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., Canto XI.202-209, p. 462.

Northernness employs aesthetic elements of Norse atmosphere, but turn the Norse worldview around in what can be viewed as Lewis's joyful turn in storytelling. In the next section I want to further develop this idea, connecting it to J.R.R. Tolkien's notion of eucatastrophe.

5.5 Eucatastrophe: Lewis's Magic Formula for Hope

It is no secret J.R.R. Tolkien drew heavily from Norse mythology;⁶⁷⁵ Gandalf and the names of the dwarves come right out of *The Prose Edda*.⁶⁷⁶ It is less well known, however, that he reversed the Norse worldview by creating a new word: eucatastrophe. In 1942 Tolkien penned the essay, "On Fairy-stories," which became the touchstone work of fantasy fiction, illuminating the genre.⁶⁷⁷ Tolkien ends the essay by discussing the "consolations of the happy ending," what he calls the eucatastrophe. A eucatastrophe is the opposite of a catastrophe. Whereas the catastrophe might be employed in tragedy, and is regarded as the downturn of a story, Tolkien's eucatastrophe represents the shift in the fairy story for the good; it is "the sudden joyous turn."⁶⁷⁸

The eucatastrophe conveys hope within a story when all hope appears to be lost; when circumstances seem grimmest, hope emerges. According to Tolkien, eucatastrophe does not deny a sudden failure by the protagonist (dyscatastrophe).⁶⁷⁹ Rather, "it denies universal final defeat and in so far is

⁶⁷⁵ O'Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 154-155.

⁶⁷⁶ Byock, "Introduction" in *The Prose Edda*, xxv.

⁶⁷⁷ Flieger and Anderson, "Introduction" in *Tolkien: On Fairy-stories*, 9.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

evangelium, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief.”⁶⁸⁰ Tolkien uses the Latin *evangelium*, meaning “good news” or in Old English “godspel,” fully aware of the Christian undertone.⁶⁸¹

Norse mythology, on the other hand, did not possess such a hopeful cosmological outcome. Rather, it offered a cycle of universal final defeat.⁶⁸² Furthermore, it was compounded by endless repetition. Ragnarök, the Norse apocalypse, was cyclical: the giants destroy the gods and all humankind in a final battle only for the earth to rise again out of primordial waters, the gods to be reborn along with humans, and the cycle to begin afresh.⁶⁸³ Medievalist and Tolkien expert Tom Shippey suggests Tolkien intended for his modern myth to offer something more than this cycle of doom and was attempting to “retain the feel or ‘flavour’ of Norse myth, while hinting at the happier ending of Christian myth behind it.”⁶⁸⁴

Central to the understanding of Tolkien’s eucatastrophe is his view of how the device mimics reality. Tolkien, for example, draws upon reality in order to create his own secondary reality, a secondary world, in which we see echoes of the real world.⁶⁸⁵ He states, “The peculiar quality of the ‘Joy’ in successful

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 71.

⁶⁸³ The resurrection of the land after the final apocalypse takes place at Idavoll or the “Eternally Renewing Field.” See Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 22; 77.

⁶⁸⁴ Tom Shippey, “Tolkien and the Appeal of the Pagan” in Jane Chance, *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, 152.

⁶⁸⁵ Flieger and Anderson, *Tolkien: On Fairy-stories*, 85. Tolkien’s term “faërie” (which he intentionally employed to “distance himself and his readers” from “fairy” so as to remove confusion with the notions of daintiness and prettiness) means “the Otherworld beyond the five senses—a parallel reality tangential in time and space to the ordinary world ... the practice of enchantment or magic.”

Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth. It is not only a ‘consolation’ for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction, and an answer to that question, ‘Is it true?’⁶⁸⁶ The underlying reality to which Tolkien refers is our own reality, not the fantasy one. Tolkien is suggesting that good Fantasy literature will echo with sounds of the real world. The reader will catch a “far-off gleam or echo of *evangelium* in the real world.”⁶⁸⁷ It is that sudden glimpse of Joy, that storytelling upturn, that makes us feel. According to Tolkien, this glimpse of Joy, the pang of hopefulness, is a universal human desire. In this way, the eucatastrophe connects to reality; we sense it in everyday life the way the hobbits yearn for it in their adventure.⁶⁸⁸

Tolkien invariably directs our attention to the eucatastrophical archetype, the Incarnation, whence our primary truth resides.⁶⁸⁹ This eucatastrophe, this Joy of the Incarnation, is the ultimate upturn to the story of mankind. This Joy comes with the feeling and the knowing that Christ is “Lord of angels and of men and of elves.”⁶⁹⁰ Tolkien’s hopeful apocalypse, however, extends further than his own writing. It is my view that eucatastrophe is plainly evident within the writings of Lewis, Tolkien’s longtime friend.

A brief biographical look at Lewis’s conversion to the Christian faith reveals that Lewis encountered the consolation Tolkien referenced in a personal way. Tolkien (along with Hugo Dyson) convinced Lewis—during a midnight

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., 77

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 78.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 78.

conversation along Addison’s Walk on the grounds of Magdalen College—that the Christian story, even though it was similar to other myths, was a true myth.⁶⁹¹ Perhaps compounding the notion that the story of Christianity was a true myth was the distinguishing fact that unlike the grim Ragnarök of Norse mythology,⁶⁹² the Christian tradition offered the consolation of the happy ending—the joyous turn.⁶⁹³ This conversation possibly influenced Lewis to write the essay “Myth Became Fact” thirteen years later in the autumn of 1944. We see the connecting thread in their shared eucatastrophic vision of Christianity in a letter Tolkien wrote to his son, Christopher Tolkien, on January 30, 1945. Tolkien laments the aesthetic drubbing of the Genesis myth (i.e., story) by the “self-styled scientists.”⁶⁹⁴ As a result, embarrassed Christians had forgotten “the beauty of the matter even ‘as a story.’”⁶⁹⁵ The letter then details how Tolkien directs his son to the great essay his friend C.S. Lewis had written, “Myth Became Fact,” championing the story value of the Christian faith as mental nourishment; as a means by which “the fainthearted that loses faith, but clings at least to the ‘beauty of the story’ as having permanent value.”⁶⁹⁶ Lewis’s point was that even the

⁶⁹¹ *CLI*, 970.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.* Lewis, as a new convert to Christianity, began to distinguish the telling factors of pagan myth with the Christian myth. Hooper notes that Lewis intimates this admission in other writings, notably in his *George MacDonald: An Anthology*, number 146: “All that is not God is death.”

⁶⁹³ It should be noted that in subsequent letters to Arthur Greeves after Lewis’s walk with Tolkien and Dyson, Lewis admits that Greeves’s best lesson to him was “homeliness,” the beauty in everyday charm, whereas Lewis’s best lesson to Greeves’s was “strangeness,” possibly here interpreted as *numinous*, or even Northernness. Lewis, however, mentions that “... ‘strangeness’ has turned out to be only the first step in far deeper mysteries.” See *CLI*, 974.

⁶⁹⁴ J. R. R. Tolkien, Christopher Tolkien, and Humphrey Carpenter, *The Letters of J.R.R.*, “To Christopher Tolkien,” 30 January 1945

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

beauty of the story, that aspect of the joyous turn, can still afford readers of the Genesis myth some consolation of hope and truth.⁶⁹⁷

For Lewis, eucatastrophe represented more than hopeful storytelling. It was a way to extend the narrative of hope into the world, a means to smuggle Joy past the obstacles that inhibit religious life for people.⁶⁹⁸ Like Tolkien, and as I have shown in chapters three and four, Lewis was profoundly influenced by Norse mythology. Lewis, for example, was a member of Tolkien's Icelandic Club at Oxford called the Kolbítars, or "Coal Biters" (1929), in which he translated Old Norse writings into English. In his essay "William Morris" Lewis pays tribute to Morris's love and mastery of "Northernness," which is another way to refer to Morris's infatuation with the atmosphere and ideology of Norse myth. As discussed previously, Lewis also admits to being a lover of Northernness, but Lewis's version differs from Morris's. Whereas Morris adopted the worldview of the Norse apocalypse, Ragnarök's cycle of doom, Lewis imbued his Northernness with eucatastrophe. To say it another way, Lewis infused his storytelling with beautiful elements of Norse mythology in the way of literary atmosphere, but instead of following the doom and hopelessness inherent in the Norse worldview, Lewis offered the eucatastrophic vision of hope in the way of new beginnings.⁶⁹⁹

For Lewis, Joy operates in a dual capacity. First, it operates aesthetically for Lewis, that being the initial feeling within the aesthetic progression of Lewis's

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁸ *OW*, 37.

⁶⁹⁹ I discuss Lewis's Northernness as compared to that of William Morris below, in "Conceptual-Theological Northernness Contra William Morris" in 8.2 of this thesis.

language of beauty, and second, it participates within the theological reality of the Christian worldview. Lewisian Joy works within a dynamic aesthetic framework and communicates not only the delight and jubilation of a specific moment, but also a response of the subject to the object, usually emphasized by a notion of quickening with the subject.⁷⁰⁰ In Lewis's language of beauty, Joy sets off the ontological aesthetic progression that awakens desire. It is this notion of desire to which we now turn.

5.6 The Elision of Joy and *Sehnsucht*

Lewis takes special care to communicate points of emphasis, or themes, within his thought-shaping. The five I am concerned with in this thesis, and which are arguably the core elements of his spiritual memoir, are beauty, the *numinous*, Joy, *Sehnsucht*, and Northernness.⁷⁰¹ I believe Joy operates in Lewis's language of beauty as part of aesthetic experience in general. Lewis himself locates Joy in just this way.⁷⁰² In locating Joy within Lewis's language of beauty, I take into account the fact that Joy for Lewis shifted from being primarily a by-product of aesthetic experience, pre-conversion, to containing the meaning and value of beauty itself, post-conversion. Lewis scholarship, however, tends to interpret and define Joy merely from the memoir's narrative rather than understanding the broader picture of aesthetic experience that Lewis states clearly. As a result, scholars tend to elide

⁷⁰⁰ I discuss this in further detail below when I look the reunion scene that occurs in the valley between Orual and Psyche in Lewis's *TWF*.

⁷⁰¹ *SBJ*, 16-18. See above section.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, 220-221.

Joy and *Sehnsucht* due to the fact that they fail to first understand the aesthetic progression Lewis describes.

Jason Lepojärvi, a Junior Research Fellow at St. Benets Hall at Oxford University, for example, defines Lewisian Joy as a “kind of love.” Lepojärvi states that Lewis’s specialized meaning of Joy “is a cleverly simple term for a desire or longing for joy beyond the offerings of the natural world. It can be described both as ecstatic wonder and causeless melancholy.”⁷⁰³ If, however, Lewis only means Joy to be a term “for a desire or longing for joy,” then how does Lepojärvi account for the complexity of Lewisian Joy discussed above (i.e., the signal of Romantic and biblical vitality, the inherent aesthetic nature of Joy as beauty as evidenced in the Creation account, Barth’s notion of joy as relating to God’s glory (*doxa*), or the aesthetic surprise it caused him and Wordsworth as noted above)? Though I understand the proximity of meaning that Joy and *Sehnsucht* share in *Surprised by Joy*, and concede their Lewisian usage can lead one to elide the terms, I believe that we must interpret Joy, as Lewis means it, in the context of his authorial intent in his spiritual memoir, as well as his usage of the term in his fiction. I hope to contribute to further clarifying of the terms in chapter 8, section 3, of this thesis.

Furthermore, David Downing writes, “The most intense and significant imaginative experiences of Lewis’s childhood are the recurrences of ‘Joy,’ his word for *Sehnsucht*⁷⁰⁴ ...” Downing elides Joy and *Sehnsucht* by only referencing the biographical conception of the term and not expanding it into an aesthetic

⁷⁰³ Jason Lepojärvi, “God Is Love But Love Is Not God” (University of Helsinki, 2015), 7.

⁷⁰⁴ Downing, *Planets in Peril*, 23-25.

progression. In doing so he also includes Northernness as an object of Joy, whereas I position Northernness as a framework for Lewisian beauty as well as an influence within Lewis's life that provided him with great Joy.

It is also interesting to note that in the "Index" to *Reason and Imagination in C.S. Lewis*, Peter Schakel lists "Joy" but then directs the reader to "Longing" (*Sehnsucht*); another example of scholars eliding the terms.⁷⁰⁵ Schakel seems to use the terms Joy and *Sehnsucht* (longing) interchangeably. In one footnote Schakel equates Joy with longing when he gives "Lewis's own expression of longing" by including the text from a letter dated November 5, 1954, between Lewis and Dom Bede Griffiths, a former student of Lewis's during the time when Lewis was converting to theism as well as a later convert to Christianity himself.⁷⁰⁶ In claiming this to be a definitive expression of Lewis's definition of longing, however, Schakel omits the section of the letter where Lewis emphasizes Joy, thus showing a distinction between the two terms.

In the letter, Lewis expresses the concept of *Sehnsucht* in his own life, which we would interpret as his desire for his real home, followed by an exact definition of the role of Joy. I include the entire quote here and use an ellipsis to show where Schakel leaves off:

About death I go through different moods, but the times when I can desire it are never, I think, those when this world seems harshest. On the contrary, it is just when there seems to be most of Heaven already here that I come nearest to longing for a patria. . . . All joy (*as distinct from mere pleasure, still more amusement*) emphasizes our pilgrim status; always reminds, beckons, awakens desire. Our best havings are wanting.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁵ Schakel, *Reason and Imagination in C.S. Lewis*, 206; 188 n.11.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 188 n.11.

⁷⁰⁷ *CL3*, 441 (emphasis added).

Here Lewis, in discussing death, pines for his true home while also showing us a nuanced distinction between *Sehnsucht* and Joy. Lewis, speaking as a Christian, says he does not desire death when life is at its worst. Rather, it is the times when he most feels like he is surrounded by bits of heaven, presumably the beautiful, that he most desires to be in what we might call True Heaven, or what he refers to here as *patria* (fatherland). He then distinguishes Joy as an element of the pilgrim journey of life that awakens desire.

Note the implicit aesthetic progression. Lewis is explaining longing by showing how it relates to the Joys experienced in life, thus showing a clear demarcation between the terms. Joy awakens desire (*Sehnsucht*). Furthermore, Schakel labels Joy as “ecstatic experience.”⁷⁰⁸ Understandably, Schakel relates Lewis’s biographical data to Lewis’s imaginative forming since that is his task in his study on imagination and the arts. His definition of Joy, however, continues to confuse. Joy, as Schakel defines it, is “an experience of intense, even painful, but desired longing, which, after his conversion, he came to believe was a desire for unity with the divine (though often intermediate objects are mistaken for the ultimate object).”⁷⁰⁹

Lewis does not define Joy as painful longing. Rather, he describes how the initial pang of Joy he received when experiencing Northernness,⁷¹⁰ for example,

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁹ Schakel, *Imagination and the Arts in C.S. Lewis*, 8; 5. Furthermore, Bruce Edwards, likewise, treats Joy and *Sehnsucht* interchangeably; see Edwards, ed., *C.S. Lewis*, 67; 250-252.

⁷¹⁰ *SBJ*, 17; 73.

awakened a desire, and how eventually he longed for the longing.⁷¹¹ Lewis notes how he, pre-conversion, labeled Joy as aesthetic experience and then, upon conversion, realized that this was not a sufficient description, but it is a description nonetheless, and it remains true of his experience.⁷¹² Thus we conclude that his conversion pushed him toward a full spiritual understanding of Joy's purpose and utility. That revelation, however, does not negate Joy's aesthetic value. For Lewis, Joy was a Wordsworthian reaction to an object of beauty and that reaction, then, awakened desire.

This ability to “awaken” places Joy in the Romantic role of signifying vitality. In the Lewisian post-conversion world, however, Joy as vitality is understood theologically as the spiritual quickening, or rebirth, which comes when a person reaches faith in Christ (Ps. 16:11). Joy, theologically, is the natural outcome of fellowship with God. God is the source and outcome of Christian Joy. (John 15:11) Joy is also experienced eternally, or permanently, when one joins Christ in the heavenly realm.⁷¹³ Joy's inherent theological permanence underpins the Christian's enduring hope because it rests in the hope and permanence of Christ himself. In John 15:11, for example, the writer describes Christ's joy as complete and the Christian joining the permanence of his joy. Not only is Christ the object and source of joy, he also experiences joy himself. Joy, therefore, is the mark of Christian fellowship in its ability to signify spiritual vitality and eschatological permanence.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.,

⁷¹² Ibid., 221.

⁷¹³ Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 72.

In the next chapter I examine *Sehnsucht* in its own light. I will define *Sehnsucht*, drawing from Corbin Scott Carnell's popular definition as well as from its historical literary lineage in German Romanticism—a stunning shortcoming of Carnell's analysis, which up to this point is the most common source for defining Lewis's use of the term. I will also connect the German Romantics' usage of *Sehnsucht* and show how it aligns with historical theology as well as show how *Sehnsucht* further contributes to the aesthetic progression inherent in Lewis's language of beauty.

Chapter 6: The Enduring Ache

Sehnsucht As Movement Toward God

“Desire itself is movement.”

—T.S. Eliot, “Four Quartets”⁷¹⁴

6.1 Introduction: *Sehnsucht* and Lewis’s Aesthetic Progression

In his essay “The Fantastic Imagination” novelist and poet George MacDonald described the beauty of a work of imagination as a tool with which to awaken meaning.⁷¹⁵ MacDonald suggests the best thing one person can do for another is to awaken his or her intellect via the use of beauty in storytelling. According to MacDonald, each person must feel the story in order to derive its meaning.⁷¹⁶ Hidden, however, between the words “feel” and “meaning” is the word *Sehnsucht* (intense longing).⁷¹⁷ In the previous chapter I asserted the existence of an aesthetic progression, according to Lewis’s language of beauty, that begins when one encounters natural beauty or an *objet d’art*. Joy follows the encounter as the initial response in the aesthetic experience (the aesthetic gasp). Joy, then, awakens desire.⁷¹⁸ Desire stirs as a person knows but, perhaps, fails to understand exactly what the feeling, initiated by beauty, means.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁴ T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 8.

⁷¹⁵ George MacDonald, *The Complete Fairy Tales*, Penguin Classics, 7.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷¹⁷ *PR*, 202.

⁷¹⁸ *CLI*, 441. Also *SBJ*, 16-18.

⁷¹⁹ Otto, *Holy*, 160.

Lewis frames the experience similarly in his corrective addendum to *The Pilgrim's Regress*. Lewis notes how “inanimate nature and marvelous works of literature” evoked the “particular recurrent experience which dominated my childhood and adolescence.”⁷²⁰ Even as a man in his twenties Lewis experienced feelings of profound desire, most notably, perhaps, stirred by the landscape. On a seaside holiday in Somerset during the spring of 1924, Lewis noted the natural beauty of the landscape in his journal. “The steepness of the slopes on which I scrambled,” writes Lewis on Sunday 30 March, “the trees hiding the ground below me, and the suddenness of my changing views of the valleys all produced, in little space, a real mountain feeling.”⁷²¹ The beauty prompts the pre-conversion Lewis to follow his description with, “*Sed omnia nisi vigilaveris in venerem abitura,*” which translates: “But everything, unless you are vigilant, will go off into sex.”⁷²² Lewis’s “mountain feeling” here seems tantamount to intense desire—or at least the catalyst for creating such an intense desire. On the whole, Lewis (post-conversion), like MacDonald, utilized these stirred Romantic feelings of nostalgia and intense longing as a point of origin from which to guide readers on a pilgrimage of divine discovery.⁷²³

Given that objects of beauty initiate an aesthetic experiential progression, which the feeling of Joy subsequently sets off, what then of this Romantic notion of *Sehnsucht* Lewis discusses so frequently in his non-fiction and creates within

⁷²⁰ *PR*, 202.

⁷²¹ *AMR*, 308.

⁷²² *Ibid.*

⁷²³ Lewis, “Preface” in, *George MacDonald*, xxxii. I make a similar point in my discussion on Lewisian Northernness in Chapter 5 with regard to Lewis’s appropriation of Norse atmosphere as a way to communicate the eucatastrophe of the Christian worldview, i.e., the hope and joy of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

his fiction? We have seen how Northernness influenced the Victorian writers of the eighteenth century, such as Scott, Morris, and Longfellow,⁷²⁴ and although the early English Romantic writers did not work with Norse sources⁷²⁵ they yet connect to conceptual Northernness in their expressions of literary flavor and atmosphere. Common to the general aspect of Northernness and to English Romantic expressions of beauty is the concept of *Sehnsucht*. I have traced the Northernness influence upon Lewis and connected Lewis's imaginative program to English Romanticism. But unlike his forebears, Lewis's conception of *Sehnsucht* expresses the rhetorical poetic of the Christian faith—a conception not unlike St. Augustine's notion of humankind's "restless heart."

I believe *Sehnsucht* emerges as a literary theological theme within Lewis's *oeuvre* as part of Lewis's language of beauty. In particular, it is my view that *Sehnsucht* works in conjunction with Joy as a constituent part of aesthetic experience thus communicated through Lewis's fiction, primarily. In this chapter, therefore, I continue my analysis of innerscape and aim to show how *Sehnsucht*, when viewed as the third elemental progression within the aesthetic experience, communicates Lewis's language of beauty and indicates an ontological *ganz andere* quality of beauty, which suggests what Elaine Scarry refers to as "unprecedentedness," the catalyst for human wandering and questing after the precedent. *Sehnsucht*, therefore, like Joy, operates as a by-product of the aesthetic

⁷²⁴ O'Donoghue, *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth*, 104-16; 143-147.

⁷²⁵ Ibid. 142. O'Donoghue notes how the canon writers of Romanticism, such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats did not particularly care for Norse sources; neither did they incorporate them into their writing. However, George Herbert and Walter Scott, who was a Victorian writer, did utilize Norse sources, as did Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It should be noted, however, that even though English Romantic poets did not draw from Old Norse poetry and myth, Scandinavian and American poets did.

experience and is, in fact, awakened by the joyous delight felt upon encountering an object of beauty. It is the feeling that moves a person toward meaning.

Sehnsucht is the impetus for Lewis's spiritual pilgrimage and provides important insight into his vision of Christianity,⁷²⁶ which I assert to be heavily weighted in Romantic Northernness. *Sehnsucht* is also a significant result of the "aesthetic experience" in general and, according to G. Gabrielle Starr of New York University, "works to produce new value in what we see and what we feel."⁷²⁷ We encounter a beautiful piece of art, or explore a beautiful landscape, and are compelled to possess it, to climb inside of it because it touches our core consciousness, our very essence.⁷²⁸

In chapter one of this thesis I suggested Lewis tips his hand, revealing his intended message behind his writing program: to find where all the beauty came from.⁷²⁹ The questing element of Lewis's literary program is undeniable,⁷³⁰ and, apart from Lewis's own biographical reasons for employing this motif, it creates within the reader his or her own sense of wandering pilgrimage, their own sense of the hunt whereby he or she might "bring the noble Hart to bay."⁷³¹ The word Lewis employs to describe this lifelong and literary wandering is *Sehnsucht*. Far from the one-dimensional notion of "intense longing," however, *Sehnsucht*

⁷²⁶ Clyde S. Kilby, *Christian World of C.S. Lewis*, 36.

⁷²⁷ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 66. Starr's work focuses on neuroaesthetics and examines the ways in which we feel beauty. *Sehnsucht* is a by-product of the sense experience of beauty, a feeling.

⁷²⁸ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 135.

⁷²⁹ *TWF*, 76.

⁷³⁰ Kilby, *Christian World of C.S. Lewis*, 187. See also Rowan Williams, *The Lion's World*, 140-141.

⁷³¹ Lewis, "No Beauty We Could Desire."

suggests a more nuanced and effervescent concept that combines the resulting “feeling” upon experiencing the joy of a beautiful object with the notion of imaginative potential and discovery. By understanding a fuller definition of *Sehnsucht* we gain further insight into the aforementioned problem of eliding it with Lewis’s conception of Joy.

6.2 The Unattained: *Sehnsucht* Defined

Sehnsucht is the German noun commonly translated “intense longing.” It joins the verb *das Sehen*, “longing or yearning,” with *die Sucht*, “addiction, craving, obsessive desire (pathological obsession).”⁷³² When joined, however, *Sehen* and *Sucht* do not approximate to a clear English equivalent, but rather locate their meaning in emotional concepts such as alienation or nostalgia or craving. But these concepts do not go far enough. When considering the whole term *Sehnsucht* we see that it is defined as a noun, meaning a “longing or yearning,” but it is also defined in terms of connectedness: “the longing for far away parts.”⁷³³ Appraised in this light we discover a reconciliatory (i.e., relational) angle embedded in *Sehnsucht*, which advances us closer to Lewis’s conception of the term. The desire for connection with a far away object echoes in modern psychology’s use of the term. “*Sehnsucht* denotes the recurring, strong

⁷³² Oxford Dictionaries, *Oxford German Dictionary*, For additional insight into the alienation side of *Sehnsucht* see Acacia M. Doktorchick, “Sehnsucht and Alienation in Schubert’s Mignon Settings” (University of Lethbridge, 2009), 2. N.B. Corbin Scott Carnell in *Bright Shadow of Reality* states *Sehnsucht* is best understood as “nostalgia.” Also note the German *sehne* translates to tendon, string, or chord, thus implying connectedness. Furthermore, the attributive adjective *Sehnsuchtig* carries Romantic nuance as it translates to “full of longing or yearning” or “wistful” as with a gaze or sigh.

⁷³³ Ibid.

feeling that life is incomplete or imperfect, coupled with the desire for ideal (utopian), alternative states and experiences of life.”⁷³⁴

The psychological sense of the term connotes bittersweet emotions that arise from dealing with the unpleasantness of a situation in the present while recalling a happier time of life with fondness. One can find the emotion of *Sehnsucht* across all aspects of life ranging from the family, to work, to art,⁷³⁵ in the modern age. The nineteenth century *Deutsches Wörterbuch* also defines *Sehnsucht* in relational terms: “a high degree of intense and often painful desire for something, particularly if there is no hope to attain the desired, or when its attainment is uncertain, still far away.”⁷³⁶ Here we find Northern strands of Ragnarök, the hopeless Norse apocalyptic cycle of doom, in the idea of the absence of hope; a hint, perhaps, that themes generally thought germane to Romanticism were also at play in the ancient Norse sagas and poetry.⁷³⁷ To understand Lewis’s connection to *Sehnsucht*, however, we must look beyond the lexicon and into Romanticism itself. To do this I want to begin with an examination of Corbin Scott Carnell’s definition of *Sehnsucht* and transition into the historical Romantic meaning found within German Romanticism.

⁷³⁴ Shane J. Lopez and C. R. Snyder, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, 176.

⁷³⁵ Ibid.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ See Adolph Burnett Benson, *The Old Norse Element in Swedish Romanticism*.

Carnell's Definition of Sehnsucht

As we have discovered, *Sehnsucht*, though it carries mystical and Romantic overtones, is not narrowly defined in such terms. Corbin Scott Carnell further expands the definition of *Sehnsucht* as an attitude that “involves both an emotional reaction and an assessment of that emotional reaction, that is, a state of mind.”⁷³⁸ Carnell draws from the psychological conception of the term. For him, *Sehnsucht* is best translated as “nostalgia,” but even he does not settle on a simplified definition. Instead, for Carnell, *Sehnsucht* splinters into various components. He, therefore, defines the term by examining what he suggests are its five primary aspects: *numinous*, romantic longing, ecstatic wonder, causeless melancholy, and the Blue Flower Motif.⁷³⁹

First, the *numinous* relates to *Sehnsucht* in that with the *numinous* one senses or becomes aware of the Divine.⁷⁴⁰ We find a sense of spiritual and even physical displacement embedded in the *numinous*, as well as alienation. These feelings then produce an air of nostalgia; we sense the Divine within the temporal (*numinous*) and therefore desire to be joined with it and to enjoy a better life with it.⁷⁴¹ Next, romantic longing, according to Carnell, deals with the aforementioned sense of exile or displacement, as I have alluded to above. Romantic longing manifests itself in personal reflection upon one's past, or a better time, a time of

⁷³⁸ Carnell, *Shadow*, 15. Professor Carnell's book deals exclusively with the term *Sehnsucht*. Though it is an excellent treatment of the German term, his approach focuses primarily on the literary use of the term and does not offer in-depth theological analysis or reflection, nor does he connect the *Sehnsucht* to Lewis's conceptual treatment of beauty.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15-28.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

one's childhood (i.e., the psychological conception).⁷⁴² Third, Carnell suggests that ecstatic wonder, though closely related to feelings of the *numinous* in that a person feels their finitude when experiencing it, produces a moment of ecstasy in which a person transcends his or her self. It is a moment of bliss, and is often experienced when encountering elements of natural beauty.⁷⁴³ Fourth, Carnell lists causeless melancholy, which can succinctly be defined as “the inevitable conflict between desire and nonfulfillment.”⁷⁴⁴ Again, this is a draw from the psychological definition of *Sehnsucht*.⁷⁴⁵ It is also a by-product of the feeling of *Sehnsucht*, not the feeling itself. The final element Carnell uses to define *Sehnsucht* is the Blue Flower Motif. This motif finds its origins in German Romanticism and can be defined as the quest for the unattainable.⁷⁴⁶ The Romantic notion of *Sehnsucht* surfaced first in Novalis and the motif of the blue flower, as previously noted. Friedrich, Freiherr von Hardenberg (1772-1801), the German Romantic poet, philosopher, and novelist who is known primarily by his pseudonym Novalis, first created the literary motif of the blue flower (*di blaue*

⁷⁴² Ibid., 19.

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁴⁵ See also Jedidiah Evans, “C.S. Lewis, Thomas Wolfe, and the Transatlantic Expression of *Sehnsucht*,” vol. IX (presented at “The Inklings Forever,” Upland Indiana: Taylor University, 2014), www.tayloruniversity.edu/cslewis. Strands of the psychological conception of *Sehnsucht* emerge in Evans' essay, and he seems to adhere to that as what should be the primary definition of *Sehnsucht*. Evans incorrectly notes that Lewis's vision of *Sehnsucht* is problematic due to his limited conception of the term; that of being “evidence for a spiritual reality.” Lewis only makes the connection with *Sehnsucht* and a spiritual reality after his conversion in 1931, which is evidenced in his first post-conversion work of fiction *PR*. To suggest post-conversion notion of *Sehnsucht* is limited seems to negate Lewis's previous work in *Dymer*, in which Lewis appear to firmly grasp the more pagan Romantic notion of *Sehnsucht*. See “Introduction” in Don W. King, ed., *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis*, 2. See also “Preface by the Author to the 1950 Edition” in *NP*, 4-5. See also “Dymer” in *NP*, 66.

⁷⁴⁶ Carnell, *Shadow*, 22.

Blume)⁷⁴⁷ in his unfinished novel titled, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*.⁷⁴⁸ In the novel, the protagonist dreams about a blue flower that dominates all his attention, creating a deep desire to obtain it. The blue flower motif subsequently became a mark of Romanticism as a broad movement,⁷⁴⁹ a symbol of Romantic longing for the unattainable. Lewis himself admits to being a votary to the “blue flower.”⁷⁵⁰ This quest for the unattainable simultaneously brings joy and frustration to the wanderer who, though she might experience moments of joy, realizes the source of the joy remains separate, always in the beyond.

Carnell’s treatment of *Sehnsucht* within the works of Lewis, though helpful and insightful, fails to connect the broader Germanic influence of the term, from which it originates. Though Carnell includes Novalis’s blue flower motif in his definition, he neglects its further development in German Romanticism. Furthermore, the five aspects he uses to define the term overlap, as I noted above as well as in the parenthetical notations, causing redundancy. Granted, the term finds no accurate English counterpart, but it seems as though Carnell has found several ways of saying the same thing.

In a way, Carnell presents *Sehnsucht* similarly to how I am positioning beauty within Lewis’s work: as a kind of language that does not define the term

⁷⁴⁷ Henry B. Garland, *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, 630-631.

⁷⁴⁸ Kri Gjesdal, “Georg Friedrich Philipp von Hardenberg [Novalis],” ed. Edward N. Zalta, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall Edition (2009), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/novalis/>. Hereafter I shall use Hardenberg’s pseudonym, Novalis, when referring to his work and thought.

⁷⁴⁹ Garland, *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, 707. The German Romantic Movement did not occur in sync with the English Romantic Movement, nor with its own earlier cognate movement from the 1770s. Both the German Romantic Movement and the English Romantic Movement occur in close chronological overlap with early Romanticism in Germany, the late 1790s to c. 1802 center in Jena and Berlin.

⁷⁵⁰ *SBJ*, 7. Lewis uses the term “votary” and not, simply, follower. Votary carries a religious sense with it, as a monk would devote himself to a certain order or church.

itself (in my case, beauty), but presents the concepts associated with the term. The difference, however, is that I seek to identify the poetics of Lewis through the modality of his aesthetics coupled with his conceptual-theological understanding of how beauty works in the world. Carnell, on the other hand, attempts to define a term, *Sehnsucht*, but does so by describing the by-products of desire creation.

German Romanticism's Notion of Sehnsucht

Though it is plain to see how and why Carnell dissects *Sehnsucht*, his conception seems to lack the depth of Romantic force that accompanied the term, which took on significant emphasis within German Romanticism. Indeed, “early German romanticists enthusiastically believed that *Sehnsucht* was an intimation of ultimate reality.”⁷⁵¹ That is to say, their view of *Sehnsucht* remained positive; a hope-filled longing. This view stood in contrast to Kant’s conception of longing which indicated the “empty wish to overcome the time between the desire and the acquisition of the desired object.”⁷⁵² Kant’s negative conception viewed the objects of desire from a position of inadequacy, whereas August Wilhelm Schlegel’s view positively framed *Sehnsucht* between memory and anticipation.⁷⁵³

Furthermore, August Wilhelm Schlegel influenced the understanding and expression of *Sehnsucht* in German Poetics when he noted that because the expression of *Sehnsucht* was bound to reality there would exist then an intrinsic

⁷⁵¹ Theodore Gish, “‘Wanderlust’ and ‘Wanderleid’: The Motif of the Wandering Hero in German Romanticism,” *Studies in Romanticism* 3, no. 4 (July 1, 1964): 225–39, doi:10.2307/25599624, 225.

⁷⁵² George S. Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche*, 2.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*

incompleteness, or imperfection, in the art.⁷⁵⁴ In other words, the conceptual expression of *Sehnsucht* through poetry (or other art forms) would leave a lingering desire for the perfect.⁷⁵⁵ It should be noted that poetic efforts such as Richard Wagner's *Ring*, among others, attempted to infuse a culture that was heaving with the birth pangs of the Industrial Revolution with the hope of myth, such as Norse Mythology, to embody German Romanticism's vision for a society marked by hopeful longing.⁷⁵⁶ Instead, the nineteenth century fell further into a modernism marked by "religious and intellectual divisions"⁷⁵⁷ as well as alienation from nature.

As a brief aside, one can see the parallel between the German Romantics' attempt to infuse an estranged culture with hope through myth and Lewis's (as well as J.R.R. Tolkien's) attempt to employ pagan mythology as a vehicle for hope via eucatastrophic Northernness of his own myths. I believe, the anti-culture thread, where hope-filled literature stands against the machine driven society, is a latent theme in Lewis's work.⁷⁵⁸ This seldom discussed strand in Lewis scholarship stems from the possible influence of John Ruskin, William Morris, and the Pre-Raphaelite movement in general, and their effect on Lewis's thought shaping as a "counter-culturalist." The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (1848), a

⁷⁵⁴ Gish, "Wanderlust' and 'Wanderleid,'" 225. Schlegel used the phrase "*ein gewisser Schein von Unvollendung*" which translates, "some semblance of imperfection."

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁶ Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany*, 2-3.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid. Williamson notes that the German longing for myth should be characterized not as a "secularization of traditional religion ... but rather as a development *within* Christian (especially German Protestant) culture." (4)

⁷⁵⁸ The "Brotherhood" believed art had become "insincere through Raphael and that it behooved them to return to the 'Age of Faith.'" See Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 511-512; See also Timothy Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, 33.

close-knit society of painters, poets, and designers,⁷⁵⁹ defied the utilitarian effects of the Industrial Revolution with their signature works that highlighted poetic atmosphere, female beauty, landscape, and *Sehnsucht*. And though the brotherhood disbanded near the end of the century, their influence endured. I have shown, and will further show, Lewis's affinity for the work of William Morris—in particular his Northernness flavor—and I will further examine the Lewis/Morris connection in Chapter 8.

The influence of Ruskin on Lewis has been less documented in Lewisian scholarship. Though I believe Ruskin's influence on Lewis to be minor, one must consider Lewis's early affection for Ruskin's writing—in particular and germane to our study here, his power to describe landscape.⁷⁶⁰ Further, in discussing Lewis's personal and literary emphasis on the beauty of landscape, I showed how beauty for Lewis does not only stem from his desire for developing picturesque scenes within his fiction. Rather, it seems more likely that Lewis's affection for landscape, when viewed alongside his disdain for machines⁷⁶¹ originates from a

⁷⁵⁹ The first members include: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, James Collinson, and Frederic George Stephens. The non-painters were sculptor Thomas Woolner, and Brotherhood secretary William Michael Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's brother. See more at: Dinah Roe, "The Pre-Raphaelites," *British Library*, Discovering Literature, accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-pre-raphaelites>.

⁷⁶⁰ See *CLI*, 956 (February 3, 1931): Lewis states Ruskin's description of travel to be the best he ever read. See also *CSI*, 626 (April 26, 1924): In a letter to his father, Lewis states he was reading *A Diary* by William Allingham, who he delights to discover was on intimate terms with Tennyson, Browning, Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelites. See also *CSI*, 331, (July 24, 1917): In a letter to Arthur Greeves Lewis admits to Ruskin being one of the prose style authors for whom he has an ear. See also *CLI*, 246 (March 11, 1916): Lewis compares Ruskin to John Bunyan, showing his progression into liking Ruskin. See also *CLI*, 65 (February 29, 1914): In a letter to his father, Lewis notes Ruskin's sense of place, prose style, and power of description. See also *CLI*, 165 (February 8, 1916): Lewis tells Arthur Greeves that he is reading *A Joy Forever* (previously titled *The Political Economy of Art*) by Ruskin and asks Greeves if he reads Ruskin. Interestingly, Lewis also admits to reading William Morris during the same period.

⁷⁶¹ See Lewis's poem "Future of Forestry" for an example of Lewis's affection for landscape.

thoughtful theological position. Scant work has been done to illuminate Lewis's connection to the Pre-Raphaelite philosophy, and though we do not have space here to develop it much further than highlighting the connection, it should be noted.

Moving on, truly Romantic artwork (i.e., poetry, literature) should carry with it a sense of *werden*, or progressing, a sense of becoming.⁷⁶² This sense is established through imagery while the “hero inhabiting this world is frequently a wanderer, the archetypal symbol of man’s capability for becoming and the personification of his yearning.”⁷⁶³ Romantic literature carries the distinctive mark of “movement,” of images denoting motion. Theodore Gish states, “Within literature, ‘movement’ has always been a traditional and lucid expression of becoming.”⁷⁶⁴ Gish further notes how within the Romantic literary landscape of motion the hero “inhabiting this world is frequently a wanderer, the archetypal symbol of man’s capability for becoming and personification of his yearning.”⁷⁶⁵

The German conception of longing—*Sehnsucht*—strides along with emerging conceptions of beauty itself. In Chapter 4 of this thesis I noted the characteristic of beauty found within the movement of Lewis’s *Perelandra*, as well as the connection of such a literary rendering of beauty to Northernness. If we continue to examine beauty within the scope of our seemingly intrinsic desire for beauty, we see constant movement. Philosophically, Boethius, for example, reflects upon the passing of physical beauty, noting the ephemeral and transient

⁷⁶² Gish, “Wanderlust and Wanderleid,” 225.

⁷⁶³ Ibid. 226.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

nature of beauty. He writes, "... how short-lived is the sheen of the body's beauty, how transient, more ephemeral than blossoms of spring (3.9.9-10)!"⁷⁶⁶ Likewise, Umberto Eco notes "a sense of melancholy, because of the *transience* of earthly beauty."⁷⁶⁷

So, natural beauty possesses a transient nature—as well as *objets d'art* by the mere fact finite individuals create them with physical materials—while the subjects of beauty, human beings, experience *Sehnsucht* upon encountering such objects. Human beings, then, wander through life in search of beauty, which by its physical nature, diminishes.

6.3 Beauty Pulls Us: Lewis's Weight of Glory

I want to explore this notion that beauty pulls us not only by its aesthetic allure but incites within us a sense of exploration and questing to discover its source. I noted in the introduction that Barth viewed God's glory as essential joy. Joy, or what might be termed vitality, communicates from God into our world via beauty. This Joy compels human beings, awakening desire for something. Theologically, therefore, we can view beauty as communicating through and possessive of a divine movement. Natural objects in our world, by the very fact that they are created by God, possess an echo of his divine nature. That is to say, they possess vitality, and that vitality constitutes their beautiful and joyful expression in this world. Lewis touches on this theme in his sermon "The Weight of Glory," in which he draws upon a long theological lineage of thinkers who

⁷⁶⁶ Boethius, *Consolations*, 52.

⁷⁶⁷ Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, 9 (emphasis added).

position beauty as a communication tool of God. It will be helpful to briefly note how Lewis positions man's desire in the sermon.

In the first part of the sermon, Lewis compares what modern man believes to be the highest of the virtues, unselfishness, with what Lewis suggests to be the former chief virtue, love. The comparison allows Lewis to show the terminus of unselfishness while pointing to the longevity of the Christian conception of love. The nature of this kind of love raises the question, if no terminus exists for Christian love then to what end does a person follow Jesus Christ while living on this earth? Lewis suggests that this following after the Christ relates to a person's desires. What kind of reward does the desire to follow after Jesus Christ produce? This desire, or inconsolable secret as Lewis positions it, often creates deviations in people, even people who decide to follow Jesus Christ. This is due to a weakness or the frailty of human desire in that we do not desire, or we do not love, Jesus strongly enough.⁷⁶⁸ If the Christian's desire for Jesus Christ were stronger, then he or she would not be so overcome with the earthly beauties that only gratify our desire temporarily. What, however, would incite a person to desire more strongly? Lewis suggests that the reward of glory possesses both the best reward of our love and is, indeed, what every person truly desires.⁷⁶⁹

In the second section of the essay Lewis delineates two views of glory: fame and luminosity.

⁷⁶⁸ Lewis discusses ordinate and inordinate loves in *FL*. "It is the smallness of our love for God, not the greatness of our love for the man, that constitutes the inordinacy." (*FL*, 122) Lewis, here, is offering a thoughtful reaction to Augustine who, in the wake of losing a dear friend, states, "Though left alone, he loses none dear to him; for all are dear in the one who cannot be lost." (*Confessions*, Book IV; xiv)

⁷⁶⁹ *TWG*, 35-38.

First, Lewis previously viewed fame as being better known than other people, a concept he considered antithetical to Christianity.⁷⁷⁰ He then concedes his error and recasts the concept of fame in light of the definition of fame by thinkers like Milton and Aquinas: fame with God. For example, Aquinas writes: “Man’s good depends on God’s knowledge as its cause. And therefore man’s beatitude depends, as on its cause, on the glory which man has with God; according to Ps. 90:15, 16: ‘I will deliver him, and I will glorify him; I will fill him with length of days, and I will show him my salvation.’”⁷⁷¹ To put it succinctly, glory defined as fame means to be accepted by God; to find that he appreciates us. Quite simply it is the notion of a child before his or her father, seeking approval and finding it; any good child naturally takes pleasure in being praised.⁷⁷² For Lewis, what God thinks about humankind is the essential thing to consider here.⁷⁷³ He moves the discussion from analogy of explanation to the spiritual *eschaton*, where, according to the Christian tradition, all humankind must give an account (Rom. 14:12). In that moment it matters not at all what man thinks about God, only what God thinks of man. This is what Lewis views as such an incredible weight. To please God is Lewis’s weight of glory. “To please God ... to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness ... to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a

⁷⁷⁰ *TWG*, 36.

⁷⁷¹ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ia-IIae, q. 8 a.1. Lewis draws heavily on Aquinas in section two of the essay, as is revealed further as he discusses how the temporal beauties of this life will not and cannot satisfy.

⁷⁷² *TWG*, 37.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*, 38.

son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain.”⁷⁷⁴

Lewis shows the connection between the initial vague desire previously discussed in the essay and the Christian promise. Glory (as fame before God) satisfies our desires. Furthermore, it denudes the desire for what it truly is and what it plainly says. Lewis suggests that when we take the time and space to evaluate our desires, when we allow the overflow of powerful feelings collected in tranquility to ease like a tide, and subside, when the feelings of belonging to that world of beauty pass, we are left with the truth of desire. That truth, Lewis states, rests in the fact that, “Beauty has smiled, but not to welcome us; her face was turned in our direction, but not to see us. We have not been accepted or welcomed, or taken into the dance. . . . Nobody marks us.”⁷⁷⁵

Objects of beauty are, for Lewis, messengers of that “something” we cannot explain; we believe beauty, due to the intrinsic qualities of delight and pleasure, will satisfy the need to be accepted.⁷⁷⁶ Beauty, however, cannot provide such acceptance; it can only show us the way to the acceptance we desire. Thus we find a kind of melancholia settles in due to the bitterness of alienation mixing with the sweetness of the beautiful object. Humankind longs to be acknowledged, and as Lewis puts it, to “bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality.”⁷⁷⁷ We see therefore how the promise of glory relates to our inconsolable desire, for glory is acceptance with God.

⁷⁷⁴ *TWG*, 39.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

The second kind of glory Lewis describes as luminosity. Lewis refers to the biblical notion that Christians will be given the Morning Star, and that they are to shine as the sun. Here Lewis points toward Nature as giving us the Morning Star, the sunrise, the sunset, and as fulfilling as that beauty is to behold, there is more. Lewis employs his familiar theory⁷⁷⁸ of looking along a thing rather than only at a thing. He suggests that it is not enough for any human being merely to view natural beauty. We want, in some ways, to possess it, “to pass into it.”

This concept abides in Lewis’s writing in both fiction and nonfiction. One example we find in *The Horse and His Boy* when the humble mare meets Aslan for the first time. “Please,” she said, “you’re so beautiful. You may eat me if you like. I’d sooner be eaten by you than fed by anyone else.” Aslan welcomes the mare and says, “I knew you would not be long in coming to me. Joy shall be yours.”⁷⁷⁹ Lewis suggests the aesthetes provide no answers because they merely look at beauty, and that it is the mythmakers and the storytellers who help us climb into beauty, so to speak. G.K. Chesterton agrees that it is the mythmakers who enable us to pursue God and beauty with our imaginations.⁷⁸⁰ Said another way, our pursuit of beauty manifests itself in the creation of faeries as a way to inhabit this world of natural beauty, rendering this kind of beauty mimetic.⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁸ See “Meditation in a Toolshed,” in *God in the Dock*.

⁷⁷⁹ C. S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*. See also Lewis’s comments in *DI*, 114. “Love seeks to participate in its object, to become as like its object as it can. But finite and created beings can never fully share the motionless ubiquity of God, just as time, however it multiplies its transitory presents, can never achieve the *totum simul* of eternity.”

⁷⁸⁰ G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*, 111.

⁷⁸¹ Edward Said, “Introduction” in *Mimesis*, xiii; xxxii. The term “mimesis” is defined as a representation of reality.

Lewis, however, suggests a day when the language of Scriptures will become a reality; the Christian will “put on the splendour {sic} of the sun.”⁷⁸² The Christian, then, will be like the creatures and children in Narnia who have walked through the door Aslan provided; they are, in a sense, mingling with the splendor, they are part of the glory, possessing it even as it possesses them. Lewis holds up Nature, in this paragraph, to be but an analog of divine beauty. He suggests that we can indeed still gain understanding from Nature’s grace, beauty, and power, only if we remain vigilant and not elevate Nature to the status of a god.⁷⁸³ Lewis is adamant, and somewhat redundant, that we “shall get in” to beauty itself if only we remain obedient.

Lewis ruminates upon the prophetic reality of going beyond the natural world into the source of beauty and desire itself. “The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain⁷⁸⁴ of joy ... the rapture of the saved soul will ‘flow over’ into the glorified body.” The experience, according to Lewis, will be *torrens voluptatis*, a torrent of joyful pleasure. He emphasizes this statement by suggesting a mere ghost would not be able to imbibe such pleasure and for readers to remember the body was made for the Lord.⁷⁸⁵

In sum, Lewis highlights the intrinsic movement of beauty working through human desire. At times human desire is misplaced, thus rendering the melancholia of dissatisfaction or lack of fulfillment. Lewis connects human desire

⁷⁸² *TWG*, 43.

⁷⁸³ *TWG*, 43-44.

⁷⁸⁴ Quite possibly Lewis echoes Athanasius here, a translation for which Lewis wrote the introduction. Athanasius writes: “For God is good—or rather of all goodness He is fountainhead.” See St. Athanasius, *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, 28.

⁷⁸⁵ *TWG*, 44-45.

with its source, the glory of God. This pulling weight lies behind the beauty that so enchants the world. Next, I want to connect Lewis's weight of glory with its theological historical through-line as well as show how modern aesthetes are moving closer toward a divine source of beauty via their understanding of beauty as possessing intrinsic movement or momentum.

6.4 Restless Until Home: Theological Precedents for Beauty's Movement

G. Gabrielle Starr notes that desire works through the beautiful to “produce new value in what we see and what we feel,”⁷⁸⁶ and finds theological resonance within Lewis's thought, as well as historical theology. Throughout this thesis we have worked to build Lewis's language of beauty. The impetus for such a project stems from my belief that, for Lewis, it is not that a person just sees beautiful objects that matters most. Rather, it is that a person *experiences* the beautiful. Central to this assertion is the notion of *Sehnsucht*, or human longing. But as we noted, *Sehnsucht* extends beyond the notion of intense longing. It hints at beauty's innate movement or *werden*. We move toward what we understand to be the source of our desiring. When engaged through Lewis's works of fiction, for example, this movement works within us to, as Starr points out, produce new value in our lived experience.

Elaine Scarry suggests such a movement as intrinsic to beauty when she states, “Beautiful things have a forward momentum the way they incite the desire to bring new things into the world.”⁷⁸⁷ Her idea of beauty's momentum leads her

⁷⁸⁶ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 66.

⁷⁸⁷ Scarry, *On Beauty*, 46.

to surmise that, “No matter how long beautiful things endure, they cannot out-endure our longing for them.”⁷⁸⁸ Humans will continue to desire the beautiful. Scarry’s philosophical statement hints at the underlying reality about human desire: it is part of our physiological and mental wiring⁷⁸⁹ because it relates to how we perceive the world through our vision, and how, when we meditate upon what we see, it relates to God.

When we see a beautiful object we are drawn in to “explore the world in reality and imagination,” writes Starr, “and to engage with both the inner and outer world as made to move us, to meet us as we grasp them.”⁷⁹⁰ So, our perception of the beauty within the world moves us inwardly, compelling us into exploration of the physical world, yes, but more importantly, of the metaphysical. Physics Nobel Prize winner Frank Wilczek supports the notion that beauty works through our vision to lure us into further exploration of the world—a kind of questing to discover. Wilczek states that the world does not supply its own interpretations. As visual mammals, humans are uniquely equipped to interpret the world through sight. “Successful perception involves sophisticated inference ... we must learn how to see by interacting with the world, forming expectations, and comparing our predictions with reality.”⁷⁹¹ Wilczek does not limit this knowledge of the world to the purely physical either. His book *A Beautiful Question* suggests

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁸⁹ Andrew Newberg M.D and Mark Robert Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings from a Leading Neuroscientist*, 49-51. Newberg and Waldman note how certain parts of the brain “are associated with different notions and experiences of God.” The parietal lobe allows “gives us a sense of our self in relation to time, space, and other objects in the world.”

⁷⁹⁰ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 80.

⁷⁹¹ Frank Wilczek, *A Beautiful Question*, 14 (emphasis added).

that a physical understanding of the world aids our understanding of the artist who created it. “Is the world a work of art?”⁷⁹² This is the question Wilczek seeks to answer. Wilczek’s thesis reaches beyond physics, prompting questions of metaphysics. Both Starr and Wilczek note the importance of vision and how our perception of motor imagery affects the pleasure we obtain from beautiful images.⁷⁹³

In light of this more “secular” understanding of how beauty incites desire, I want to return to Scarry’s suggestion that beauty possesses momentum, an intrinsic movement that begets by way of desire.⁷⁹⁴ This notion of aesthetic movement originating in the form of desire stems from Scarry’s Platonic intuition. I believe Scarry (as well as Starr and Wilczek) is on to something theologically without necessarily stating or believing it. I want to show how this Platonic theme in Scarry roots itself within Christian theology in order to suggest the importance of Lewis’s language of beauty as an apologetic tool.

Moses’s Weight

In Exodus 33:18 Moses asks God, “Show me your glory, I pray.” The Hebrew term *kabod* here translates to “glory” and means “weight” or “splendor” and is used in the positive.⁷⁹⁵ The glory of God (luminosity) is his essence, and that essence is weighty, it is “good” as “good” relates to virtuous and thus refers

⁷⁹² Ibid., 1.

⁷⁹³ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 80-81.

⁷⁹⁴ Scarry, *On Beauty*, 46.

⁷⁹⁵ *Kohlenberger/Mounce Concise Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Accordance, electronic ed., n.p.

to God's nature, the truth of his being; "it is clear that he equates his glory with all my goodness."⁷⁹⁶ Jonathan Edwards puts it like this:

The word *glory* denotes sometimes what is *internal*. When the word is used to signify what is within, or in the possession of the subject, it very commonly signifies *excellency*, dignity, or worthiness of regard. This, according to the Hebrew *idiom*, is, as it were, the *weight* of a thing, as that by which it is heavy; as to be *light*, is to be worthless, without value, contemptible.⁷⁹⁷

He is, therefore, altogether glorious, which is to say he is altogether weighty in his goodness; a goodness so transcendent a human being cannot look upon it in full or it will physically overwhelm him or her. When God refers to "my glory" he is literally saying "myself."⁷⁹⁸ Moses does not *see* God, but he does hear him. He hears God's name "YHWH" or "Lord." New Testament and Johannine scholar Richard Bauckham says the story of Moses's encounter with God and his glory suggests "that God's glory is the radiance of his character, of his goodness, of who he truly is."⁷⁹⁹ Barth agrees with Bauckham, as I noted in the introduction of this thesis. Barth, then, suggests that it is exactly because of God's glory as being his true essence, his true act of self-demonstrative love, that we interpret God's glory as "self-sufficiency" but also as "God's sufficiency for all other things."⁸⁰⁰ Barth then observes that such sufficiency manifests itself in the theological idea that in God man lacks nothing. God communicates his utter goodness to man through the

⁷⁹⁶ *New Bible Commentary*, ed. D. A Carson et al., Accordance electronic ed., 117.

⁷⁹⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 116 (emphasis added).

⁷⁹⁸ Kohlenberger/Mounce Concise Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament, Accordance electronic ed., n.p.

⁷⁹⁹ Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 50.

⁸⁰⁰ Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics*, 26.

symbolic notions of radiance and light. God turns us toward him through his created world and the beauty within it. Thus, in God's self-sufficiency man finds another aspect of God's essence: joy. It is the idea that in drawing man to himself, God fulfills man's desires through spiritual relationship.⁸⁰¹

With this conception of God's glory in mind, I want to further note its philosophical-theological lineage from which Lewis drew.

The Drawing of Divine Love

In *The Symposium*, Plato states that *eros* (love, i.e., desire) moves men to possess the "good" forever (206a).⁸⁰² Earlier I noted the important implication of the Koine Greek term *kalos* as it relates to the English terms "good" and "beautiful." It is worth noting a similar occurrence in the classical Greek in which the words "good" and "beautiful" closely relate. The term *kalos* "actually resembles the contemporary use of the English 'beauty' in the enormous range of its meaning."⁸⁰³ In terms of referring to "beauty," however, *kalos* is more akin to the English equivalent, which refers to the aesthetic or that which is concerned with beauty. It does, however, also shade toward the meaning "noble and good." Therefore, *to kalon* translates to the aesthetic sense of beauty along with the notion of noble or good (as in *The Symposium* and *Phaedrus*).⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.,

⁸⁰² Plato and W. R. M. Lamb, (*Plato in 12 Volumes III*): *Lysis Symposium Gorgias*, 189; 190-193.

⁸⁰³ Drew A. Hyland, *Plato and the Question of Beauty*, 5.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid., 4-5; 99.

The third century philosopher Plotinus interpreted and synthesized Plato with the luxury of six hundred years of scholarship from which to draw. In his philosophical compendium *The Enneads*,⁸⁰⁵ Plotinus states: “That which soul must quest, that which sheds its light upon Intellectual-Principle, leaving its mark wherever it falls, surely we do not wonder that it be of power to draw to itself, calling back from every wandering to rest before it. From it came all and so there is nothing mightier; all is feeble before it.”⁸⁰⁶

Plotinus’s “drawing unto itself”—*itself* being the Intellectual-Principle (i.e., The Good)—is the Augustinian (and Barthian) conception of Divine love; that God made us for himself and therefore draws us toward himself. If bereft of this union the human person restlessly wanders, searching for fulfillment in material objects and experiences when only union with the Divine will satisfy.

Augustine views a desire for the Divine as innate to the human condition. In Book VIII of *The Confessions*, Augustine further develops this theme of desire. Here Augustine refers to his love for God as the weight that draws him toward God. First he states, “In your gift we find rest. There are you our joy. Our rest is in our peace.”⁸⁰⁷ Augustine defined the “gift” as the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter also refers to the Holy Spirit as the gift in the New Testament.⁸⁰⁸ In essence, when a person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, they *carry* Christ, and in Christ he or she finds the joy of their salvation, that being the redemption of sins through

⁸⁰⁵ *The Enneads* is translated in Greek as “a collection of nine things.”

⁸⁰⁶ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, 492. (VI.7.23)

⁸⁰⁷ Augustine, *Confessions*, 278.

⁸⁰⁸ Acts 2:38 (NRSV): “Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Christ's sacrifice.⁸⁰⁹ Christ is, therefore, the object of the Christian faith and he who draws humans to himself: "For he [Christ] is our peace."⁸¹⁰

What is the impetus, then, of such joy and rest? Augustine suggests that love lifts the Christian to this place. Here Augustine means that the love of Christ draws the Christian from their humble place toward peace and joy, heavenly rest.

Beauty Draws Us

Plotinus explains how the Intellectual-Principle draws humans to it by using beauty.⁸¹¹ "We have to recognize that beauty is that which irradiates symmetry rather than symmetry itself and is that which truly calls out our love."⁸¹² Plotinus suggests, however, that beautiful objects (objects of symmetry) are not the Beautiful. Rather, that it is the Beautiful that illumines symmetry, not the symmetrical object itself; the beautiful object points to something beyond. Plotinus then observes that it is beauty itself that draws out human love.⁸¹³

Augustine builds on Plotinus's conception with his own concept of love (*eros*, desire) being the impetus for our movement—how, ontologically, humans tend to move toward their appropriate place. He writes:

⁸⁰⁹ Psalm 51:12 (NRSV): "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, / and sustain in me a willing spirit."

⁸¹⁰ Ephesians 2:14 (NRSV)

⁸¹¹ Abrams, *Supernatural*, 147. Abrams notes how Plotinus "holds that the first principle is the One, and that the One is identical with the Good."

⁸¹² Plotinus, *The Enneads*, VI.7.22-23. Augustine further develops the concept of a higher principle irradiating symmetry in *De Vera Religione*, 252-253.

⁸¹³ Umberto Eco also notes the intrinsic human desire to be in harmony with encountered beauty. "An aesthetic pleasure arises when the soul finds its own inner harmony duplicated in its object." See Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, 10.

A body by its weight tends to move towards its proper place. The weight's movement is not necessarily downwards but to its appropriate position: fire tends to move upwards, a stone downwards. They are acted on by their respective weights; they seek their own place. ... Things which are not in their intended position are restless. Once they are in their ordered position they find rest. ... My weight is my love.⁸¹⁴

It is here we come upon the Augustinian thought that so influenced Lewis. For Lewis echoes Augustine, and, presumably, Plotinus when he writes, "Now, if we are made for heaven, the desire for our proper place will be already in us, but not yet attached to the true object, and will even appear as the rival of that object."⁸¹⁵ Later in the sermon Lewis refers to this desire for our "proper place" as a summons. "We are summoned to pass in through Nature, beyond her, into that splendor which she fitfully reflects."⁸¹⁶ Lewis expounds on these statements in 1960, nearly twenty years after his "Weight of Glory" address, in *The Four Loves* when he writes, "We were made for God."⁸¹⁷ Reepicheep in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, John in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, and Psyche in *Till We Have Faces*, all experience intense longing (*Sehnsucht*) for their "appropriate" place.⁸¹⁸ Their experience of *Sehnsucht*, however, is not simply a static feeling. It impels them forward, on a quest of ontological discovery.

A note must also be made regarding Lewis's caution against idolatry. According to Lewis, though humans were made for God, humans must not mistake the natural world and its beauties for God himself. Lewis explains that

⁸¹⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, 278.

⁸¹⁵ *TWG*, 6. Lewis's term "rival" can be equated with the concept of the "false Florimells" discussed in *PR*.

⁸¹⁶ *TWG*, 17.

⁸¹⁷ *FL*, 21.

⁸¹⁸ See 8.4 of this thesis for further development of these examples.

although we have seen an image of glory, we must not attempt to pass through nature on a “direct path through it and beyond it to an increasing knowledge of God,”⁸¹⁹ for this will only lead to idolatry. Though Lewis cautions readers not to attain deep knowledge of God through nature, he does, however, state that it was through nature that he understood the meaning of glory. “I do not know where else I could have found one [a meaning]. I do not see how the fear of God could have ever meant to me anything but the lowest prudential efforts to be safe, if I had never seen certain ominous ravines and unapproachable crags.”⁸²⁰ Nature was the tool that opened Lewis’s deep longings and, indeed, gave him the language with which to define the love of God—that irresistible beacon of beauty that “calls out” our love, as Plotinus suggests.

Returning to Augustine’s thought regarding his “weight” being his love, we find that Lewis’s “weight” mirrors Augustine’s. For Lewis, however, this love manifests itself in *Sehnsucht*. Lewis describes this longing stemming from or being a by-product of the glory of God (luminosity); a glory that we experience in beautiful objects or encounters or landscapes; in fond memories, in poetry, in a field of daffodils, in our favorite song. These objects contain a kind of weight that draws us in and through them, toward our proper place.⁸²¹

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁸²¹ *TWG*, 44.

In this chapter we looked at Lewis's notion of *Sehnsucht*. We noted how *Sehnsucht* follows the aesthetic gasp of Joy to complete an aesthetic experience that is meant to linger. We also built upon already submitted definitions of the term, and attempted to expand those notions by adding more complexity via a more fully orbed understanding of German Romanticism. We discovered that *Sehnsucht* engenders movement both in the work of literature itself, and also within the reader. It is a powerful literary device that enabled Lewis to create new capacity within his readers, thus proving the strength of Lewis's ability as a communicator of myth.

Chapter 7: Watchful Dragons

Lewis's Phenomenological *Apologia*

“The horror of it is that beauty is not only a terrifying thing—it is also a mysterious one.”

—Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*⁸²²

7.1 Introduction

Thus far I have suggested that Joy and *Sehnsucht* constitute the innerscape of Lewis's language of beauty. Both elements act as aesthetic residue of the human experience with beauty. The experience of beauty creates the aesthetic gasp, or Joy. Joy, then, awakens our desire. According to Lewis, Joy is present in the desiring and Joy itself is also the goal of our longing.⁸²³ One of the ways this aesthetic progression, intrinsic to Lewis's language of beauty, is communicated is through *numinous* elements (or moments) within his work. We spent two chapters discussing Lewisian Northernness and its primacy within Lewis's corpus as it relates to communicating beauty through literary atmosphere as well as through eucatastrophic moments—thus taking the hopeless apocalyptic elements of Northernness and turning them into redemptive moments of storytelling.

In this chapter I want to show how the *numinous* and the beautiful work together to form a phenomenological *apologia*. In *The Problem of Pain* Lewis introduces readers to Rudolf Otto and his *numinous* concept. Lewis describes the origin of Christianity as a way to lay out the context of his study on pain and, in so

⁸²² Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 145.

⁸²³ This is also in line with Barth's notion of God's glory and how Joy is intrinsic to God, and so it is elemental in being *with* God.

doing, suggests the *numinous* as the first of three strands in all forms of religion.⁸²⁴ The *numinous*, according to Lewis's interpretation, is the *object* that incites awe.⁸²⁵ What no one has argued, until my own research, is that the *numinous* enhances literary elements of beauty within Lewis's *oeuvre* and further establishes his imaginative enterprise as a Christian apologist.

In section two I will briefly define the term "apologetics." Too often the term connotes rational argument in defense of the Christian faith. In my view, the term carries a broader application. A vibrant Christian *apologia* should consist of varied approaches dependent upon the individual. In the third section I emphasize Lewis's imaginative approach to apologetics and assert that it is through the imagination that a person senses the *numinous* and apprehends beauty. In section four I examine Lewis's definition of the *numinous* in light of Rudolf Otto's conception in *The Idea of the Holy*. The term, like Lewis's notion of Northernness, is often discussed biographically (in relation to Lewis's spiritual shaping) or in the context of Lewis's mythmaking ability—which is not in question. I, however, want to draw new insights from the *numinous* as it relates to the apologetic of beauty and how they combine to act as a cognitive jamming device. Section five furthers my assertion that the *numinous* carries more significance than previously realized in Lewis scholarship. I introduce the "Bifrost" aspect of the *numinous* and present its historical significance and connection to Lewis's work. In section six I show how the *numinous* and beauty connect via relational threads.

⁸²⁴ *PP*, 14.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

In the next section, I want to settle on a definition of apologetics from a theological perspective and marry that to Lewis's notion of apologetics. Further, I want to suggest how the *numinous* works in his writing to form a phenomenological *apologia*.

7.2 *Apologia*: Definition and Lewis's Historical Significance

I want to begin this chapter with a brief engagement with the question, *What is apologetics?* When we employ the word "apologetics" in reference to Lewis, we must be careful not to fall into the same misconception as those who frame Lewis as primarily a rational apologist who leverages strategic propositional arguments to prove philosophical points about Christianity.⁸²⁶ When we consider the proper definition of apologetics, an important nuance surfaces that illuminates Lewis's application of the term. The modern Christian use of the term "apologetics"⁸²⁷ originates from the Koine Greek word *apologia*.⁸²⁸ Mounce

⁸²⁶ See 1.4 of this thesis.

⁸²⁷ The modern term "Christian apologetics" stems from F. Morel in *Corpus Apologetarum* (1615) and P. Maran (1742). The "idea" of Christian apologetics, however, dates to 914 according to the codex Paris. gr. 451, which consists of a collection of apologetic writing by Baanes who was under orders from Arethan, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. The term came to identify the writings of several 2nd and 3rd century writers who defend Christianity against pagan attacks. See Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 124.

⁸²⁸ Plato's famous *apologia* for Socrates employs a wide range of literary tropes including Socratic cross-examination, story-telling, and lecturing. This varied form of "explanation" (*apologia*) advances the variegated conception of *apologia*; of there being a language of *apologia*. See Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, ed. Harold Tarrant, trans. Hugh Tredennick, 33-34. Furthermore, later 2nd and 3rd century apologists wrote in "various styles and literary genres," they answered charges brought against the Christian faith as well as leveled charges of their own against the pagan culture. Early apologists sought to translate the faith into philosophical categories "and thus to make it acceptable to the pagan elite." The term, therefore, does not imply narrow meaning and application but finds expression in varied forms. See Hornblower, Spawforth, and Eidinow, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 125.

defines the noun *apologia* as “defense.”⁸²⁹ It is a derivative of the verb form *apologeomai*, which translates “to defend oneself, ... the content of what is said in defense ... how one defends oneself.”⁸³⁰ In terms of the theological discipline, however, we should understand the term as a noun, as a thing to be given; simply, “defense.” This is the term used in 1 Peter 3:15 (ESV) when the apostle writes, “... always being prepared to make a *defense* to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect ...”⁸³¹

Beyond the term itself, Cardinal Avery Dulles, in *A History of Apologetics*, reminds us that before an apologetic, Christianity was, first, a message.⁸³² This message was distributed via personal testimony of the truthfulness that Jesus Christ was the risen Lord. Due to the nature of these testimonies Dulles indicates that the preaching in the early church often sought to answer the responses to such a claim. “In answer to such objections,” writes Dulles, “and possibly also in anticipation of foreseen objections, the Christian preachers spoke about the signs and evidence they had found convincing. ... To some degree, therefore, apologetics was intrinsic to the presentation of the

⁸²⁹ *MGD*, s.v., n.p.

⁸³⁰ L & N, s.v. “Introduction,” n.p.

⁸³¹ Emphasis added. The context of Peter’s admonition to a general Christian audience is one of possible persecution. Christians facing persecution for their faith often discover opportunity for instances of explanation of their hopeful way of living in the face of such calamity. Theologian Wayne Grudem suggests, “Peter must be assuming that the inward hope of Christians results in lives so noticeably different that unbelievers are prompted to ask why they are so distinctive.” When the opportunity presents itself to bear witness to such a hope, the Christian should be prepared to defend their lifestyle. Though this term can often be interpreted in terms of answering an accusation (Acts 22:1; 25; 16; 1 Corinthians 9:3; Phil. 1:7, 16) the context here is more general in the sense of replying to “formal charges” or “informal accusations.” The definition of *apologia* therefore may carry the sense of a reasoned response, or the simple witness of one’s life and the evident change noticed by the outside world. See Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 161. A classic example of a lived witness as *apologia* can be found in the so-called “Letter to Diognetus.” See Cyril Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers*, 217.

⁸³² Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 1.

kerygma.”⁸³³ So, apologetics first emerged as a formulated response to the doubts of the Christian message.

I am concerned, however, with the *type* of response Christians have used throughout the ages as it relates to Lewis’s apologetic enterprise. Dulles indicates, for example, that the gospel writer Mark employed “numinous elements of awe and fascination.”⁸³⁴ Mark “vividly portrays the impact made by the Son of God upon the Apostles as he walked among men. They are dazzled and stupefied, as if by a brilliance too great for them to take in.”⁸³⁵ Likewise, John portrays Jesus as “the Light who has come into the world to shine upon the children of God in every nation and to give them a more abundant life of freedom, truth and mutual love.”⁸³⁶ So, the question we must apply to contemplating and realizing an effective *apologia* is what type of defense does the Christian employ? Further, what type did Lewis employ and how can the Christian community emulate its effectiveness? Dulles concludes that the *type* or mode of *apologia* “set forth in the Gospels would seem to be the attractiveness of the message itself.”⁸³⁷

In the twentieth century the theological tide rose and fell, apologetically speaking. The “accommodationist” type of apologetic intrinsic to Protestant liberalism, which catered more to “doubt-ridden Christians within the fold,”⁸³⁸ emerged alongside of the Catholic movement (in France) of neo-Scholastic apologetics, whose practitioners often became mired in theological nuance that

⁸³³ Ibid., 2.

⁸³⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁸³⁸ Ibid. 323.

mattered little to the laity. It was in this context (1930 - 1940)⁸³⁹ that Lewis, along with writers and apologists G.K. Chesterton, Dorothy Sayers, Charles Williams, and T.S. Eliot,⁸⁴⁰ emerged as a literary apologist. Dulles marks this time as specifically unique in that Lewis's work maintains its freshness and vitality now more than a half-century later "while massive tomes of previous centuries gather dust on library shelves."⁸⁴¹ Lewis's unique approach contrasts the fundamentalist apologists in America at the time. Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987), for example, set forth the presuppositional apologetic approach that says, "The Christian must begin by presupposing that the revelation contained in Scripture is true and then find that reality and life makes sense in terms of this presupposition."⁸⁴² Lewis's approach, on the other hand, began from the standpoint of basic Christianity, or mere Christianity, and engaged with readers in such a way as to make Christianity not only seem reasonable, but attractive. Dulles refers to Lewis as a "brilliant stylist" who "reached a vast number of readers who would not have found time for technical theological works."⁸⁴³ Lewis's imaginative approach to apologetics remains unique in its production and in its contemporary popularity.

Lewis himself defined apologetics as "defense"⁸⁴⁴ in his essay "Christian Apologetics," and also expands the nature of the apologetic enterprise. He states that the object of defense for the apologist is Christianity, not a person's personal

⁸³⁹ Ibid., 318.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid., 324.

⁸⁴² Ibid., 322.

⁸⁴³ Ibid., 319.

⁸⁴⁴ C. S. Lewis, *C.S. Lewis: Essay Collection and Other Short Pieces*, ed. Lesley Walmsley, 147.

conception or opinion on a matter relating to religion. It is not personal religion⁸⁴⁵ that an apologist is to defend, according to Lewis, but Christianity. In defending Christianity, Lewis warns against “keeping abreast of recent movements in theology” as this can confuse what must stand as “the standard of permanent Christianity”⁸⁴⁶ in the mind of the apologist. It should be noted that in the essay Lewis is addressing “youth leaders” and “Junior Clergy.”⁸⁴⁷ He emphatically addresses these professional clergy, exhorting them to keep their object of defense—Christianity—clear, and to keep the language of their defense plain. “Our business,” writes Lewis, “is to present that which is timeless (the same yesterday, today and tomorrow—Hebrews 8:8) in the particular language of our own age.”⁸⁴⁸ Although Lewis suggests vernacular as the essential language of apologetics, he insists that Christianity not be watered down.⁸⁴⁹ The implications of Lewis’s statements suggest that any Christian layman can and should give a defense of Christianity as long as the message remains true to the fundamental truths of the faith and that such truths are communicated in the language of the

⁸⁴⁵ See also Lewis, “Preface” in *MC*, 6-7. Lewis echoes this sentiment when he writes, “For I was not writing to expound something I could call ‘my religion,’ but to expound ‘mere’ Christianity, which is what it is and was what it was long before I was born and whether I like it or not.” The absence of personal preference, popular opinion-theology, and theological schemes or theories marks Lewis’s theological enterprise. Paul Holmer further states, “But he [Lewis] seems not to have been converted to a theological scheme at all, and he refused all of his life to think that an understanding of Christianity would necessitate that he adopt an elaborate theology.” See Holmer, *Shape*, 100-109.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 149. Lewis distinguishes the “keeping up” with contemporary movements of theology with keeping up with contemporary thought on subjects such as science. Lewis argues that theology stands upon established doctrines from ancient times. Science, however, remains in a constant state of flux, therefore demanding that apologists stay apprised of significant new movements.

⁸⁴⁷ Lewis, *Essay Collection*, 147.

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 156.

culture.⁸⁵⁰ This implication is consistent with the Apostle Peter's exhortation in his epistle for the Christians, presumably all Christians (lay and clergy alike) to always be ready to explain their hopeful faith. This nuance shows the Christian *apologia* to be a defense not limited to sophisticated arguments, but to be a common explanation from the common person of their uncommon (i.e., hopeful) faith.

Elements of Apologia

Moving on from the definition and uses of *apologia*, we must consider its varied elements. As stated above, Lewis noticed how stories presented themselves as ambassadors to religious understanding and feelings, and understood the *apologia* as a variegated enterprise, not limited to courtroom defense but rather welcoming of imaginative approaches to explaining faith. Furthermore, Lewis emphasized the need to keep the supernatural element of the Christian faith preeminent in one's apologetic enterprise. For the enlightened west, the supernatural element of the Christian religion, or the *numinous*, plays the particular role of what Lewis refers to as "thick religion." He defines true religion as being both "thick" and "clear." Thick religions consist of orgies, ecstasies, mysteries, and local attachment, whereas clear religions are philosophical, ethical, and universalizing (i.e., Stoicism, Buddhism).⁸⁵¹ For the western mind,⁸⁵²

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid. 153. The audience of the essay should not be overlooked lest we ascribe Lewis's points on apologetics as completely prescriptive for apologetics in general. For example, Lewis details how missionaries and missional presentations of the gospel should be given in a public setting. Lewis is not, therefore, espousing an argumentative or even theatrical apologetic (155-156). Rather, he is exhorting young clergy in their public evangelism efforts.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid., 158.

therefore, thick elements of religion present themselves as alluring, out of the ordinary, multi-sensory, and mysterious. The Christian *apologia*, therefore, should seek to employ these elements when appropriate.

When considering the definition of apologetics, then, we first realize that we are discussing a clear defense of Christianity in the most general sense, according to Lewis. Second, though professional apologetics remains a viable vocation for members of the clergy and academy, the general call for all adherents to the Christian faith is to be able to explain the hope in their lives (1 Peter 3:15) to those who inquire. Finally, for the western mind the opportunity exists to express the allure of their thick religion. In my view, thick religion requires, and is specifically suited for, an apologetic expression of beauty through the *numinous* feeling.

Lewis's notion of a thick religion draws on his thoughts concerning cultural enchantment. Theologian Wesley Kort states, "Lewis was convinced that before modern people can understand what religion is all about, they must change their relation to the world and how they understand their place within it. ... Lewis believes that religion can be rightly understood only by people who live in a world that is at least to some degree *enchanted*."⁸⁵³ Kort does well to show how the early twenty-first century culture falls under a disenchanted worldview. He gives three modern assumptions that conspire to disenchant that are worth noting. The first assumption is the alienation of humanity from its nonhuman context. Next is the

⁸⁵² Lewis places himself in the category of persons who need to encounter thick religion (159). Lewis considered Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* as one of the most influential books in his life. It seems probable, therefore, that Lewis's notion of thick religion in some way stems from Otto's discussion on "The Cruder Phases" of the *numinous*. See Otto, *Holy*, 132-135.

⁸⁵³ Kort, *Then and Now*, 33.

severance of value and meaning from both the non-human world and, perhaps more importantly, the human world thus relegating value and meaning to mere conscious construction. The final element of cultural disenchantment is the belief that knowledge and understanding primarily rise from the reduction of things, events, humans, and human behavior to their “simplest components.” This reductionism is accompanied by a cynical perspective of human behavior that views humans as disingenuous in the way they present themselves—i.e., people tend to hide their true selves.⁸⁵⁴ Kort’s analysis asserts that the culture’s disenchantment stems from a person’s readiness to define themselves by the above assumptions.⁸⁵⁵ Such a disenchantment leads to a lack of relational understanding—person to person but more importantly, person to God. Lewis referred to “the evil enchantment of worldliness which has been laid upon us for nearly a hundred years.”⁸⁵⁶ He then suggests the Christian needs to wield a stronger enchantment with which to break the current spell.⁸⁵⁷ I suggest that for

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁸⁵⁵ Kort asserts the Great War (WWI), though an obvious prominent emotional marker within Lewis’s culture, was not at the root formation of people’s disenchantment. Rather, it was the loss of personal meaning disseminated in the philosophical thought in the likes of Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon, Giambattista Vico, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud. (33-36)

⁸⁵⁶ *TWG*, 31.

⁸⁵⁷ In *The Abolition of Man* (1943) Lewis laments the current state of public education and agrees with Aristotle in that education should “make the pupil like and dislike what he ought,” (26) rather than “fortify the minds of young people against emotion.” (24). The changing landscape of education is but one cultural shift Lewis witnessed in his lifetime up to this point (1941). Lewis had served in one world war and was in the middle of observing the effects of the second. The Industrial Revolution had given birth to assembly line jobs and the mass production of consumer goods, and the propaganda that accompanies such goods. Lewis considered the “gap” between the writing of Jane Austen and “the birth of machines” to be the most drastic historical shift in human history. According to Lewis, the greatest expressions of the imagination occur pre-Darwin, and so we are left to assume this great enchantment that has befallen the modern mind or psyche (according to Lewis) can only be broken by a return to imaginative works of myth. See “*De Descriptione Temporum*” in *Selected Literary Essays*, 9-11. For more on Lewis’s view of modern education see Joel D. Heck, *Irrigating Deserts: C.S. Lewis on Education*, 26-28. For a thorough cultural history of consumption and materialism see C. Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*. Mukerji notes much of the modern consumptive habits stem

Lewis, an element of this stronger enchantment is beauty. Beauty works in Lewis's stories as *apologia*, but not in that it persuades readers that God exists through a presuppositional argument. Rather, beauty works in concert with the *numinous* to suggest a relational otherness present in the cosmos.

With a view of the definition of apologetics in view, as well as the contextual history in which Lewis emerged with his unique approach, I want to further examine Lewis's imaginative approach so that we can better understand how his phenomenological *apologia* works.

7.3 Imagination: Lewis's Apologetic Approach

Contemporary theologians consider C.S. Lewis to be the greatest Christian apologist of the twentieth century.⁸⁵⁸ Michael Ward suggests Lewis's approach to apologetics gained popular success due not to the reasonableness of Lewis's argumentation but, rather, due to his "imaginative skill and imaginative intent."⁸⁵⁹ Indeed, Ward identifies one of the emerging seven streams of Lewis scholarship as dealing primarily with his conception of imagination.⁸⁶⁰ It is a rather harsh irony that although Lewis's apologetics might be defined by some scholars, such as Ward, as "imaginative," other readers of Lewis tend to emphasize his

from the flagrant consumption of Queen Elizabeth, which led to material goods shifting from utilitarian use to objects used to express personal worth. The historical timestamp of consumption notwithstanding, Mukerji supports Lewis's claim of the deep psychological effects the Industrial Revolution and the age of consumption has had on the modern person.

⁸⁵⁸ Michael Ward, "The Good Serves the Better and Both the Best" in Andrew Davison, *Imaginative Apologetics: Theology, Philosophy and the Catholic Tradition*, 59-60. See also McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 12. Ward implies Lewis's greatness or effectiveness relates to the sheer amount of his apologetic books sold during the 1940s and 1950s.

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁸⁶⁰ See chapter one, "Introduction: Hunting in Lewis's Forest of Beauty" of this thesis where I list each of the streams of Lewis scholarship set out by Michael Ward.

apologetic works as examples of Christian rational defense.⁸⁶¹ In Chapter 1 I made the case that much of the popular and academic readership categorizes Lewis as the “King of the Rational Argument” (my phrasing).⁸⁶² In this chapter, however, I am not concerned with categorizing Lewis’s work as a unified whole. Rather, I am interested in his imaginative approach to apologetics and the role of the *numinous* and beauty in that method. By “imaginative approach” I mean to emphasize Lewis’s fiction as forms of literary apologetics.⁸⁶³

Lewis describes his fictional writing program as not apologetically premeditated in that he conceived of a value or Christian doctrine he wanted to communicate. On the contrary, he wrote from the images that appeared in his imagination; “a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion.”⁸⁶⁴ Thus, it was only after Lewis constructed the story from the image that

⁸⁶¹ Victor Reppert’s *C.S. Lewis’s Dangerous Idea* goes to great length to support Lewis’s argument that human reason is independent of the natural world, which Elizabeth Anscombe supposedly thwarted at the Oxford Socratic Club in 1948. The argument Lewis gave came from chapter three of his book *Miracles*, which was published the previous year in 1947. The Lewis/Anscombe debate is an example of how an isolated incident can be used to frame a person’s entire literary program. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, Reppert frames Christian apologetics as primarily a theological-philosophical discipline in which professionals debate well developed and highly sophisticated arguments. See Victor Reppert, *C.S. Lewis’s Dangerous Idea*, 29.

⁸⁶² At the time of this writing, Professor Wesley Kort of Duke University had completed a new book in which he offers an alternative holistic approach to reading Lewis’s work. See Wesley A. Kort, *Reading C.S. Lewis*.

⁸⁶³ Theologian and literary apologist Holly Ordway defines literary apologetics as a subset of imaginative apologetics; it engages the imagination on the mode of knowing. It is the use of imagination to create an experiential grasp of meaning. It is not an aspiring apologist or artist saying “Here’s my agenda, now I’ll just wrap it in a story and be done with it.” This approach to apologetics is not literary, it is a form of rhetoric (i.e. propagandistic). Literary apologetics does not seek to make a story into more than what it is. See Brian Auten, *Apologist Interview: Holly Ordway on Literary Apologetics*, MP3, Apologist Interview, accessed January 27, 2015, <http://apologetics315.s3.amazonaws.com/interview/interview-holly-ordway2.mp3>.

⁸⁶⁴ C.S. Lewis “On Fairy Stories,” in C.S. *OW*, 36. Lewis also indicates a similar approach to his conceiving and writing of the second book in his cosmic trilogy, *Perelandra*. See “Unreal Estates,” (1962) in *OW*. It has, however, been suggested that despite *Perelandra*’s literary beauty, thus making it a primary example of imaginative “world making” in twentieth-century fantasy literature, readers who do not share Lewis’s theological positions might be put off by its

his own Christian moral code emerged and “pushed itself in of its own accord.”⁸⁶⁵ Following the images Lewis then considered the form of expression. The fairy tale presented itself as the appropriate form (*poema*) and Lewis quickly fell in love with it: “its brevity, its severe restraints on description, its flexible traditionalism, its inflexible hostility to all analysis, digression, reflections and ‘gas.’”⁸⁶⁶ It was only after Lewis determined the form for his images, however, that he concluded how fairy stories could “steal past a certain inhibition which had paralysed [*sic*] much of my own religion in childhood.”⁸⁶⁷ Lewis’s creative progression here should not be overlooked. There is a difference between engaging a personal muse, i.e. the images that appeared in Lewis’s imagination, and deliberately contriving a story for the sake of theological coercion. The former stands as the prelude into the artistic enterprise while the latter acts as a prelude to the formulation of rhetorical didactics.⁸⁶⁸ I distinguish between rhetorical didactics and the classical definition of rhetoric in that rhetorical didactics is an approach to

theological heavy-handedness. See Franz Rottensteiner, *The Fantasy Book: The Ghostly, the Gothic, the Magical, the Unreal*, 126.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid., 36-37.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁸⁶⁸ Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric*, 102-103. In this chapter Richards traces the rejection of “rhetorical didactics” in the Post-Enlightenment work of William Wordsworth, among others. Wordsworth’s famous rejection of rhetorical poetical conventions in his *Preface* and the Appendix to the 1802 version of *Lyrical Ballads* was an attempt to return poetry back to real language and “liberate the poetic from the dead head of formal rhetoric.” (102) Wordsworth believed “the practice of imitation, the cornerstone of education in the liberal arts, soon led to these becoming merely conventional formulations.” (103) Lewis, in his side of the argument of *The Personal Heresy*, disagreed with Wordsworth and believed the personality of the poet should remain absent from the poem. See also *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis*, Cambridge Companions to Religion, 20, 33. Lewis, however, might be overreacting to Wordsworth. Though Richards makes a strong point that Wordsworth’s corrective in *Lyrical Ballads* can also be taken to be a device or rhetoric, the point Wordsworth was attempting to make was poetry had become overrun by contrived language and was itself artificial and disingenuous as an art form. In using the term “rhetoric” here I am employing Wordsworth’s tactic to indicate that religious writing that aims to employ story and artistic devices for the express purpose of Christian apologetics reduces the work to mere rhetorical didactics.

poetics that employs overused literary tropes to contrive works of art, whereas rhetoric, as Lewis understood it, can and should be used as a way to “call passions to the aid of reason.”⁸⁶⁹ Indeed, Lewis believed rhetoric to be a noble art, “though, of course like most arts, it can be used wickedly.”⁸⁷⁰ Though Lewis did not initially intend to produce works of literary apologetics, he realized an important point regarding the didactic approach and the poetic approach to apologetics. Certain cultural pressures created these inhibitions, or “watchful dragons”⁸⁷¹ as Lewis called them. Lewis notes that it is difficult to *feel* a certain way about the sufferings of Christ when one is told, didactically, to feel that way. Stories, on the other hand, engage on an imaginative level.⁸⁷² I want to briefly say a word about Lewis’s imaginative approach and then develop a more complete understanding of the term “apologetics” and Lewis’s phenomenological apologetics.

Lewis understood the imagination offered a hidden pathway behind a person’s belief structures. Though imagination and reason operate in concert with one another,⁸⁷³ the imagination engages with reality in a way reason does not. Roger Scruton refers to the imagination as involving “thought which is unasserted, and hence goes beyond what is believed.”⁸⁷⁴ Scruton’s description of imagination helps us understand Lewis’s idea of utilizing a stronger enchantment

⁸⁶⁹ *PPL*, 53.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷¹ Lewis, *OW*, 36.

⁸⁷² Peter Schakel emphasizes the power of the imagination with regard to communicating difficult truths, like the doctrine of *kenosis*. Regarding the paradoxical notion of an all-powerful God who is also a suffering God he writes, “Resolving that paradox, accepting the mystery of those seeming opposites, can be accomplished only through the imagination, which can accept the counterrational and appreciate its immensity and beauty.” See Schakel, *Imagination and the Arts in C.S. Lewis*, 67.

⁸⁷³ Ward, “The Good Serves the Better and Both the Best,” 73-74.

⁸⁷⁴ Roger Scruton, *Art and Imagination*, 97.

so as to overwhelm the worldly spell. An unasserted thought suggests free play of the mind (Kant, §5).⁸⁷⁵ Such free play, then, would allow concepts and images into the mind, even past previously held personal beliefs.⁸⁷⁶ Lewis's emphasis of imagination over a more reasonable approach seems to contradict his own words. In the essay "Bluspels and Flalansferes" Lewis admits, "I am a rationalist." But he does not end there. He explains his statement. "For me, reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning."⁸⁷⁷ How are we to interpret Lewis's definitive statement and what do we make of his apparent hierarchy of reason and imagination?

Lewis would not be considered a rationalist in the twenty-first century. Contemporary rationalism argues that, "there are cases where the content of our concepts or knowledge outstrips the information that sense experience can provide ... they construct accounts of how reason in some form or other provides that additional information about the world."⁸⁷⁸ Lewis, however, views the rational

⁸⁷⁵ The point here is not to make a Kantian statement *about* beauty per se. Rather, I use the concept of "free play" here to show how the imagination engages with beautiful objects. Anthony O'Hear notes, "... in judging something freely our imagination is acting *freely* (that is according to rational criteria and not as a mere response to stimulus, in other words)." See O'Hear, *Beyond Evolution*, 195.

⁸⁷⁶ In *The Golden Pot* E.T.A. Hoffman employs what he calls the Serapiontic Principle. The principle primarily emphasizes the interplay between reality and imaginative worlds; it shows us our "external reality, but with a clarity that comes from within." Hoffman's stories are set in reality but invaded, in a sense, by the imaginative. This literary device, therefore, creates avenues for one to experience the *numinous* (i.e., have a religious experience), thus showing how religious experience can penetrate various (if not all) aspects of life. religious experience with the story. We see this principle played out in Lewis's fiction as Lucy enters an old wardrobe, set in then modern day England, and finds herself transported into another world. Likewise, in the cosmic trilogy Ransom leaves his normal life here on earth to travel to other planets inhabited by extra-terrestrial creatures and angelic beings. We find this same duality in *The Great Divorce*. See Ritchie Robertson "Introduction" in E.T.A *The Golden Pot and Other Tales*, ix-x.

⁸⁷⁷ *SLxE*, 265.

⁸⁷⁸ Peter Markie, "Rationalism vs. Empiricism," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2015 Edition)*, 2015, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/rationalism-empiricism/>>.

man as consisting of *Intellectus* and *Ratio*, which thus creates a whole Rational Soul; their dual conception constituting the whole of rational man, or reason. Indeed Lewis observed how post-Enlightenment thought reduced the Rational Soul “to meaning ‘the power by which man reduces one proposition from another.’”⁸⁷⁹ Lewis’s view of reason was the larger “older” pre-eighteenth century view where imagination was included in the conception of reason. “*Intellectus* is that in man which approximates most nearly to angelic *intelligentia*.”⁸⁸⁰ We employ *intellectus* when we behold self-evident truths, according to Lewis. *Ratio*, on the other hand, is the act of “proceeding step by step to prove a truth which is not self evident,”⁸⁸¹ an endeavor Lewis admits to being impossible. Impossible, that is, without the aid of *intellectus*. Furthermore, in his discussion he reminds how Boethius asserts four areas of human cognition: sensation, imagination, reason, and understanding (Boethius, *Consolations*, 5.4.27-39).⁸⁸² These four components work in unison, each serving the human being in different respects. Boethius’s view seems also to align with Coleridge who viewed the imagination as part of a composite whole.⁸⁸³ Lewis, therefore, is not establishing a cognitive hierarchy *per se*, dividing the two faculties, when he says he views imagination as the organ of meaning and reason as the natural organ of truth. Rather, he is

⁸⁷⁹ *DI*, 161.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸² Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, 106-107.

⁸⁸³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, lxxxiii-lxxxv. Coleridge views the imagination as consisting of two parts, Primary and Secondary. The Primary Imagination is the power behind “the mystery of perception”; it is the “living Power and Prime Agent in of all human Perception.” We might associate Coleridge’s Primary Imagination with *intellectus*. The Secondary Imagination is the “creative or poetic imagination.” (lxxxix) Coleridge also conceded another aspect called the philosophical imagination. All three, however, operate in unison.

showing how they work in concert to rightly interpret reality, both seen and unseen.

With Lewis's view of imagination now briefly sketched, I want to continue on to the specific "thing" or device within Lewis's stories that steals past the watchful dragons of personal presuppositions and cultural pressures. It is my view that beauty works within Lewis's stories as a cognitive jamming device. Lewis valued and employed beauty as an imaginative element of storytelling to achieve his narrative and apologetic goals because he understood the "resonance between the beauty of the created order and human aesthetic sensitivities, which transcends the limits to reason."⁸⁸⁴ Theologian Alister McGrath states, "Beauty by-passes rational analysis, appealing to something far deeper within us."⁸⁸⁵ Furthermore, I believe Lewis's concept of the *numinous* illuminates McGrath's statement, and aids our understanding of how Lewis's language of beauty operates within his works. Indeed, the very elements we find unsettling in the natural world are the same elements that come through the atmosphere and language of Lewis's fairy stories and his cosmic trilogy.⁸⁸⁶ These *numinous* elements stir the imagination. It is this stirring to which Lewis refers when he challenges readers to suppose that the source of that *numinous* feeling is God.

⁸⁸⁴ McGrath, *Intellectual World*, 109.

⁸⁸⁵ McGrath, *Mere Apologetics*, 115.

⁸⁸⁶ I refer to the sequential works of *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength* as the "cosmic trilogy" for the sake of brevity.

7.4 The Beautiful *Numinous*

Lewis listed Rudolf Otto's book *The Idea of the Holy* (*Das Heilige*, 1917) as one of primary importance to his thought-shaping.⁸⁸⁷ The German theologian, Otto, introduced the idea of the *numinous* and showed how religious experience permeates various aspects of life. The *numinous* underlies all religious experience. Otto coined the term *numinous*, taken from the Latin *numen* (divine power), as a way to define, "the holy *minus* its moral factor or its 'moment', and ... minus its 'rational' aspect altogether."⁸⁸⁸ Further, Otto defines the *numinous* by emphasizing four "moments"⁸⁸⁹ (types) of experience. To fully understand Otto's term we must look briefly at its constituent parts: *tremendum*, *mysterium*, *et fascinans*, and *augustum*. It should first be noted, however, that Otto defines "the object to which the numinous consciousness is directed"⁸⁹⁰ as the *mysterium tremendum* (n). What follows, therefore, are the adjectives that describe this object—*mysterium tremendum*—and the feelings it produces.

Tremendum – It is that which overpowers, might, or power. The feeling of "aweful majesty," or *tremenda majestas*. Inherent in the term is the creature-consciousness where one feels or is conscious of an object that rises over and against the self. It carries the relational notion of submergence; as falling beneath

⁸⁸⁷ A.T. Reyes "Introduction" in A. T. Reyes, ed., *C.S. Lewis's Lost Aeneid*, 6-7.

⁸⁸⁸ Otto, *Holy*, 6. The religious experience of the *numinous* includes what Otto describes as "creature-conscience." It is the awareness of being and feeling dependent upon something outside of the self. It is the sense of overwhelming nothingness in the face of what exists beyond the self. (10) Kierkegaard observes this same sense: "... every human being is an individual human being, becomes conscious of himself as an individual human being." See Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, 151.

⁸⁸⁹ Leon Schlamm, "Rudolf Otto and Mystical Experience," *Religious Studies* 27, no. 3 (September 1991): pp. 389–98, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20019490>, 392.

⁸⁹⁰ Otto, *Holy*, 25.

that which overtakes; it constitutes the notion of being “but ‘dust and ashes’ and nothingness” and “forms the numinous raw material for the feeling of religious humility.” The *tremendum* incites feelings of dependency; the “consciousness of creaturehood.”⁸⁹¹ This feeling supposes a feeling and understanding of creature *status* before its creator; thus, the relational element of *tremendum* differentiates from a more mystical rendering of createdness—a view that lacks the divine relation and focuses more on nature.

Mysterium – It is that which is related to “mystery.” It relates to *tremendum*, or the “aweful,” but more directly connotes the idea of “stupor” or “blank wonder.”⁸⁹² It is, in the natural sphere, that feeling of being struck dumb with astonishment. It is alien to human experience. In the religious sense, it is the ‘wholly other,’ or that which exists in the beyond, or that which extends beyond the usual.⁸⁹³ *Mysterium* differs from “supernatural” and “transcendent” in that *mysterium* describes the reality of some thing’s special character that we feel though its presence renders us unable to “give it clear conceptual expression.”⁸⁹⁴

⁸⁹¹ Ibid., 19-20.

⁸⁹² Ibid., 25.

⁸⁹³ Peter de Bolla refers to this concept in *Art Matters* as “mutism,” though he does so in the context of aesthetic value and feelings, which Otto clarifies as being analogous but certainly different in kind. Otto, however, goes further than the natural sphere and relates *mysterium* to the idea of “wholly other,” or “whose kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in a wonder that strikes us chill and numb.” Otto quotes Augustine’s description of his encounter the One who is “wholly other, found in *Confessions*. I include it here to serve as another example of what *mysterium*: “What is that which gleams through me and smites my heart without wounding it? I am both a-shudder and a-glow. A-shudder, in so far as I am unlike it, a-glow in so far as I am like it.” See Otto, *Holy*, 26-28.

⁸⁹⁴ Otto, *Holy*, 30. “Supernatural” and “transcendent” relate to and are exclusive to nature, whereas *mysterium* relates to the *mysterium tremendum*, the object one experiences in the religious sense.

Et fascinans – It is that “something uniquely attractive and fascinating.”⁸⁹⁵

It is that in the *numen* that causes one to wonder but also entrances; it bewilders, confounds, captivates, causes dizzy intoxication, and transports with a strange ravishment.⁸⁹⁶ It is one of two values (the other being *augustum*) within the *numinous*. Fascination is the element within the *numinous* “whereby it is of *subjective* value to man.”⁸⁹⁷

Augustum – It is related to “august,” or venerable (*augustus*). It indicates *value* of the *numen*, thus “it is recognized as possessing in itself *objective* value that claims our homage.”⁸⁹⁸ *Augustum* differs from the concept of transcendence in that transcendence is an ontological characteristic and denotes a being who is able to “abash us” whereas *augustum* indicates value and implies a being who is able to inspire—notably⁸⁹⁹ *augustum* functions as a relational term.

The *numinous* connects to beauty in that the *numinous* can be expressed in multiple forms.⁹⁰⁰ Otto asserts that the *numinous* can be expressed directly and indirectly. He aligns the indirect expression of the *numinous* to methods that “consist in those means by which we express kindred and similar feelings belonging to the ‘natural’ sphere.”⁹⁰¹ Within this sphere are elements such as grandeur and dread, both of which relate to Kant’s notion of the sublime. Otto

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁸⁹⁶ We can describe Lewis’s encounter with George MacDonald’s *Phantastes* as *et fascinans*. I discuss this below.

⁸⁹⁷ Otto, *Holy*, 31; 52.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid., 52. Thus Aslan, being the offspring of an emperor, and presumably a god-like figure, would possess *augustum*; making him worthy of homage, and conveying unquestioned value to his being.

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid., 52. See also, 14.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid., 65-66.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid., 61.

suggests a “hidden kinship between the numinous and the sublime which is something more than a merely accidental analogy, and to which Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* {sic} bears distant witness.”⁹⁰² So, the *numinous* and beauty connect in that the former is expressed through the latter. This is not to say the Otto’s *numinous* is necessarily beautiful. Indeed, the *numinous* can be experienced through terror or dread. Lewis described the *numinous* as profound wonder and illustrated it this way. If someone told you a ghost was in the next room, you would feel uncanny dread. But if someone told you a Great Spirit was in the room, and you believed it. “Your feelings would then be even less like the mere fear of danger: but the disturbance would be profound. You would feel wonder and a certain shrinking—a sense of inadequacy to cope with such a visitant.”⁹⁰³

Otto further states that the arts express *numinous* through the sublime, and that “in great art the point is reached at which we may no longer speak of the ‘magical’, but rather are confronted with the *numinous* itself, with all its impelling motive power, transcending reason, expressed in sweeping lines and rhythm.”⁹⁰⁴ Here Otto intimates the expression of the *numinous* through artistic atmosphere, whether in painting, literature, or in religious services. We shall see below that the expression of the *numinous* via vehicles of beauty helps us recognize the importance of the *Bifrost*, specifically in Lewis’s work.

With the elements of the *numinous* in view, we must now inquire further into what Otto means by holiness *minus* its moral factor. His definition aligns with Old Testament usage, meaning “sacred, consecrated, set apart as dedicated to

⁹⁰² Ibid., 63.

⁹⁰³ C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 15.

⁹⁰⁴ Otto, *Holy*, 67.

God” or “ ... as a title of God, “the Holy One” focuses on God as unique, wholly other;⁹⁰⁵ which is similar to the New Testament *hagios* meaning “separate from common condition and use; pure, righteous ... morally.”⁹⁰⁶ Otto, however, frames “the holy” as not just a description or ascription but as feeling derived from fantastic encounter. So, there is an object of holiness, and there is also the feeling one receives by being in its presence.

In *Surprised by Joy* Lewis notes how he encountered this *feeling* when, as a teenager, he read George MacDonald’s *Phantastes*.⁹⁰⁷ Lewis, then an atheist, randomly purchased the book on a cold October evening on the train station platform in Leatherhead, and that same evening he was quickly ambushed by the story. “It was as if I were carried sleeping across the frontier,” writes Lewis, “or as if I had died in the old country and could never remember how I came alive in the new. For in one sense the new country was exactly like the old. ... But in another sense all was changed.”⁹⁰⁸ Lewis felt as if the common things in life were being transformed, as if he had stumbled onto a pathway of knowing—a knowing that he could not name for some time, but sensed its realness. It was woven into the journey of the main character Anodos and slowly, Lewis found it in his own life. “But now I saw the bright shadow coming out of the book into the real world and resting there, transforming all common things and yet itself unchanged.”⁹⁰⁹

The odd joining of “bright” and “shadow” reveals Lewis’s own difficulty in

⁹⁰⁵ Kohlenberger/Mounce Concise Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament, n.p.

⁹⁰⁶ *MGD*, n.p.

⁹⁰⁷ *SBJ*, 179.

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 181.

pinpointing the experience.⁹¹⁰ Lewis sensed this unique element of MacDonald's writing affecting his imagination, baptizing⁹¹¹ it into this new world.⁹¹² "I did not yet know (and I was a long time in learning)," admits Lewis, "the name of the new quality, the bright shadow, that rested on the travels of Anodos. I do now. It was Holiness."⁹¹³

In my view, Lewis's teenage experience represents more than the beginning of his sanctification and journey to the Christian faith. His brush with holiness illuminates Otto's definition of the *numinous*. In fact, Lewis's experience and description of holiness are consistent with Otto's *numinous* in that he experienced an unexplainable feeling (*mysterium*), a sense of sacral worship (*tremendum*), personal engrossment in the story along with its beautiful elements (*fascinans*), and a transforming value (*augustum*). Furthermore, for Lewis, at that time, it was not an encounter with moral goodness,⁹¹⁴ but the presence of the

⁹¹⁰ Perhaps Lewis here borrows from MacDonald himself, as the closing two chapters of *Phantastes* focus on Anodos realizing that he had not died in fairy land as the sun rises over the mountain and casts his shadow as it should. This is, perhaps, the "bright shadow" of life realized. See George MacDonald, *Phantastes*, 162-167.

⁹¹¹ Michael Ward asserts that when Lewis's describes his imagination as "baptized," he means that *Phantastes* "awakened his imaginative capacity for understanding 'holiness' . . ." Here Ward explains imaginative baptism as providing Lewis with the meaning behind the idea of sanctification. I am, however, relating Lewis's notion of holiness with Otto's notion of the *numinous* and how Lewis, at an early age, engaged with that religious sense through beauty. See Ward "The Good Serves the Better and Both the Best" in *Imaginative Apologetics*, 63.

⁹¹² The image of baptism or re-baptism in the form of re-enchantment also emerges in *Perelandra*. In the MacDonald book Lewis was enchanted or baptized by the Holiness or *numinous* he experienced in the reading. In *Perelandra*, an object of beauty and sheer delight initiates the baptism or re-enchantment. Ransom attempts to pick one of the shimmering pieces of fruit and is doused with "an ice cold shower bath." Ransom's senses are immediately revived. He experiences full bodily refreshment and feels fully awake. "A re-enchantment fell upon him." See *Perelandra*, 42.

⁹¹³ *SBJ*, 179.

⁹¹⁴ In Lewis's "Is Theism Important" he asserts that true Christian faith is not derived from presuppositional arguments about the existence of God, nor from the *numinous* (religious experience), nor from moral experience or history alone. Rather, from "historical events which at once fulfill and transcend the moral category, which link themselves with the most *numinous*

Thing itself.⁹¹⁵ Otto clarifies his definition of holiness as well as distinguishes it from the common, and according to him inaccurate, usage by stating that merely defining holiness as “completely good” does not deal with the “overplus of meaning” which he contends the *numinous* seeks to illuminate.⁹¹⁶ In my view this overplus of meaning leads to a deeper understanding of Lewis’s use of the relational elements of the *numinous* and the beautiful, which create a phenomenological *apologia*.

7.5 The *Bifrost*

In this section I would like to bring up what I consider to be an important, and seldom discussed, aspect of the *numinous*. Lewis does not intentionally employ this aspect per se, but I believe this element exists within his writing and is an important category in its own right. What follows is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, it is meant to be suggestive, and represents a unique lens I am bringing to bear on Lewis and Otto—though hints can be found in *The Idea of the Holy*. The *numinous* carries a relational quality rarely discussed in Lewis scholarship. I am categorizing this element as the Bifrost: *that aspect relating to*

elements in Paganism, and which ... demand as their presupposition the existence of a Being ...” See Lewis “Is Theism Important” in *C.S. Lewis: Essay Collection*, 57.

⁹¹⁵ Lewis describes God in *M* as the One Thing, and from the source originates all of creation. Lewis, however, strongly differentiates the Hebrew God from a Pantheist God who is present in everything, thus establishing itself as a kind of universal force. The God of the Bible is not a force, but *fact* itself. He is concrete and certain. This, therefore, infuses the concept of the *numinous* with an even greater constitutional dynamic. A force that exists within every aspect of creation does not effuse presence in the way a concrete fact does. See *M*, 139; 148-149. As we will see below, Lewis’s Aslan character exhibits this notion well in *LWW*.

⁹¹⁶ Otto, *Holy*, 5. Otto concedes moral goodness as concomitant with holiness. He further notes the Hebrew conception *qadosh*, Greek conception *agios*, and the Latin *sanctus* all carry the notion of moral goodness. But this value aspect of holiness does not fully communicate the phenomenological residue that remains after one encounters the *numinous*.

ancient numinous kingship which places a person in a bridge-builder role between humankind and the divine. I am using the term Bifrost to keep the Northernness flavor of this thesis consistent, realizing, however, that this term refers to a literal bridge of light, or a rainbow, and not to a human being. The point being, the Norse *numinous* object Bifrost stands as an object that bridges or connects the realm of humankind to the divine.⁹¹⁷ Otto touches on *Bifrost* when he examines “Divination in Primitive Christianity.”⁹¹⁸ Otto asserts the notion that the *numinous*, in addition to being a feeling experienced by an individual, may also manifest itself in a person, such as a prophet or “holy man.” He [the prophet] is the being of wonder and mystery,” writes Otto, “who somehow or other is felt to belong to the higher order of things, to the side of the numen itself.”⁹¹⁹ The *numinous* person does not proclaim himself to be part of the numen. Rather, “he is experienced as such.”⁹²⁰ Otto further asserts that Jesus lived and acted as “the *numinous* being *par excellence*.”⁹²¹ It was the *impression* of Jesus upon the Apostle Peter that prompted his declaration of Jesus’s Messiahship (Mark 16:15).⁹²² So, the *numinous* can, and does, extend beyond metaphysical resonance or sublime religious experience. It also anchors to objects, or, in this case, a person.

⁹¹⁷ John Lindow, *Norse Mythology: A Guide to Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*, 1 edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 80-81.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹²¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹²² *Ibid.*, 159.

In this section, therefore, I want to examine *Bifrost* and suggest that the overplus of meaning inherent in the *numinous* includes this relational element. Once I examine and suggest this new perspective on the *numinous* in the context of Lewis studies, I then aim to further show the importance of its relational value and what that value connects to beauty.

Bifrost: Kingship

Mysterium Tremendum evokes a sense of silence, and may be “developed into something beautiful and pure and glorious.”⁹²³ The *mysterium* contains the sense of the unfamiliar, that which reaches beyond understanding and is extraordinary. Joined with the *tremendum* it includes experiencing the sense of overwhelming power. The *mysterium tremendum* also carries rugged elements of Northernness. “It has crude, barbaric antecedents and early manifestations...”⁹²⁴ In *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* we find the *mysterium tremendum* vividly etched into the children’s first experience of Aslan. When Mr. Beaver says that Aslan is on the move the children each experience a unique feeling (*sui generis*). Lewis describes the feeling as the kind experienced in a dream when “someone says something which you don’t understand but in the dream it feels as if it had some enormous meaning.”⁹²⁵ The meaning can be terrifying and turn the dream into a nightmare, or it can be lovely, “too lovely to put into words, which makes the dream so beautiful that you remember it all your life.”⁹²⁶ Lewis here

⁹²³ Ibid., 13.

⁹²⁴ Ibid.

⁹²⁵ *LWW*, 76.

⁹²⁶ Ibid.

connects the *numinous* elements of mystery and awe to beauty, but before we look at how the *numinous* connects to beauty I want to develop the *numinous* idea within the exchange between the Beavers and the children in order to illuminate an important, and seldom discussed element of the *numinous*.⁹²⁷

Further into the children's discussion with Mr. Beaver, Lewis employs the *tremendum* in Mr. Beaver's description of Aslan. Susan asks if they can see Aslan, to which Mr. Beaver responds affirmatively. Lucy then inquires as to Aslan's form, followed by Susan's inquiry about his temperament. I include the entire exchange here in order to show another seldom discussed element of the *numinous*:

"Is—is he a man?" asked Lucy.

"Aslan a man!" said Mr. Beaver sternly. "Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea. Don't you know who is the King of the Beasts? Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion."

"Ooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver; "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver, "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he is good. He is the King, I tell you."⁹²⁸

Within the dialogue several subcategories emerge regarding characteristics of the *numinous* worth noting. First, the *numinous* sense experienced by the children at the mere mention of Aslan, his being, is intensified when they discover

⁹²⁷ Carnell uses "*numinous* awe" when discussing Otto's term. Carnell's helpful analysis of *numinous* shows how Lewis employed the concept in his stories but, in my view, he does not extend the notion of the *numinous* beyond literary elements of awe and wonder. See Carnell, *Shadow*, 120.

⁹²⁸ *LWW*, 86.

his form and station. He is *the* Lion (form) and he is the son of an emperor (station). Previous Lewis scholarship analyzes this portion of text in light of Aslan's form, a magnificent lion (*numinous*), and his inherent goodness,⁹²⁹ as stated by Mr. Beaver. This statement relates holiness with Aslan's moral character,⁹³⁰ which as we have noted Lewis would not deny (nor would Otto). Otto, however, specifies in his definition that the *numinous* is the *felt* aspect of holiness. To focus on the morally good, is not to focus on the *numinous* at all. I want to suggest that beyond Lewis's clear framing of Aslan as morally good yet *numinously* unpredictable and mysterious, this passage communicates the notion of Aslan's *numinous* role as ruler. Yes, Aslan is a lion (*numinous* form) and emperor (station), but what of his kingly role (position); can this *numinous* characteristic bring significant insight to Lewis's *apologia*?

⁹²⁹ Russell W. Dalton "Aslan is on the Move" in Shanna Caughey, ed., *Revisiting Narnia*, 142-144. Dalton suggests that Lewis "tries to develop" Aslan's character so as to embody both the "classical theistic view of God" with the Western Orthodox view of the incarnate, crucified Christ. (142) See also Bruce L. Edwards, *Not a Tame Lion*. Edwards does well to discuss Aslan's *terrible goodness*, relating this moral quality to Jesus Christ, who reminds his followers that only God is good. Edwards notes that true goodness "is a revelation that moves us." (44) Edwards, perhaps unknowingly, touches on the concept of *numinous* kingship (*numinous* knowledge) when he quotes St. Paul in Colossians 2:3: "In [him] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (41) See also David C. Downing, *Into the Wardrobe*, 65-69. Downing provides a brief survey of the *numinous* qualities and influence on Lewis's writing, especially the scene that I have noted here with Aslan and the children. Downing rightly describes Aslan's goodness as unlike any earthly goodness (*numinous*). He notes, "To say 'Aslan is not a tame lion' is to acknowledge his *numinous* qualities and his absolute sovereignty over Narnia." (69) When Downing mentions Aslan's "*numinous* qualities" he is referring to Otto's defined *numinous* elements of fear, awe, holy dread, fascination, attraction, yearning, unspeakable magnitude, majesty, energy, urgency, dynamism, wonder, astonishment, stupefaction, mystery, otherness, incomprehensibility. (65) There is, however, no mention of the *numinous* role of the ruler and what that entails with regard to *numinous* knowledge. See also Peter Schakel, *Imagination and the Arts in C. S. Lewis*, 66. In discussing the *numinous* quality of Aslan, he primarily notes Aslan's theological analog in Christ and emphasizes Lewis's determination to make Aslan seem transcendent (though transcendent differs from the *numinous*, according to Otto) and awesome. Nothing, however, is said of Aslan's position as ruler.

⁹³⁰ When the children finally meet Aslan face to face, Lewis again uses *numinous* language to describe the encounter. "People who have not been in Narnia think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time." Here he communicates the very essence of *mysterium tremendum* and punctuates it with a reference to Aslan's "overwhelming eyes." See Lewis, *LWW*, 140.

Kingship carries a specific *numinous* role in that a king stands between those he rules and the unknown (position). Kingship in the Ancient Near East, as well as Mesoamerica and the empirical dynasties of China, did not relate to a political institution. The Ancients viewed human polity as reaching beyond local governance and into the mysteries of nature and the powers that ruled nature.⁹³¹ The ancients understood daily life as incorporating the trans-corporeal along with the immediate aspects of the community. The king was meant to harmonize these integrations between local and national interests as well as those reaching into the beyond of the cosmos.⁹³² A king, therefore, rules under and answers to the unknown; he must interpret and represent that which is “the good” for the common good of all the people. The king establishes law and provides order in the kingdom.⁹³³ Furthermore, the king exists as a live analog of the temple. For example, the Mayan temples and pyramids mimicked the sacred mountain “which the divine father had used to lift up the sky up above the earth, and which constituted the numinous point of contact with the divine.”⁹³⁴ The Mayan king was, therefore, identified with this *axis mundi* of the cosmos and was a living metaphor; he was the *axis mundi* made flesh.⁹³⁵

Bifrost: Religious Role

⁹³¹ Francis Oakley, *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment*, 17. Sacral kingship was a common expression of polity in Ireland, India, Sudan, Peru, Scandinavia, Polynesia, West Africa and China. For more on numinous places see Otto, *Holy*, 126.

⁹³² Ibid.

⁹³³ Odin was a king as well as *Æsir*. His goodness of reputation was known to other kings because of his unique beauty and intelligence, and also because of his ability to command and lead others well. See Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, 7-8.

⁹³⁴ Oakley, *Kingship*, 30-31.

⁹³⁵ Ibid., 31.

The religious role of the *Pontifex Maximus*, commonly known as the Pope, is *numinous* as well. To the ancients, bridges were viewed as *numinous* objects; they were the only means by which a person could reach a faraway country. Bridges became *numinous* symbols where the devil would attack or where “one can also cross over oneself.”⁹³⁶ The highest title in ancient Rome was *Pontifex*, which translates “bridge builder.” The Catholic Church appropriated the term, thus rendering *Pontifex Maximus*, or “the uppermost bridge builder.” The *Pontifex Maximus* served as the bridge between mankind and the Godhead or the beyond.⁹³⁷ In the case of Aslan, he communicated the Emperor’s magic first at the White Witch’s confrontation of Edmund the traitor, and again after his resurrection when he informs Susan and Lucy of elements of the Deep Magic the White Witch did not know.⁹³⁸ Mr. Beaver describes Aslan as the king of Narnia, son of the emperor, and also notes how Aslan will reestablish order within Narnia in the form of ending the eternal winter.⁹³⁹

Bifrost: Northernness

Furthermore, this conception of *numinous* in Aslan’s kingship connects to Northernness. In Old Norse mythology Óðinn interpreted and possessed wisdom and knowledge for the people and the kings of the realm. Scholars suggest he distributed “*numinous* knowledge” to kings that was necessary for their rule.⁹⁴⁰

⁹³⁶ Marie-Louise Von Franz, *Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales*, 179.

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁸ *LWW*, 156; 178.

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁹⁴⁰ Timothy Bourns, “The Language of Birds in Old Norse Tradition” (Masters thesis, Medieval Icelandic Studies, Háskóli Íslands Hugvísindasvið, 2012), 68. See also Jens Peter

Indeed, the second poem in *The Poetic Edda*, “Hávamál” (or “Sayings of the High One”) contains granular everyday wisdom for Norse peoples, as well as personal narrative accounts of Óðinn’s adventures and the wisdom he procured from them; in particular, one stanza in which he describes his own death and his return to life after nine nights of acquiring more wisdom. (Hávamál, 138-164).⁹⁴¹ As shown above, this is clearly echoed in Aslan as “Son of the Emperor-beyond-the-sea.” He is, in similar fashion, an Óðinn-like character who distributes *numinous* knowledge to the sons and daughters of Adam, who are prophesied to rule the realm of Narnia.⁹⁴² Aslan, therefore, embodies both notions of kingship *numinous* in that he is the *axis mundi* made flesh and rules as *Bifrost* in the realm of Narnia, and he is also an Óðinn-like *numinous* figure⁹⁴³ in that he wanders between two worlds, distributing knowledge and wisdom to the children who are themselves images of the *Bifrost*.

Moreover, in *That Hideous Strength* we find an apparent *Bifrost* element in Ransom’s role in helping others notice the existence of the “unseen country,”

Schjødt and Victor Hansen, *Initiation Between Two Worlds: Structure and Symbolism in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religion*, “The Acquisition of the Numinous and the Other World: An Analysis of the Semantics of Liminality.”

⁹⁴¹ Larrington, *The Poetic Edda*, 34.

⁹⁴² *LWW*, 88-89.

⁹⁴³ Jens Peter Schjødt and Victor Hansen, *Initiation Between Two Worlds*, 422-425. In addition to Óðinn as a *Bifrost* character, certain objects within Old Norse mythology also carry *numinous* knowledge or power to the subjects who possess them. “Blood, for instance, may have had a special attachment to abilities in battle, or the runes may have been linked to magical activities.” Though speculative, what is clear about these *numinous* objects (blood, runes) is that they “formed a broadly *numinous* potentiality.” (424) The parallel of *numinous* objects can be observed in the *LWW* when Father Christmas distributes weapons of battle and magical devices to help and to heal. *LWW*, 116-119. It should also be noted in this section of the story Father Christmas himself emanates a *numinous* presence: “He was so big, and so glad, and so real, that they all became quite still. They felt very glad, but also very solemn. (117)

the Logres.⁹⁴⁴ Ransom, though not royalty himself, whether as king or son of an emperor, still acts as emissary or tribune—a bridge builder—of the *numinous* presence upon the earth. Likewise, we find in *Till We Have Faces* a saga-like tale⁹⁴⁵ that includes a shadowy creature (eventually found to be a god) in the Brute who lives upon the mountain accepting the sacrifices of the people of Glome.⁹⁴⁶ When the king of Glome offers his daughter Psyche,⁹⁴⁷ who is worshipped by the people for her beauty and healing power, she becomes a *numinous*-like character in that she serves as ambassador between the natural world and the preternatural world of the Shadowbrute—the god of the mountain.⁹⁴⁸ Anodos, the protagonist from George MacDonald’s book that first captivated Lewis, can also be viewed as a *Bifrost* for Lewis himself into the world of the *numinous*, the world of the beyond.

Conclusion

In examining *numinous* kingship, what I am now calling *Bifrost*, we understand and accept the various elements of the *numinous* Otto set forth: *tremendum, mysterium, et fascinans, augustum*. These elements, with their

⁹⁴⁴ Carnell, *Shadow*, 101.

⁹⁴⁵ Jocelyn Gibb, ed., *Light on C.S. Lewis*, 94.

⁹⁴⁶ Lewis, *TWF*, 99. Here we see well the *numinous* object, the Shadowbrute, as viewed by Bardia and Orual. Lewis is consistent with his *numinous* notion as defined in *The Problem of Pain*; the *numinous* is an object and that object produces the *numinous* feelings Otto associates when encountering the object, i.e., fear, dread, wonder, awe, magnificence, mystery, fascination, etc. With the Shadowbrute as a *numinous* object, we can see how Psyche then plays the role of *Bifrost*—the bridge builder between the *numinous* world of the gods in the beyond and the people of Glome, namely Orual.

⁹⁴⁷ *TWF*, 61.

⁹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 54-61.

derivative aspects, describe the feeling of the *numinous*,⁹⁴⁹ not the *numinous* itself; what Lewis described as the object of the *numinous*.⁹⁵⁰ With regard to Lewis's work, these feelings emerge when one encounters the beautiful within the literature itself: fear, awe, holy dread, fascination, attraction, yearning, unspeakable magnitude, majesty, energy, urgency, dynamism, wonder, astonishment, stupefaction, mystery, otherness, incomprehensibility.⁹⁵¹ The role of *Bifrost* illuminates how the *numinous* within Lewis's work activates the imagination to engage with another world, the beyond, which, as we will see, invites encounter for the characters within the stories, as well as the readers themselves. The *Bifrost* is thus an element of the *numinous* seldom—if ever—discussed in Lewis scholarship and clearly shows the relational quality of religious sense. Next, I want to examine how the *numinous* incites relation through desire.

7.6 Relational Value in the *Numinous* and Beautiful

Umberto Eco in his *On Beauty: A History of a Western Idea* notes how the eighteenth century ushered in a new concept of beauty. “A beautiful thing is defined by the way we apprehend it, by analyzing the reaction of a person who pronounces a judgment of taste.”⁹⁵² Intrinsic to a person's response to a beautiful thing is the value or quality of that object, hitherto an element of the beautiful not considered save for those of the Classical school centuries earlier. The beautiful

⁹⁴⁹ *PP*, 14.

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹⁵¹ Downing, *Wardrobe*, 65.

⁹⁵² Umberto Eco, *On Beauty*, 275.

was considered in dominant philosophical circles to be “bound up with the senses, the recognition of a pleasure.”⁹⁵³ Eco notes that simultaneously the notion of the Sublime began to emerge. The Sublime was elevated into vogue by Pseudo-Longinus’s treatise *On the Sublime*, a first century work revived in the seventeenth century. Longinus defined the sublime as that which “elevates us: uplifted with a sense of proud possession, we are filled with joyful pride, as if we had ourselves produced the very thing we heard (*On The Sublime*, VII. 1-4).”⁹⁵⁴ Eco summarizes Longinus’s definition thus: “... the Sublime is an effect of art (and not a natural phenomenon) whose realisation is determined by a convergence of certain rules and whose end is the procurement of pleasure.”⁹⁵⁵ The distinction between the eighteenth century Neo-Classical definition of the beautiful and the revivification of Longinus’s *Sublime*⁹⁵⁶ instructs our understanding and placement of Lewis’s notion and employment of the beautiful. Though we find elements of the Sublime in Lewis’s work, I believe he adhered to a Neo-Classical expression of the beautiful. Lewis was concerned with the value and quality of beauty.

⁹⁵³ Ibid., 277.

⁹⁵⁴ W. Hamilton Fyfe, trans., *Aristotle The Poetics. Longinus On the Sublime. Demetrius On Style.*, 139.

⁹⁵⁵ Eco, *On Beauty*, 278.

⁹⁵⁶ The Sublime and the *numinous* play, perhaps, similar roles within literary atmosphere. A painting of a storm, as made famous by Kant, can express power, and therefore be considered a sublime natural phenomenon. But the *numinous* can also be expressed through painting or a written scene of a storm so long as the storm is expressed in contrast to a form of light, perhaps a small campfire on the shore. (Otto, *Holy*, 68) It is, however, a mistake to consider them synonymous; for the Sublime, according to Longinus and Kant, shakes our spirit with power—it is the effect of art that produces pleasure (Eco, *On Beauty*, 278; 294); whereas the *numinous* is the feeling produced by the beautiful, or elements of awe, even the sublime, that causes relational insignificance or awareness of presence beyond the finite realm. Furthermore, the bifurcation of the Sublime and the beautiful has grown increasingly tenuous. Philip Shaw, in *The Sublime*, argues for a “return to beauty.” He reminds us that the Sublime was previously “regarded as a mode of beauty, not as an exception, and truth was thus available for apprehension by the individual.” For more see Philip Shaw, *The Sublime*, 148-152.

Previously we examined this “beautiful quality” at work within MacDonald’s *Phantastes*, set off by the holy elements of the *numinous* so germane to fantasy.⁹⁵⁷ It was those elements Lewis intended as a subtle *apologia* because of their inherent relational qualities.⁹⁵⁸

In *The Religious Sense* Catholic theologian Luigi Giussani positions the human experience of wonder and awe, or the feeling of “presence,” within the world to be an essential ontological element.⁹⁵⁹ That is to say, it is not that we merely sense “things” in the world and are struck by their form, but that we sense “being,” and that sense of being strikes us with wonder and awe. “The very first sense,” writes Giussani, “of the human being is that of facing a reality which is not his, which exists independently of him, and upon which he depends.”⁹⁶⁰ We realize we exist in relation to another preexisting “gift,”⁹⁶¹ it is the gift of reality, and we passively experience it in that we did not ask for existence and yet it comes to us. We, therefore, sense this reality and become “aware of an exorable presence.” This presence⁹⁶² exists outside of us, is not dependent upon us, and yet draws us to it by its independence. Giussani suggests this presence conditions our

⁹⁵⁷ Rottensteiner, *The Fantasy Book*, 12.

⁹⁵⁸ Shaw, *The Sublime*, 151. Shaw notes the relational qualities of beauty in Platonism and Neoplatonism as the beautiful is linked to *eros*, “an embodied desire leading to an elevated desire for true intellectual beauty.”

⁹⁵⁹ Luigi Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, 101.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid. This is the sense (feeling) Lewis felt upon reading MacDonald’s *Phantastes*.

⁹⁶¹ Giussani’s notion of gift is inherently relational. Reality is a gift given to humans by someone *other*.

⁹⁶² Philosopher Charles Taylor describes our lives and the places we live as consisting of a spiritual shape. He uses the term “fullness.” According to Taylor, we grope for this feeling of fullness in our lives. Sometimes we label the feeling wonder or beauty. Lewis regards this “presence” in similar fashion in *TWG* when he writes, “Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty . . .” (30) Taylor explains the experience as one that “breaks through our ordinary sense of being in the world, with its familiar objects, activities and points of reference.” See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 5.

existence, thus creating a sense of awe and wonder in relation to this presence, this otherness⁹⁶³ or *der andere Zustand*.⁹⁶⁴ Lewis, like Guissani, ascribes this presence to God and says, “He is so brim-full of existence that he can give existence away, can cause things to be, and to be really other than himself ...”⁹⁶⁵ I contend Guissani’s notion of religious sense aligns with Otto’s *numinous* and deepens its meaning, thus illuminating the relational element of the *numinous* feeling.

Giussani, then, connects awe and wonder with attraction or desire. Human desire occurs before any other sense, even fear. Indeed, “affirmation and development”⁹⁶⁶ of human desire is the core of religious experience. So, we sense our own being, and we sense an independent “otherness” (*ganz andere*) as well, something in the beyond to which we relate and are attracted.⁹⁶⁷ In light of the ontological progression, Guissani suggests the “prime original intuition then, is the awe” in front of this otherness and the realization “of the ‘I’ as part of it.”⁹⁶⁸ This is what we sense when confronted with a beautiful object, whether that object is an *object de art* or part of the natural world. The splendor or grandeur or enormity—the *numinous*—of the form draws us; so then it is not beauty itself, but the something *ganz andere* we sense and seek to know.

⁹⁶³ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid., 6. *Der andere Zustand* is a phrase used by Robert Musil meaning “the other condition.”

⁹⁶⁵ *M*, 41.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid., 102.

⁹⁶⁷ See also Anthony O’Hear, *Beyond Evolution*, 195.

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid., 103.

Furthermore, in *Symbolism and Belief*, Edwyn Bevan notes how when a person notices a sunset the feeling evoked seems like a kind of knowledge of another world “spreading out like a halo from the object.”⁹⁶⁹ Bevan suggests something more exists beyond mere pleasant sensation or even intellectual knowledge. It is a “world of reality there behind the object.”⁹⁷⁰ Indeed, Bevan gives the Beautiful a peculiar unexplainable value. This weightiness of meaning is the same weightiness we ascribe to an old brick house. The wood beams, large fireplaces, and low ceilings suggest the house was built in a by-gone era. The patina is observed conceptually, so to speak. If we walked into this brick house when it was first built, we would not notice this particular beauty. We admire the house now because it “reminds us of something beyond itself.”⁹⁷¹ The beauty of the house possesses a *numinous* feel; it is a bridge into the past.

Anthony O’Hear describes this kind of beauty as objective, contra the subjectivist notion of beauty developed by Hume and Kant.⁹⁷² O’Hear suggests that when we describe the sunset as beautiful we are in fact making a statement about an object and its properties. Hume and Kant, on the other hand, maintain that in describing the sunset as beautiful we are speaking about “nothing in the object,” that is to say we are not describing a value or quality about the object. We are merely staining it with our own projected sentiment.⁹⁷³ O’Hear asserts that

⁹⁶⁹ Edwyn Bevan, *Symbolism and Belief*, 276.

⁹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁹⁷² O’Hear, *Beyond Evolution*, 187.

⁹⁷³ It is one thing to say that beauty and the sublime are two separate qualities, thus bifurcating the related terms due to their lexical value. But it is difficult to make this contention in light of Hume and Kant’s notion of beauty containing nothing, meaning that it does not possess any *ganz andere* element such as the *numinous*. This Kantian conception of subjective beauty

when we view beauty in this subjectivist light we consequently view man as existing without a background of value or realities that transcend him.⁹⁷⁴ O’Hear’s objectivist notion of beauty understands aesthetic value “in terms of a background of value ... of standards to which our judgments ought to conform.”⁹⁷⁵

This view of beauty, therefore, encapsulates not only form of object but also value or quality of object, and it is the quality, the *numinous et fascinans* of the object, the Beautiful itself, attracting a like value within us.⁹⁷⁶ Otto’s notion of the beautiful and the *numinous* align with O’Hear. Otto posits that the nature of the *numinous* is *a priori*. Judging an object, which I perceive through sight, as beautiful consists of conveying an “attribute that professes to interpret it,”⁹⁷⁷ as O’Hear suggests when he mentions the value of an object observed. The judgment occurs spontaneously, not through sense-experience, according to Otto. Otto presents the example of him encountering an object of beauty. He intuitively perceives the object’s sensuous qualities and spacial form. It is from this data alone that he ascribes the attribute or value of beautiful to the form. Otto suggests he must already possess an “obscure conception,” just as O’Hear suggests, of the beautiful itself or else the interpretation of even the most insignificant beautiful object would be impossible. There is, therefore, a pre-existing “knowing” within a person that informs him or her that an object possesses the quality or value of beauty, but that knowledge does not demand comprehension; it is *numinous*

mutes the notion of the *numinous* within an object of beauty and, therefore, negates any higher (i.e., divine) quality governing the form. See *De Vera Religione*, xxi, 57.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid., 191.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid., 192.

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁷ Otto, *Holy*, 134.

knowledge.⁹⁷⁸ Finally, Guissani asserts that the *numinous* presents immediate relational sense by making us feel the presence of a divine other; this sense comes through the beauty we see and through the mystery of that beauty we do not understand.

The *numinous*, therefore, expresses a sense of *ganz andere* as it is encountered through beauty. Beauty itself employs the *numinous* in that when we, as the seeing subject, observe an object and derive pleasure from it, we are, in a sense, connecting to the object's "otherness" value via the same value within our nature. The *numinous* connects to beauty, in our study, in the way the *numinous* contributes to beauty's otherness. When used literarily, an author, such as Lewis, can employ *numinous* qualities as a way to more vividly paint his prose with a sense of otherness. That "sense," or "religious sense," then, contributes to Lewis's phenomenological *apologia*.

Now that we have established a strong connection between the feeling of the *numinous* as expressed through the beautiful, I want to, in the next chapter, show how Lewis employs the elements of his language of beauty. Thus far this thesis has relied primarily on the analysis of concepts to lay the groundwork for interpreting beauty within the works of C.S. Lewis. In the next chapter, I aim to give evidence to this end.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid., 134-135.

Chapter 8: A Beautiful Apologetic

How Lewis Employs His Language of Beauty as Apologetic

“Language is deployed to make us strangers to ourselves and then recognize the world afresh.”

—*Rowan Williams, The Edge of Words*⁹⁷⁹

8.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters I have given detailed analysis of Lewis’s language of beauty. I have shown how Northernness works as literary atmosphere and how it also shows up in Lewis’s conceptual-theological thought in the way he shapes his fiction. Lewis uses Northernness to paint his prose in such a way as to elicit an aesthetic gasp—what he termed Joy. Joy operates as the initial response (aesthetic gasp) in the aesthetic progression that unfolds when one encounters beauty. Lewisian Joy denotes vitality and marks the story arc in the form of eucatastrophe. Eucatastrophe further demonstrates how Northernness influenced Lewis’s writing in that though he employed artistic elements of Northernness in his description, landscape, and overall language within his storytelling, he contrasted the conceptual-theological elements of Northernness with a purely Christian worldview: the ultimate happy ending. In this way Lewis imaginatively utilizes the seemingly contradictory nature of pagan Northernness—in other words, he employed the artistic elements for storytelling while, in a sense, redeeming the pagan worldview to a Christian one. The aesthetic gasp, Joy, incites

⁹⁷⁹ Williams, *The Edge of Words*, 19.

Sehnsucht, intense longing. This concept is understood in light of its genesis within German Romanticism. It is a term used to denote the sense of quest birthed upon experiencing the beautiful. One way in which Lewis communicated this language of beauty was through use of the *numinous*. The *numinous* is the sense of divinity or holiness within the aesthetic experience that draws subjects toward it. In Lewis's case, it manifests in haunting landscapes, the characters of Aslan and Ransom, and the sense of otherness within Lewis's works (like *Perelandra* and *Till We Have Faces*).

Let us review the inherent aesthetic progression within Lewis's language of beauty. First, there is encounter of the object, one of natural phenomenon, such as the ocean at sunset; or there is an encounter with an *objet d'art*, such as a painting or work of fiction. The encounter with the object produces intense feelings within the subject; this is the stab of Joy, according to Lewis. These strong feelings of Joy, then, produce *Sehnsucht*, or intense desire. The production of *Sehnsucht* suggests a quality beyond surface aesthetics. Elaine Scarry describes this quality as "unprecedentedness," that is, a quality in search of a precedent; potentially, the divine. G. Gabrielle Starr says desire "works to produce new value in what we see and what we feel."⁹⁸⁰ So, as subjects, we don't just *view* beautiful objects. Rather, we *experience* the beautiful; we *feel* beauty. In discussing beauty as an experience that we as humans feel, we join form (surface aesthetics) with function (transcendent intention). Framing beauty as merely transcendent or aesthetic further contributes to the bifurcation of beauty and the Sublime. Whereas the Enlightenment thinkers sundered the indescribable quality from beauty,

⁹⁸⁰ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 66.

commonly referred to as “the sublime,”⁹⁸¹ Lewis drew out that quality, relying on it to communicate directly with the emotions and the reasoning of his readers. He relied on form to communicate function or transcendent intent. One way Lewis accomplished this was by employing the *numinous tremendum*.

Rudolf Otto defines the *numinous* by emphasizing four moments, or types, of experiences: *mysterium tremendum*, *mysterium*, *et fascinans*, and *augustum*. The subject’s consciousness is directed toward the *mysterium tremendum*, or quite simply, the divine. Consider that in the arts, such as literature, poetry, and now in the twenty-first century film or music, the constituent parts communicate the essence of the piece.⁹⁸² In literature, for example, “atmosphere” gives the poem or book or scene its “feel,” or aesthetic impact. In Lewis we find the *numinous* combining with Northernness, both atmospherically and conceptually, achieving this feeling. Paul Holmer states, “Lewis’s literature communicates in such a way that, when successful, it creates new capabilities and capacities, powers and a kind of roominess in the human personality.”⁹⁸³ Poetic language, therefore, is a real medium of information.⁹⁸⁴ It builds within the subject a kind of memory index, which in turn shapes the conscious and subconscious mind, impacting both the imagination and the subject’s reasoning.⁹⁸⁵ Lewis viewed the use of myth as more than a portal for so-called “reasoned” engagement on philosophical issues. Rather,

⁹⁸¹ See Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics*, 25; 194-195. See also Eco, *On Beauty*, 275-284.

⁹⁸² St. Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, xxx, 54-57.

⁹⁸³ Holmer, *C.S. Lewis*, 20-21.

⁹⁸⁴ Kerry Dearborn, “Bridge over the River Why: The Imagination as a Way to Meaning,” *North Wind* 16 (1997): 29-40; 45-6.

⁹⁸⁵ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 147.

the story itself augments understanding, as Holmer suggests. It is, in fact, training a person's mind. "One becomes susceptible to new competencies, new functions, new pathos, new possibilities."⁹⁸⁶ Thus, Lewis's language of beauty operates as apologetic in that it unlocks the reader's imagination to new potentials—such as the existence of a Creator, in the case of *Perelandra*, or a "Source" of beauty, as in the case of *Till We Have Faces*, or the redeeming quality of sacrifice, as in the case of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

In what follows I will engage primary sources to show how Lewis's language of beauty works as apologetic. First, I will begin with Northernness; showing it to be an atmospheric context in which the *numinous* works to incite the aesthetic gasp: Joy. Next, I will show how Joy contributes to the experience of beauty by inspiring hope and exuding vitality. Finally, I will show how *Sehnsucht* operates as the final aesthetic element by the way it resonates with innate feelings of questing for the cause of the aesthetic gasp.

8.2 Northernness

Motion and Seeing Beauty

Previously I have shown the prevalence of Northernness by detailing its biographical influence upon Lewis. I have also shown, by using selective examples, how Northernness pops up lexically within his work. That is to say, Lewis will often use landscape, images, characters, language, or even places within his literature that directly correspond with Norse mythology. Furthermore, I have suggested the conceptual-theological influence of Northernness to be even

⁹⁸⁶ Holmer, *Shape*, 20.

more profound than the lexical. That is to say, Lewis employs Norse (and Romantic) concepts, such as heroism and the “quest” motif, but counters the Norse worldview, offering eucatastrophe rather than the hopelessness associated with the Norse apocalypse.

I am not concerned with the apparent contradiction between Lewis’s faith and his use of Norse mythological elements. The point of Lewis’s use of literary pagan elements of storytelling is not to endorse their worldview, but to utilize their ability to enhance the story so that the reader gains a sense of otherness. Lewis’s language of beauty borrows elements from Northernness to perform what any other works of literature attempt: to delight.⁹⁸⁷ In this way, Northernness operates in Lewis’s language of beauty as a kind of framework.

In this section I want to revisit the notion of movement as intrinsic to beauty. In particular, I want to return to the Northernness element evident within Lewis’s novel *Perelandra*. Following my commentary on Northernness and motion, I will look once more at the “Great Dance”—Lewis’s iconic final scene in the novel—and note how Northernness (as in the vividness of beauty) contributes to a conceptual-theological expression of beauty as Lewis counters Morris’s Northernness for his own hopeful version.

Northernness of Motion

In Chapter 4 I suggested a possible semantic Norse echo in Lewis’s green woman character, Tinidril, and the Norse term *gróa*, which suggests movement through the eddying of water. Even if *gróa* did not influence Lewis’s imaginative

⁹⁸⁷ *EC*, 10-12.

development of Tinidril, the eddying “northern” landscape of *Perelandra* presents us with a canvas from which to examine Lewis’s language of beauty. In *Perelandra* Lewis communicates beauty through landscape description, Northernness echoes of eddying water, or motion, and, thus, causes the reader to not only see beauty, but to experience it.

Readers experience a heightened sense of beauty by way of motor imagery, such as eddying water or floating islands. In order to feel this intensified beauty, we must first be able to see it more deeply than mere one-dimensional aesthetic sight that looks only to judge the exterior of an object.⁹⁸⁸ William Hogarth, the eighteenth century illustrator and author of *The Analysis of Beauty*, suggests we must combine mental imagery with actual sight.⁹⁸⁹ “Mastering this sight,” according to Gabrielle Starr, “is the foundation of the ability to see beauty.”⁹⁹⁰ This imaginative sight Hogarth suggests demands a kind of three-dimensional analysis that includes visual imagery, that of form, as well as “the world behind the head,” or, to use Lewis’s language, the thing behind the thing.

Hogarth’s illustration of the way in which we can best see beauty, which is too long to include here, mirrors Lewis’s principles of perception found in his essay “Meditation in a Toolshed.” In the essay Lewis states we must not only look at something from the outside, but we must also look at it from within. As he stood inside a dark toolshed Lewis inspected a sunbeam shining through a crack at the top of the door. But when he moved into the beam and stood within the light, he saw the world from within the sunbeam; he was looking *along* beauty and not

⁹⁸⁸ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 80-81; 91.

⁹⁸⁹ William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 21.

⁹⁹⁰ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 71.

simply at it.⁹⁹¹ Lewis's principle here suggests Hogarth's dogma; that we must develop ways of seeing the beautiful that are multi-dimensional. We must use visual imagery and our perception or mental sight. This way to see is important.⁹⁹²

The third dimension to Hogarth's "way to see" is that of motion. Elaine Scarry suggests that imagined motion is at the heart of the way writers can engage readers' most vivid imaginative experiences.⁹⁹³ There is also a relation to the sound of music to motion. The imagery of motion is essential for an image's aesthetic potential.⁹⁹⁴ That is to say, when you can use an image that suggests movement, you tap into the very essence of aesthetic experience and, arguably, the best possible potential for that particular image.

In Lewis's *Perelandra*, for example, the entire book is situated within movement. The language of beauty provides the reader, first, with a sensuous moving landscape; second, it plunges the reader alongside the hero into an immersive sensual experience that works in concert with the story arc to produce a strong sense of *Sehnsucht*. Finally, it works within a Northernness framework to lift the reader's sense of Joy.

In the first place, the first time we engage with the hero in *Perelandra*, we find him riding the waves of a drinkable ocean. The novel keeps readers constantly in "motion," and that motion impacts their experience of beauty. It is

⁹⁹¹ Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 212.

⁹⁹² There continues a debate between iconologists and iconoclasts regarding the privilege of imaginative power: iconologists privilege either the visual arts (painting, sculpture, etc.) or visual imagery (poetry, literature, rhetoric), while iconoclasts assert that visual images (painting, design, sculpture, etc.) are inherently inferior to the concepts of language; that is to say, iconoclasts privilege language art above visual art (Coleridge would agree with this and is, perhaps, the progenitor of the thought). See Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 69.

⁹⁹³ Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book*, 76.

⁹⁹⁴ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 81.

the birthing of a world, and Lewis does his best to let fly the imaginative boundaries and remain true to the imagery he conjured that initially set the story in motion. Lewis describes the landscape in folds, leading the reader into discovery along with Ransom: “One of the great patches of floating stuff was sliding down a wave not more than a few hundred yards away.”⁹⁹⁵ The floating stuff Ransom eventually discovers constitutes the Perelandran landscape. The world is a floating world. Upon arrival Ransom immediately finds himself caught up in a storm. Lewis describes the thunder: “It is the laugh, rather than the roar, of heaven. . . . Enormous purple clouds came driving between him and the golden sky, and with no preliminary drops a rain such as he never experienced began to fall.”⁹⁹⁶

“Imagery of motion,” states Gabrielle Starr, “may be the most aesthetically consequential kind.”⁹⁹⁷ *Perelandra*, therefore, performs like any substantial work of art should; it captures movement within its poetics in such a way as to give its prose a kind of rhythm and glide.

Secondly, the scope of *Perelandra* is quite large, and stirring. In Lewis’s way, it is Romantically grand, operatic, with movement and color that coalesce into rhythmic climax. It is saturated with a Wagnerian Northernness that works itself into a tempest of visual drama. Apropos for Lewis who, although he appreciated the *Primum Mobile* of a classical cosmology, felt it too neatly confined and longed for the overwhelming vast open space of the Romantic

⁹⁹⁵ *P*, 34.

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁷ Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, 91.

vision.⁹⁹⁸ The vision of Perelandra, however, is only the tip of the iceberg with regard to beauty. Such a vision without movement seems too stagnant for Lewis. The multi-sensory nature of Perelandran imagery helps us not only see floating islands, but places us alongside Ransom in the primordial waters swimming with the islands. We feel the warm waters⁹⁹⁹ we drink from the “great globes of yellow fruit”¹⁰⁰⁰ and our thirst is quenched, we throw our hands up in praise and shout, “Blessed be he!”¹⁰⁰¹ during the Great Dance. This is why Perelandra is perhaps our most direct and best example of beauty in the Lewis corpus; it creates a heightened sense of longing in the reader even as Ransom’s own sense expands throughout the novel. As Paul Holmer puts it, Perelandra is the place “Where beauty makes one ache ...”¹⁰⁰²

The Perelandran beauty is so opulent and risky that it moves the reader away from convention; not only in sensory experience, but also in morality. The grandness of the vision expands our own allowance and threshold for beauty as well as the good. Lewis blankets the reader in near despair as Ransom, exhausted from battle and his journey, searches for a way out of the “under-land.” Then, after slipping on clay into “deep, swift-flowing water” he allows himself to float “out of blackness into greyness and then into an inexplicable chaos of semi-transparent blues and greens and whites. ... A moment later and he was rushed into broad daylight and air and warmth, and rolled head over heels, and deposited,

⁹⁹⁸ *DI*, 99.

⁹⁹⁹ *P*, 32.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁰⁰² Holmer, *Shape*, 47.

dazzled and breathless, in the shallows of a great pool.”¹⁰⁰³ There is a pleasure and delight about the watery world that we celebrate even as Ransom destroys the Unman—we gasp at the salvation of innocence.

Finally, Lewis produces a Wagnerian Northernness feel that emphasizes the victory of good or evil, and the jubilation of creation. The movement of *Perelandra* escalates into an operatic climax that punctuates the novel with visual imagery of a primordial and apocalyptic dance. The movement experienced in Lewis’s climactic scene utilizes his language of beauty both in movement and in its Northernness influence.

The Northernness influence in the aesthetic movement of *Perelandra* ushers the reader along a path that arcs with beauty and finally climaxes with a type of Wagnerian hymn. Lewis refers to this hymn as the “Great Dance.”¹⁰⁰⁴ Lewis’s narrative begins to crescendo as Ransom regains his strength after his subterranean adventure of killing the Unman. During his recovery he hears a song. “It was formless as the song of a bird, yet it was not a bird’s voice. As a bird’s voice is to a flute, so this was to a cello: low and ripe and tender, full-bellied, right and golden brown: passionate too, but not with the passions of men.”¹⁰⁰⁵ Lewis raises his hero from the bowels of *Perelandra* in order that he may witness the genesis of its inhabitants. The Wagnerian climax of the novel moves in literal song (speeches given by unknown voices to Ransom). If we compare Siegfried’s exchange with Brünnhilde in *Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods* with the concluding lines in the speeches of the Great Dance, similarities in lexical

¹⁰⁰³ *P*, 158.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 159.

structure emerge as well as a general aesthetic feel of climax. “Sun, I hail thee! / Hail, O light! / Hail, O glorious day!” exclaims Brünnhilde. “I hail thee, mother / Who gave me birth! Hail, O Earth, / That nourished my life,”¹⁰⁰⁶ replies Siegfried. Wagner’s repeated use of “Hail” finds curious echo in Lewis’s refrain “Blessed be he!” which ends each speech. The movement of the story progresses not just chronologically, but in visual and sensual scale.

Lewis’s “Great Dance” operates aesthetically in terms of how the literature moves the reader, but also conceptual-theologically in terms of how it communicates to a reader’s innerscape.

Conceptual-Theological Northernness Contra William Morris

Lewis’s language of beauty seen in *Perelandra* also works on a conceptual-theological level. Here Lewis reverses the Morrisian Northernness dance of melancholy and replaces it with relationship: creature/Creator offering the “Great Dance” of created things *with* their Creator.¹⁰⁰⁷ What does Lewis mean by “Great Dance” and how does it relate to his Northernness and his concept of beauty? Three concepts emerge from Lewis’s “Great Dance” that provide answers to these questions: 1) The “Great Dance” helps situate created objects into their proper ontological order; 2) The “Great Dance” aids our conception of true Joy; and, 3) The “Great Dance” defines human purpose through interaction with God.

First, the “Great Dance” helps us situate created objects into their proper ontological order. Gilbert Meilaender states that Lewis believes we must “enter

¹⁰⁰⁶ Wagner, Richard, *Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods*, 88-89.

¹⁰⁰⁷ For more on Lewis’s incorporation of Charles Williams’s concept of co-inherence, see Paul Fiddes’s “The Great Dance in C.S. Lewis’s *Perelandra*” in *C.S. Lewis’s Perelandra*, 40.

into the movement of the dialectic [of desire] and practice of both enjoyment and renunciation. Neither simply qualifies the other, but instead, life is seen as a constant movement back and forth between the poles of the dialectic. The objects of creation are *intended* to arouse delight without fully satisfying.”¹⁰⁰⁸ Meilaender suggests this intention is due to objects of creation being fragments of God’s glory and as such are not to be mistaken, as Lewis often reminds his readers, for the glory itself. This error diminishes the honor of their intent. That is to say, if they are intended by God to express his glory, his very essence, then to love the fragment is to dishonor the one who distributes the fragments throughout the created order.

In the “Great Dance” Lewis again draws lines of distinction between created objects and human beings: “All which is not itself the Great Dance was made in order that He might come down into it.”¹⁰⁰⁹ It is here we find the locus of Lewis’s philosophy of beauty. The objects of beauty in this life compel us to love them. Lewis states, “You know very well what is the common quality that makes you love them though you cannot put into words.”¹⁰¹⁰ Here Lewis suggests our love for these beautiful things is aroused by the desire to possess them. If a person thinks they possess these beautiful things, then she is mistaken. The beautiful things of this world, according to Lewis, are not the things we truly desire. Where Morris ended, Lewis proceeded further out into the realm of spirit. He regards the human soul as possessing a secret signature that pushes the person far beyond mere created objects and into the quest to see that from which the desire

¹⁰⁰⁸ Meilaender, *Taste*, 23.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *P*, 184.

¹⁰¹⁰ *PP*, 130.

aroused.¹⁰¹¹ That is not to say the created objects possess no purpose or that their intrinsic beauty should not be appreciated. Lewis shows the divine utility of created objects while also explaining that even though the objects maintain a purpose, God does not need them: “He has immeasurable use for each thing that is made, that His love and splendour may flow forth like a strong river. ... We also have need beyond measure of all that he has made. ... He has no need at all for anything that was made.” The paradoxical contrast displays grace and love from God who provides beauty from “a plain bounty.”¹⁰¹²

Second, the “Great Dance” aids our conception of true Joy. In contrast to Morris, Lewis uses Northernness in the “Great Dance” as a way to communicate the truer understanding of Joy. Norse mythology expresses a melancholic desire for something beyond, but in the current physical world hopelessness lingers.¹⁰¹³ Thus, the beauty Lewis found as a young man in Norse mythology contained no hope for what might be termed “Christian Joy.” This is why Vikings sought a good death, for it was only in a good death during battle that they could show their courage and valor and thus find a seat at the table in the great hall of Valhalla.¹⁰¹⁴ Morris presented the end of the world in this way through his use of landscape and even his descriptions of innerscape.¹⁰¹⁵ Lewis, on the other hand, does the opposite and uses elements of landscape (or geography, see “Fortune’s Smile” in *SBJ*) to communicate the possibility of new modes of Joy. This is a Joy that

¹⁰¹¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁰¹² *P*, 186.

¹⁰¹³ See Chapter 4 of this thesis.

¹⁰¹⁴ Gordon, “introduction” in *Introduction to Old Norse*, xxix-xxxvi.

¹⁰¹⁵ “William Morris” in *SLE*, 224-225.

does not deal with mirth, but something far more than the consummation of being with a desired object.¹⁰¹⁶ The common Christian view of last things looks at the end of days to be a procuring of the “Thing behind the thing” that we desire, a consummation of the journey. (Rom. 8:18-25) In the “Great Dance” Lewis helps us suppose the something else entirely. He suggests it is false to consider the “Last Days” the finale, but points us to the perspective of a wiping away, a correction, or to use a theological term, a renewal. In describing the moral fall of Ransom’s own planet, Tor refers to the coming apocalypse neither as an ending or new beginning, but a restart, a moving into what was intended to be.¹⁰¹⁷ “After a falling, not a recovery but a new creation. Out of the new creation, not a third but the mode of change itself is changed forever. Blessed be He!”¹⁰¹⁸ The Joy of the “Great Dance” establishes a place of origin, a center from which all life moves in and out, another contrasting comfort to the Morrisian Northernness. “Each grain is at the centre. The Dust is at the centre. The Worlds are at the centre. The beasts are at the centre. The ancient peoples are there. The race that sinned is there. Tor and Tinidril are there. The gods are there also. Blessed be He!”¹⁰¹⁹

Finally, the “Great Dance” defines human purpose through interaction with God. Before the “Great Dance” passage begins, Ransom laments to Tor his lack of understanding with regard to his and his world’s placement in the cosmos. If the incarnation of God does not take place on Ransom’s planet, then what, asks Ransom, will become of him? “If you take that from me, Father, whither will you

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid., 180.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid., 182.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid., 184.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid., 185.

lead me? Surely not to the enemy's talk which thrusts my world and my race into a remote corner and gives me a universe, with no centre at all. ..."¹⁰²⁰ There is much discussion with regard Lewis's use of the center concept. For example, Paul Fiddes discusses it in terms of a dynamic intermingling of Divine and human interaction. Fiddes suggests that one may read the "Great Dance" as "meaning that the pattern of the dance are the patterns of God's love, and so are the movements of the Trinity itself," although he also concedes "it is quite difficult here to be certain whether the Trinity *itself* is moving in a dance, or whether all things are simply sharing in a dance around the centre where God is, a centre ... where all created beings equally are."¹⁰²¹ What I find important in Fiddes's commentary for my final observation is the simple fact that the "Great Dance" offers Ransom, and the reader, "an image of participation."¹⁰²² Participation is exactly what Ransom is seeking, although he fails to articulate this innate human need to Tor. Theologian Alistair McFadyen also describes human participation with God in non-static terms. He states that Christ calls people into the dialogue of relationships and that as men and women participate in these dialogues, he or she changes and even rises above the self-serving nature of the world's fractured structures. "Christ is beyond us," writes McFadyen. "From this transcendent position he comes to us, calls us to Him and so calls us to become what we truly are."¹⁰²³ Lewis is also after a full knowledge of self as apprehended through continued knowledge of God. This then is the prize for all humanity—to find our true selves resting in Christ and

¹⁰²⁰ Ibid., 183.

¹⁰²¹ Paul Fiddes in "On Theology," *Companion*, 91.

¹⁰²² Ibid., 92.

¹⁰²³ Alistair Iain McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood*, 61.

then reflected in our relationships with others. “We are called by Christ,” writes McFadyen, “into dialogue with the transcendent reality of others and of God. Through dialogue we ourselves are transformed ... and so transcend ourselves through the ... spiral of dialogue.”¹⁰²⁴ This movement, this dance of dialogue, is the answer Ransom receives from the fugue-like voices in the “Great Dance.” Ransom desires a deep knowledge of his place within the cosmos and receives the answer, “Where Maleldil is, there is the center.”¹⁰²⁵ “Christ is therefore ‘in’ us as the ground of this self-transcendence,” continues McFayden, “as a centre within us pushing us outwards, and as a centre beyond us pulling us towards God and others ... He calls us into movement beyond ourselves towards realities of God and others and to new forms of self-identity. In this movement our individuality and our relatedness become conformed to Him.”¹⁰²⁶ The spiraling dialogue, the movement, the “Great Dance,” all describe what Lewis considers to be most important to thriving as a person on earth: to be *experiencing* God at all times. In his address to the people of the United Kingdom via the BBC radio broadcasts, Lewis put it like this: “The thing that matters is being actually drawn into that three-person life, and that may be at anytime—tonight, if you like.”¹⁰²⁷ For Ransom, this was the communicated truth dispensed in the “Great Dance.”

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid., 185.

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁷ *MC*, 143.

In this section we have noted the possible semantic Northernness echoes in *Perelandra* as well as the conceptual-theological Northernness echoes found primarily in Lewis's climactic scene of the "Great Dance," as they relate to and operate within Lewis's language of beauty. Perhaps more than any of Lewis's works of fiction, *Perelandra* showcases Lewis's imaginative ability to create a deeply pervasive literary atmosphere. The climactic finale to *Perelandra* utilizes vivid landscape imagery, otherworldly discourse, and conceptual-theological exposition that produce a rhetoric of beauty. The finale is both paradoxically eschatological and Edenic, a device Lewis also employs in *The Last Battle* in which readers experience an end to "old Narnia" only to find a "new Narnia."

8.3 Joy

Joy operates in Lewis's language of beauty as both aesthetic gasp and as an elemental characteristic of beauty itself. As aesthetic gasp, it operates as the subject's response to an object of beauty. As an elemental characteristic of beauty itself, it denotes the vitality inherent in beauty. Lewis seeks to incite the former and to express the latter. In this section I want to note Lewis's pre-conversion notion of Joy, followed by his post-conversion notion of Joy. In the second section I further parse Lewisian Joy, examining Joy as vitality and Joy as consolation, or eucatastrophe.

Pre-conversion: Joy as Aesthetic Experience Pointing to the Divine

I want to briefly note two examples of pre-conversion Lewisian Joy as a way to further support my assertion that Joy operates within Lewis's language of

beauty as an aesthetic experience as well as a pointer to the source of beauty. The first example emerges from Lewis's concept of Joy as aesthetic experience and how it relates to Northernness. In Chapter 4 I examined Lewis's initial experience with Northernness. I want to return to those early encounters with Northernness and unfold another aspect: how Lewis viewed those encounters with Northernness as aesthetic experience, as Joy pre-conversion. Though Lewis does not relate Northernness to proper religious belief, here he aligns it with a pure experience of the beautiful: "... there was in it something very like adoration, some kind of quite disinterested self-abandonment to an object which securely claimed this by simply being the object it was."¹⁰²⁸ Lewis's use of the phrase "disinterested self-abandonment" reveals a curious Kantian reference to free play of the mind; an activity Kant associates with encountering beauty (§5.210).¹⁰²⁹

Lewis interpreted the Northernness he experienced as a young man as encounters with the beautiful due to the by-product of the experience: Joy. Furthermore, it must also be noted how Lewis positions Joy as a kind of *numinous* experience or feeling. That is to say, Joy works in Lewis's aesthetic framework as a *Bifrost*, bridging the world of material beauty with the world beyond; this experience always carries an emotion that prompts the subject toward worship of

¹⁰²⁸ Lewis, in his running spiritual commentary here, notes how glory and Joy—one might say the experience of beauty—work in our common experience to drive us toward worship. Lewis hypothesizes that perhaps he was sent back to the Pagan gods in order to better grasp notions of divine glory. In effect, this is what beauty and Joy taught him. See Lewis, *SBJ*, 77. This notion for Lewis remains consistent through even his years as an atheist. In "Dymer" he associates the encounter of beauty and joy with a resulting time of worship. See C.S. Lewis, *Narrative Poems*, 79; 8.16.

¹⁰²⁹ Kant, *Judgment*, 41. See also §23.245, p. 75. Roger Scruton summarizes Kant's idea of "disinterested interest" by saying that we act in an interested way toward an object when we use it "to satisfy our own interests. . . . Towards some things we take an interest that is not governed by interest but which is, so to speak, entirely devoted to the object." Disinterest, however, does not equal non-interest. Rather, it means to be "interested in a certain way." See Scruton, *Beauty*, 22-23.

the divine. Regarding Lewisian Joy, Alister McGrath writes, “If Joy intimated anything it was not so much that there was a God, but that there was a transcendent realm beyond us—in other words, a heaven.”¹⁰³⁰ In “Dymer” for example, Lewis’s hero relates Joy to the Divine when he writes: “Why do they lure to them such spirits as mine, / The weak, the passionate, and the fool of dreams? / When better men go safe and never pine / With whisperings at the heart, soul-sickening gleams / Of infinite desire, and joy that seems / The promise of full power? / For it was they, / The gods themselves, that led me on this way.” (8.11)¹⁰³¹ Here Lewis relates Joy to a promise of full divine power. Though the hero is positioning such a feeling as an emotion that weak men, such as himself, experience, it nevertheless reveals Lewis’s understanding of the Romantic notion of the emotion.

The second example emerges from Lewis’s pre-conversion poem “Joy” (1924)¹⁰³² as a cypher for our placement of Joy within Lewis’s language of beauty. First, I want to note the progression of the aesthetic event. Second, I want to mention how Lewis continues to emphasize the experience of beauty rather than the object of beauty. Finally, I want to observe the mood beauty incites. Lines five through nine read: “Like a huge bird, Joy with the feathery stroke / Of strange wings brushed me over. Sweeter air / Came never from dawn’s heart. / The misty smoke / Cooled it upon the hills. It touched the lair / Of each wild thing

¹⁰³⁰ McGrath, *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*, 113.

¹⁰³¹ “Dymer” in *NP*, 77-78.

¹⁰³² Don King places “Joy” in the time period between 1920-1925. In his *C.S. Lewis: Poet* he states that “Joy” was published in 1924, though, referencing Lewis’s letters and diary, he suggests that Lewis worked on it years prior: April 18, 1922. See note 24, page 333.

and woke the wet flowers everywhere (1.5-9).”¹⁰³³ Lewis describes his waking moments experiencing the Joy received from his nighttime dreams. These lines describe his feelings concerning his aesthetic experience.¹⁰³⁴ This feeling, or “mood” as Lewis describes it, incites curiosity and a desire to walk the land; to imbibe in nature as “master of all” now that he is liberated and can “see clearly.”¹⁰³⁵ Stanza three expresses the poet’s feeling of freedom after having received the gift of Joy, which appears to be renewed sight and desire for the beauty of nature. Lewis is caught in pure rapture; he is set free, “Pure colour purified my mind (3.27).”

The poet’s rapture sets off a reflection on the ways and power of beauty. We cannot understand beauty’s language; she comes with wonder, beckons us to her, confounds wisdom, and yet we must not cling to her for she fades.¹⁰³⁶ The poem illustrates Lewis’s view of beauty, which his spiritual memoir corroborates, and Joy, with Joy acting the role of aesthetic response or residue upon experiencing beauty. Though beauty remains an enigma to Lewis, he admits that although she passes, he remains bound to her. King notes, indirectly, the progression of Joy and beauty. Beauty brings this mood, or breath; it is what the poet experiences having experienced beauty. When we look at Lewis’s post-conversion notion of Joy, we see that it maintains its aesthetic power while expanding into a more fully orbbed Christian conception of the term.

¹⁰³³ Don W. King, ed., *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis*, 137.

¹⁰³⁴ King states that Lewis here alludes to “the myth of Leda and the swan, where Zeus in the form of a gigantic bird ravishes a beautiful girl. Lewis compares the sleeper’s waking to this event.” The poet, or speaker, is “drunk with such joy.” See King, *Poet*, 107.

¹⁰³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰³⁶ King, *Collected Poems*, Stanzas 4-5.

Post-conversion: Joy As Aesthetic Gasp

In Chapter 5 I asserted that, for Lewis, Joy operates as aesthetic gasp. It operates as the initial response to the object of beauty. Joy also suggests vitality, and, as noted previously, combines the verve of Romanticism with the holiness of Scripture. The dual constitution of Lewis's Joy is a joy we must grow into. It is unpredictable as God himself is unpredictable; it is like a lion that is unpredictable. The unexpected occurs when we encounter joy.¹⁰³⁷ Lewis positions joy in similar fashion in *The Four Loves* when he says that joy comes not from expecting to be overwhelmed by the garden, but by ignoring the specific elements of the garden. When this happens, and one allows the enormity of the whole garden to enter into their experience, joy overwhelms.¹⁰³⁸ So, there is, according to Lewis, a wholeness and physicality about joy that connects us (as the subject) to beauty itself: God. Lewis's language of beauty works to convince us that "the profoundest physical enjoyment is one of the best and clearest images of what it is to meet God."¹⁰³⁹ Lewis's joy, therefore, operates within and contributes to his language of beauty in two ways: 1) vitality and 2) consolation.

1. Vitality

In Chapter 1 I noted Barth's conception of God's glory and how joy was intrinsic to its constitution. God's glory, also regarded as beauty, communicates to man through a kind of brilliance, or light, and incites human joy because it is the

¹⁰³⁷ Rowan Williams, *The Lion's World*, 51-57.

¹⁰³⁸ *FL*, 22.

¹⁰³⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

aspect of God himself. In Chapter 5 we learned that vitality is a key signature of beauty, both biblically and romantically. Lewis captures the beauty of vitality in overt and subtle ways in his writing.

Lewisian Joy, Compared to Biblical and Romantic Joy

In Chapter 5 we learned that the theme of Joy roots itself both in Scriptures and in Romanticism. Lewis positions Joy similarly, utilizing elements of both Romantic and biblical Joy. For example, Romantically, in his poem “Joys That Sting”¹⁰⁴⁰ he writes, “But in a life made desolate / It is the joys once shared that have the stings.”¹⁰⁴¹ In this poem, Lewis contrasts the beautiful vitality found within intimate relationships with the reality of immortality. Again, in his poem “The Day with a White Mark,” Lewis rejoices in simple beauties of the day. He begins by reflecting on his unexplainable happiness: “All day I have been tossed and whirled in a preposterous happiness.”¹⁰⁴² He lists possible reasons for such happiness: “Was it an elf in the blood? Or a bird in the brain? Or even part / Of the cloudily crested, fifty-league-long loud uplifted wave / Of a journeying angel’s transit roaring over and through my heart?”¹⁰⁴³ He follows this with ruminations on why he should not be happy, including his spoiled garden, his cancelled holiday, bad omens. But for every spoiled situation of the day, he is revived by “dewy sprinkles of delight” that draw on “Fine threads of memory

¹⁰⁴⁰ Don King dates this poem within the years 1950-1963, and he also has renamed the poem “Oh Do Not Die,” simply taking the first line as the title. See King, *Collected Poems*, 395.

¹⁰⁴¹ *CSLP*, 108.

¹⁰⁴² *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*

through the vibrant thickness of the soul.”¹⁰⁴⁴ It is through such memories that Lewis experiences Joy—a Joy that salutes the vibrancy of life itself. “Recalling either adolescent heights and the inaccessible / Longings and ice-sharp joys that shook my body and turned me pale.”¹⁰⁴⁵ Elsewhere Lewis shows how the medieval designations of the planets also align with the Romantic notion of vitality and rejoicing. “Joy and jubilee” mark the orbit of Jupiter, or Jove as Lewis refers to it in his poem “The Planets.” Images associated with Jove are: feasts, mended woes, wrath ended, treasure, good fortune, revelry, laughter, the lion-hearted, heroes, gentleness, justice, kingly, righteous power, ease, and empire.¹⁰⁴⁶

More pointed to the combined Romantic and biblical use of the term Joy is in a scene from Lewis’s final novel *Till We Have Faces*—the scene where Orual discovers Psyche alive on the mountain following her supposed sacrifice to the Shadowbrute. Lewis frames the scene at the close of the previous chapter with the striking beauty of landscape. Here I want to note not only the Joy Lewis communicates in the scene, but how he frames the scene.

He begins by setting contrast and contextual scope.¹⁰⁴⁷ As Orual and Bardia ride their horses toward the Mountain Lewis mingles *numinous* elements of distance and awe, along with striking images of landscape:

“The Mountain, far greater yet also far further off than I expected, seen with the sun hanging a hand-breadth above its topmost crags, did not look

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibid., 14. With regard to the “lion-hearted,” Lewis emphasizes the joy and jocundity of the image of the lion in *Spenser’s Images of Life*. For Spenser, according to Lewis, the lion is “the humble creature that goes right without knowing, or hardly knowing, what it does.” See C. S. Lewis, *Spenser’s Images of Life*, 82-83.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Spirm, *The Language of Landscape*, 133.

like a solid thing. {*numinous*} Between us and it was a vast tumble of valley and hill, woods and cliffs, and more little lakes than I could count. To left and right, and behind us, the whole colored world with all its hills was heaped up and up to the sky, with far away, a gleam of what we call the sea. . . . There was a lark singing; but for that, huge and ancient stillness.”¹⁰⁴⁸

Lewis allows the landscape to contribute to the context of not just the scene, but also Orual’s thoughts of dread.¹⁰⁴⁹ Spirn states that context, from the Latin *contexere* “to weave,” suggests movement, rather than “its static common meaning.”¹⁰⁵⁰ Landscape consists of forms in dialogue together. “A tree, growing, is context—a weaving together—of leaf, branch, trunk, and root; decaying and transpiring, a tree shapes larger weavings of soil and atmosphere.”¹⁰⁵¹ Spirn also notes that “through context, materials acquire meaning.” A stone lying on the ground is heavy. Piled, stones gain religious meaning in the form of an altar. Notice the human element here. Individuals and cultures provide context and meaning for landscape as well. Orual and Bardia contribute a human element to the landscape thus creating context, in this case, a context of *numinous* beauty as prologue to the Joyful encounter. The Northernness echo rings as Lewis tapers the chapter into dark and light contrasts; dark leading up to and at the place of Psyche’s bondage; light further on, into the valley of the god:

{Dark} “The great mass of it rose up (we tilted our heads back to look at it) into huge knobbls of stone against sky, like an old giant’s back teeth. The face

¹⁰⁴⁸ *TWF*, 95.

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Spirn, *The Language of Landscape*, 133.

¹⁰⁵¹ *Ibid.*

of it showed us was really no steeper than a roof, except for certain frightful cliffs on our left ... It, too, was now black.”¹⁰⁵²

After Orual and Bardia discover Psyche’s loosed chains, Bardia leads Orual further on in search of Psyche’s remains. The landscape context sharpens in dramatic transition.

{Dark Transition} “... working round in circles ... with our eyes to the ground; very cold, one’s cloak flapping till leg and cheek smarted with blows of it. ... I had to thrust back the hair that was whipping about my face before I could see him. I rushed to him; half flying, for the west wind made a sail of my cloak. ... ‘We are very near the bad part of the Mountain—I mean the holy part. Beyond the tree, it’s all gods’ country they say.’”¹⁰⁵³

The characters, then, move from the *numinous* turbulent place of sacrifice, into a place brimming with life.

{Light} Lewis blankets his description in an immersive aesthetic that touches three of the five senses for the reader. First, visually, Lewis employs stark contrasts to emphasize the beauty of Psyche’s valley; the overcast sky opens as the sun “leaped out”¹⁰⁵⁴ and illuminates Orual and Bardia’s view of the valley below. We find aesthetic hints of a heavenly place, an embodied space of Joy: “It was like looking into a new world. At our feet ... lay a small valley bright as a gem. ... Through that opening there was a glimpse of warm, blue lands, hills and forests, far below us.”¹⁰⁵⁵ The “place” Lewis describes here echoes the “New

¹⁰⁵² *TWF*, 97-98.

¹⁰⁵³ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Narnia” into which Aslan invites the children, beasts, and mythic creatures in *The Last Battle*.¹⁰⁵⁶ The Lewisian landscape communicates a grammar¹⁰⁵⁷ of newness of place but also a *cairos* moment for the characters involved.¹⁰⁵⁸ The landscape also communicates vitality in the wild vines and “gorse in bloom,”¹⁰⁵⁹ flourishing trees, along with splashes of water on the valley canvas—bright pools and streams. Next, Lewis moves from the visual beauty to the fragrant; the air was warm and sweet. Third, the sound: the wind deadened, allowing the two travelers to hear the “chattering of the trees and the sound of bees.”¹⁰⁶⁰ Finally, Lewis shows us Orual’s reaction to the most beautiful aspect of the scene (progression of aesthetic experience). As Orual bends to wash her face she hears two voices cry out; one is Bardia’s, the other, Psyche’s. The chapter ends with Orual at ease within the beauty of the valley and then jolted by the discovery of the object of her desire: Psyche.¹⁰⁶¹

In the following chapter Lewis dives into an intense scene, which he describes—through the narrator—as the “wildness of my joy.”¹⁰⁶² Lewis details Orual’s joy as an emotional yet jubilant event emphasized by tears as well as laughter at the sight of discovering her sister, whom she thought dead: “What I babbled, between tears and laughter, in the wildness of my joy (the water still

¹⁰⁵⁶ *LB*, 158.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Spirn, *The Language of Landscape*, 168-181. Spirn notes principles of grammar with regard to the language of landscape. Certain geographic locations possess a local landscape grammar, a dialect unique to place. Lewis’s landscape in *TWF* speaks with the grammar of beauty, noted by Northernness and *numinous* elements, giving way to episodes of Joy.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Mounce, *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 732.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *TWF*, 101.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶² *Ibid.*, 102.

between us) I do not know.”¹⁰⁶³ The liminal event of the sisters’ reunion punctuates the intensity of the beauty;¹⁰⁶⁴ from the wonder of landscape, to the descent into the valley, to finally possessing the object of desire. Psyche welcomes the two travelers and beckons her sister, Orual, to come “further up”¹⁰⁶⁵ to discover the safest place to ford the river. Here again Lewis uses the seemingly ubiquitous phrase, “further up,” in a place where divine meets with finite;¹⁰⁶⁶ a heavenly place of numinous beauty. The sisters collapse in the heather in an emotional reunion after which Psyche narrates her experience of being taken by the god of the mountain.

This scene, therefore, typifies Joy in the Lewisian fashion, identifying it with a truly Romantic notion in terms of vitality, as well as in the biblical sense with regard to jubilant response to the object of pleasure (in this case, the object is Psyche). Furthermore, though Joy highlights the narrative moment, the other elements of Lewis’s language of beauty coalesce to produce tender drama, *mysterium*, wrapped in the subtlety of Northernness (landscape and momentary eucatastrophe). In the next section I aim to show how Romantic vitality and biblical jubilation (and delight) amalgamate as a storytelling device and communicate Lewisian beauty in the form of narrative outcomes.

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Bruno Forte states: “Beauty is an event.” See Forte, “Introduction” in *The Portal of Beauty*, vi.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *TWF*, 103. See also 4.4 of this thesis where I suggest Lewis appropriates the phrase “Further up and further in!” from *The Prose Edda*’s description of a deeper heaven beyond Asgard, where the light elves live.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Forte, “Introduction,” in *The Portal of Beauty*, vii. The event of beauty happens “when the Whole offers itself in the fragment, and when this self-giving transcends infinite distance.” Lewis, in effect, shows transposition communicated by the grammar of landscape, and the collision of supernatural and natural worlds.

Lewisian Joy Communicated Through the Beauty of Creation

At the close of Chapter Eight of *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory hears a song coming from “all directions at once.”¹⁰⁶⁷ The tuneless wordless song sounded as if it rose from the earth itself. Despite its mysterious origin Lewis describes the song as incomparably beautiful, “... the most beautiful noise he [Digory] had ever heard. It was so beautiful he could hardly bear it.”¹⁰⁶⁸ The invigorating magic of the song is felt by the horse who, upon hearing the sound, experiences a “lovely” memory from its past as a foal. The song brings newness—a life-giving change—to the horse that had labored for years as a cab-horse.¹⁰⁶⁹ We find here an echo from *Prince Caspian* and the victory romp of Aslan and Bacchus; the song, like Aslan’s physical presence, brings newness and life to the listless people of Beruna.¹⁰⁷⁰

Next, the song produces two wonders. First, it harmonizes with a choir of high-pitched voices. The ensemble of voices then produces the second wonder: the starry heavens.¹⁰⁷¹ The “beautiful” “lovely” song possesses the power to create. It is worth noting the Northernness (Norse) echo; the symphonic Wagnerian climax—the same climax we find in the Great Dance at the conclusion of *Perelandra*.¹⁰⁷² Digory believes he can differentiate between the voice of the

¹⁰⁶⁷ *MN*, 93.

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷⁰ *PC*, 165-171.

¹⁰⁷¹ *MN*, 93.

¹⁰⁷² See 4.3 and 8.2 of this thesis.

stars and the “First Voice,”¹⁰⁷³ suggesting a Creator. The beauty of the creative moment prompts the Cabby into a moment of moral reflection: “I’d ha’ been a better man my whole life if I’d known there were things like this.”¹⁰⁷⁴

As the song continues Lewis frames the creation moment with movement: a light wind stirs, colors turn from dark to light, the approaching light reveals faraway forms in the landscape. Polly, Digory, and the Cabby stand pierced with arrows of delight (Joy) as they witness the moment with “open mouths¹⁰⁷⁵ and eyes shining... drinking in the sound.”¹⁰⁷⁶ The posture of the children (and the Cabby) communicates a state of Joy in response to the moment of beauty. Movement continues as the song rises, seemingly without limit. The sky changed, the air shook with the song, which produced the sun: “... it laughed for joy as it came up.”¹⁰⁷⁷ Lewis punctuates the scene with an economic explanation of his philosophy of beauty. “The earth was of many colors: they were fresh, hot, and vivid. They made you feel excited; until you saw the Singer himself, and then you forgot everything else.”¹⁰⁷⁸ The mixture of the visual movement of the creation process with the response of Joy on the part of Digory, Polly, and the Cabby communicates the quintessential Romantic motif of “abounding vitality.”¹⁰⁷⁹

¹⁰⁷³ Ibid., 94.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Lewis notes that Uncle Andrew’s mouth was open as well, but “not with joy.”

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibid., 95.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Abrams, *Supernatural*, 276.

2. *Eucatastrophe: Lewisian Beauty Through Consolation*

In *The Pilgrim's Regress* John the protagonist finds a new beginning when he dives into a large pool and emerges forever changed, seeing the world with new eyes. In this scene as John passes through the "inwards of the mountain to the land beyond *Peccatum Adae*,"¹⁰⁸⁰ he hears a voice explain to him what Tolkien had explained to Lewis during their midnight conversation on Addison's Walk.¹⁰⁸¹ "Child, if you will, it *is* mythology. It is but truth, not fact: an image, not the very real. But then it is My mythology ... this is the veil under which I have chosen to appear even from the first until now. For this end I made your senses and for this end your imagination, that you might see My face and live."¹⁰⁸² Here we find the consolation of Lewis's allegory, the rebirth of John, as well as the explanation of the Christian eucatastrophe.

Furthermore, in *The Last Battle* (1956) after Aslan makes an end to the old Narnia, the children find themselves running "further up and further in" to a new Narnia.¹⁰⁸³ The animals, creatures, and children struggle to identify the new land Aslan had opened up to them. They are constantly told to continue "further up and further in" to this new world. If we accept my theory that this designation is a possible Norse echo of the Wide Blue, otherwise regarded as an equivalent to the Christian heaven, then this final scene in *The Last Battle* shows the children, beasts, and creatures discovering Joy itself. That is to say, they have found, in the new Narnia, a metaphor for heaven.

¹⁰⁸⁰ *PR*, 168.

¹⁰⁸¹ Lewis, "Myth Became Fact," in *God in the Dock*, 66. See also *CLI*, 970.

¹⁰⁸² *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁰⁸³ *LB*, 158-184.

In this new land, this new beginning, they proclaim their delight; they laugh, run, and discover they do not tire. They are able to actually run up a waterfall.¹⁰⁸⁴ This is the Romantic vitality at full force in Lewis's writing. In Lewis, the reader discovers, and presumably enjoys, the beautiful elements of Romantic storytelling cloaked with Northernness atmosphere, but unlike the melancholia of the Norse worldview they are not left to desire something to give the beauty meaning. Rather, through literary imagery, they are given the goal of Joy. In keeping with our initial framing of Lewis as a beauty hunter, considering Joy as *telos* is consistent with his thought.¹⁰⁸⁵ In *The Great Divorce* Lewis responds to the view of life as one long journey in which the destination holds no importance; what matters is to travel hopefully. Lewis replies to that notion by saying, "If that were true, and known to be true, how could anyone travel hopefully? There would be nothing to hope for."¹⁰⁸⁶ The eucatastrophic vision of reality reveals Lewis's progressive modulation from viewing Joy as a specific aesthetic experience, the initial pleasure that incited *Sehnsucht*, to the source of the delight; Joy itself. As noted above, it is an eschatological Joy that acts as the goal of delight and beauty, as well as a theological framework. In the literary moments described above we discover the Joy Tolkien described as a "sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth."¹⁰⁸⁷ Tolkien described the truth of eucatastrophe in terms of the Christian narrative. "The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of man's history," writes Tolkien. "The Resurrection is the

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid., 172-173.

¹⁰⁸⁵ See 1.4 and 2.2 in this thesis.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 44.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories," 77.

eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation. This story begins and ends with joy ... such joy has the very taste of primary truth.”¹⁰⁸⁸ For Tolkien and Lewis, the primary truth was the Christmas eucatastrophe—the joyous turn for all of humankind. In this we see how eucatastrophe, from a theological perspective, connects to God himself who is, in his essence, Joy, and, therefore beautiful.

Conclusion

For Lewis, Joy operates in a dual capacity. First, it operates aesthetically for Lewis, that being the initial feeling within the aesthetic progression of Lewis’s language of beauty, and it also participates within the theological reality of the Christian worldview. As we noted in the scene in the valley with Orual and Psyche, Lewisian Joy works within a dynamic aesthetic framework and communicates not only the delight and jubilation of a specific moment, but also a response of the subject to the object, usually emphasized by a notion of quickening with the subject. In Lewis’s language of beauty, Joy sets off the ontological aesthetic progression that awakens desire. It is this notion of desire to which we now turn.

8.4 *Sehnsucht*

When understood in the context of Lewis’s language of beauty, *Sehnsucht* takes on more than the notion of intense human desire. It extends into the idea of becoming, denoting aesthetic movement (in the Romantic sense).¹⁰⁸⁹ As I showed

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ibid., 78.

¹⁰⁸⁹ See 6.1 and 6.2 of this thesis.

in Chapters 6, biographically, Lewis was himself heavily influenced by the German Romantic notion of *Sehnsucht* and we see that influence expressed not only in his theological works, such as “The Weight of Glory” but more poignantly in his ability to communicate beauty by employing *Sehnsucht* as part of the aesthetic progression—that being what Joy awakens: *desire*. In this section I want to show *Sehnsucht* at work as an element in Lewis’s language of beauty first in how desire relates to beauty, and then how Lewis expresses this in his fiction as understood by his own suggestion of desire being the “inconsolable secret” of every human being. Then, I want to briefly examine Lewis as wanderer.

Beauty and the Inconsolable Secret

In “The Weight of Glory” Lewis refers to an “inconsolable secret” he believes extant in every person.¹⁰⁹⁰ Lewis’s moniker refers to the Augustinian idea that a desire exists within us that makes us restless until satisfied.¹⁰⁹¹ Lewis’s inconsolable secret possesses four main characteristics. In the first place, as was already stated, this secret is inconsolable. By this Lewis means this desire cannot be satisfied by earthly or temporal means. Second, this desire hurts.¹⁰⁹² It is in fact

¹⁰⁹⁰ *TWG*, 29.

¹⁰⁹¹ See 6.4 of this thesis.

¹⁰⁹² See *P*, 37. The narrator describes how Ransom struggled to describe the pleasure experienced when he first ate the yellow fruit as “sharp or sweet, . . . creamy or piercing.” But Ransom responds “Not like that.” The reader is left to fill in the kind of pleasurable experience that accompanied eating the fruit. It is interesting, however, that Lewis, the author, uses the extreme poles of sweet and sharp, creamy and piercing; poles of pleasure he uses here in the sermon to describe the pleasure that accompanies desire. Lewis was fond of employing contrasting images within his fiction.

a desire so intense it forces us to label it with descriptors such as Romanticism,¹⁰⁹³ Nostalgia, or Adolescence. Next, the desire pierces with sweetness. In *Surprised by Joy* Lewis described how he was shot with arrows of Joy.¹⁰⁹⁴ He describes this desire as hurting as much as it provides a paradoxical piercing sweetness—perhaps arrows of sweetness. Finally, it is a desire from which we cannot hide and of which we cannot tell, though we desire to do both. It is a secret we cannot tell because we have no basis for it in our temporal experience; meaning, our finite imaginations fail to grasp it because the desire stems from some place “other.” It is a secret we cannot hide because it surrounds us, as suggested throughout Nature and our personal experience.¹⁰⁹⁵ Lewis calls this “secret that we cannot hide” beauty. “Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter.”¹⁰⁹⁶ Beauty, therefore, operates as the impetus for the constant hunt—the quest spurred by desire—for its source.

Consider Lewis’s book *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. The literary map of this book is itself described as a book of wandering—specifically, of wanderers at sea serving as Caspian’s *wanderjahr*.¹⁰⁹⁷ In particular, the valiant mouse Reepicheep—though also accompanying Caspian on his year and a day expedition, which is bent on exploration and revenge—possesses a “high hope,”¹⁰⁹⁸ according to Caspian. Reepicheep desires to travel to “the very eastern

¹⁰⁹³ Lewis treats desire and Romanticism in the Preface (or Afterword, depending on the version) to the updated (1943) version of *PR*, in which he describes the Romantic experience within the allegory as an experience of “intense longing.” (202)

¹⁰⁹⁴ *SBJ*, 230.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *TWG*, 29-30.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Myers, *Context*, 140. See also *VDT*, 23. See also Carnell, *Shadow*, 90.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *VDT*, 23.

end of the world,” to Aslan’s country. The mouse reasons that since Aslan always comes from the east, then sailing to the far reaches of the east itself will produce a place of origin for the great cat.¹⁰⁹⁹ The idea stirs Edmund with awe and Lucy with wonder. Reepicheep does not possess answers to their questions concerning what they might find at the end of the world, or if they can, indeed, *sail* to Aslan’s country. The only answer he can give them is that although he knows little to nothing about the destination, he clings to a lyric once told him as a small child:

Where sky and water meet,
Where the waves grow sweet,
Doubt not, Reepicheep,
To find all you seek,
There is the utter East.¹¹⁰⁰

The mouse states that the spell of the verse has stayed with him all his life. Lewis here frames the scene similarly to John’s vision episode in *The Pilgrim’s Regress*. John is, for better or worse, on a mission to attain the island in his vision.¹¹⁰¹ Likewise, Psyche, in *Till We Have Faces*, notes a similar spell on her life—to find where all the beauty has come from.¹¹⁰² In each case—Reepicheep’s, John’s, and Psyche’s—their wanderings originate from their intense desire to discover the source of their experience of beauty. Lewis frames their desire as a common experience, thus opening the door for readers to experience their own related longings.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 24.

¹¹⁰¹ *PR*, 6.

¹¹⁰² *TWF*, 75.

The final scenes in *Dawn Treader* encapsulate Lewis's language of beauty, as it relates to *Sehnsucht*. The children and Reepicheep encounter the weight of glory. That is to say, they experience the expressed beauty of the very essence of Aslan himself, as communicated through his "country." Once again, the landscape figures as a primary element of Lewis's language of beauty in this scene—just as Northernness frames the whole tale; a tale of exploration and revenge (though it should be noted that the literal direction of their adventures is "Utter East").

As they come to their world's end, the landscape changes, and speaks to them through its beauty. Their vessels float into mysterious arctic-like waters that they discover to be floating lilies. The world's end exudes feelings of purity, dignity, and deep value.¹¹⁰³ They experience refreshment and eerie feelings of overwhelming nostalgia.¹¹⁰⁴ They drift through the shallow waters at the world's end and, after three days, experience the wonder of the dawn along with a shimmering green wall in front of them.¹¹⁰⁵ Through the shimmering wall they behold great mountains but cannot locate their peaks: out there is Aslan's country. It was a country without sky, without end, a country Lucy describes as a place that felt as though it would break your heart.¹¹⁰⁶ Upon seeing the shimmering wall and Aslan's country behind it, Reepicheep disarms, says good-bye while trembling with overwhelming joy, and sets off in his coracle over the sloping wave and behind the shimmering wall.

¹¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

These scenes contain Lewis's language of beauty in totality, though the movement of *Sehnsucht* cannot be missed. The scenes communicate a *numinous* beauty to the reader through the landscape: the lilies, water, and air; a landscape that introduces an entering into the region of *Bifrost*. We feel as if we are arriving, along with the children and Reepicheep, to a final destination. The Northernness echo is present as Lewis's end of the world draws from William Morris's *Well at the World's End*; the well situated on the floor of the Ocean Sea, Ralph and Ursula enraptured in the Joy of their desire.¹¹⁰⁷ The aesthetic gasp of Joy prevails through the change in landscape as the beauty separates into a kind of aesthetic otherness. The movement of *Sehnsucht* gives the scene an eternal noble feel as the mouse—sure of his destination—heads off into the unknown.¹¹⁰⁸ The image of the dawn breaking on the third morning echoes the New Testament scene of Christ Jesus rising from the tomb after his crucifixion. (Luke 24:1-8) This is a subtle and poignant mark in the narration as Lewis surreptitiously connects the finality of wandering with introduction to a new and better life, presumably through life with Christ, or in Reepicheep's case, Aslan. Thus is the weight of glory communicated through the scene: finality of wandering and finding home with Aslan (God).

Elaine Scarry states, "The beautiful thing seems—is—incomparable, unprecedented; and that sense of being without precedent conveys a sense of the 'newness' or 'newbornness' of the entire world."¹¹⁰⁹ *Sehnsucht* compelled

¹¹⁰⁷ The Project Gutenberg E-Text of *The Well at the World's End*, by William Morris, accessed March 10, 2016, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/169/169-h/169-h.htm>, Book IV Chapter 20-21.

¹¹⁰⁸ *VDT*, 207.

¹¹⁰⁹ Scarry, *Beauty*, 24.

Reepicheep toward what he felt had no precedent, and was itself the end, but also the beginning, and his home.

This sense of new-bornness, therefore, also conveys to the reader, reminding her of her own desire. Paul Holmer states, “Lewis’s literature communicates in such a way that, when successful, it creates new capabilities and capacities, powers and a kind of roominess in the human personality. ‘One becomes susceptible to new competencies, new functions, new pathos, new possibilities.’”¹¹¹⁰ This, in my view, is Lewis’s greatest strength as a writer. It is not that Lewis simply desires to create engaging works of literature for entertainment, although that is certainly on his mind. Rather, it is that Lewis understands the power of the medium and utilizes beauty in such a way as to create potential within his readers.

Lewis as Wanderer: Dialectical Completeness and False Florimells

In this subsection I want to note how throughout Lewis’s maturation as a man and as an author, we see *Sehnsucht* develop into a stout Platonic concept. Lewis shows how he understands the intrinsic wandering of the human race to discover their dialectical completeness, as well as the diversions along the path.¹¹¹¹

Lewis, for example, engages the *werden* theme when he writes in *Mere Christianity*, “And from that point of view the very idea of something being

¹¹¹⁰ Holmer, *Shape*, 20-21.

¹¹¹¹ See Book Two and Three of *PR*.

imperfect, of its not being what it ought to be, has certain consequences.”¹¹¹² Here Lewis notes the result of imperfect objects and the potential, or movement, of the “ought.” Again we find that Lewis self-identifies with the wanderer motif¹¹¹³ in an autobiographical poem he wrote in a postscript to Owen Barfield on May 6, 1932, concerning his affinity for Virgil’s Aeneas as wanderer:

At many bays and harbours I put in with joy
Hoping that there I should have built my second Troy
And stayed. But either stealing harpies drove me thence,
Or the trees bled, or oracles, whose airy sense
I could not understand, yet must obey, once more
Sent me to sea to follow the retreating shore
Of this land which I call at last my home, where most
I feared to come; attempting not to find whose coast
I ranged half around the world, with vain design to shut
The last fear whence the last security is won.¹¹¹⁴

Biographically, Lewis identifies with Aeneas (above), as well as with Wordsworth, as wanderer come home.¹¹¹⁵

Our destiny, our nature and our home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.¹¹¹⁶
(1850 ed.; VI, 604-608).

¹¹¹² *MC*, 27. In this chapter, “The Reality of the Law,” Lewis begins by making the case that the imperfection of human nature and the consequences of that imperfection act as a clue to the truth or meaning of the universe.

¹¹¹³ Reyes, *Lost Aeneid*, 7.

¹¹¹⁴ *CL2*, 77.

¹¹¹⁵ Reyes, *Lost Aeneid*, 6.

¹¹¹⁶ Wordsworth, “The Prelude,” 535; VI.604-608.

M.H. Abrams notes Wordsworth's discovery, that "Man is not born for ultimate satisfactions, but in his power to sustain an aspiration that is commensurate with desire, rather than with things as they are, consists man's tragic dignity."¹¹¹⁷

Abrams presents the tension within Wordsworth and what we know of pre-conversion Lewis, of reality and the desire for something more. Wordsworth, according to Abrams, finds consolation in "beyond possibility,"¹¹¹⁸ a consolation perhaps in the same way that Lewis found consolation in the eucatastrophe of his Christian faith. For even though Lewis, in his post-conversion state, realizes there is a time when the wanderer finds his home, like the Unicorn in *The Last Battle*,¹¹¹⁹ the point made here is that Lewis views the human earthly existence as enduring through personal pilgrimage. Furthermore, Paul Holmer intimates that Lewis's literature draws from those occurrences in life common to man; it is the enduring of life lived in pursuit of the same pleasures, desires, and hope to which all humans can relate.¹¹²⁰ Lewis understood the common pilgrimage of humans and placed himself among them in order to better relate the universal sense of human longing.

Although Lewis's spiritual memoir, *Surprised by Joy*, and his memoir of grief, *A Grief Observed*, reveal "the man" Lewis as well as the themes that shaped his thought, neither compare to *The Pilgrim's Regress* in terms of communicating Lewis as wanderer. Indeed, Andrew Wheat notes that *The Pilgrim's Regress*,

¹¹¹⁷ Abrams, *Supernaturalism*, 452-453. Abrams also locates the image of the soaring eagle as a predominant theme in Romanticism. The eagle signifies "the poise of human aspiration between impossibility and despair." The German poet Friedrich Schiller was fond of the *schweben*, or "the image of soaring," in his work. (453)

¹¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 453.

¹¹¹⁹ *TLB*, 176.

¹¹²⁰ Holmer, *Shape*, 4.

along with *The Allegory of Love*, represents Lewis's attempt to "set forth a large scale cosmographia, a comprehensive picture of man's place and destiny in the universe."¹¹²¹ Two halves of the cosmographia, according to Wheat, represent sensualism and rationalism, and although both possess individual characteristics that set them apart they both, in the end, "share a 'common enmity to immortal longings.'"¹¹²² That is to say, their own secular nature undermines their natural proclivity for *Sehnsucht* due to the "common destructive source in sadism and masochism, one directed outward, the other inward."¹¹²³ Lewis himself struggled with the tensions of extreme sensualism and rationalism. Before his conversion he wandered, ontologically, between the two extremes.¹¹²⁴

With Lewis's cosmographia in view, I want to note the significance of John's (the protagonist) journey after seeing a vision of "the island." The vision episode begins with John looking through a small window in a stone wall along the roadside. As John gazes through the glassless window at the primrose wood just beyond, he is struck with "a sweetness and a pang so piercing" that he finds his mind emptied of thought, and that he is crying. A mist, which hung at the far end of the wood, parted and revealed something wonderful and mysterious to John. He saw "a calm sea, and in the sea an island, where the smooth turf sloped down unbroken to the bays."¹¹²⁵ John's vision of the island (1.Encounter) incites

¹¹²¹ Andrew Wheat, "The Road Before Him: Allegory, Reason, and Romanticism in C.S. Lewis' *The Pilgrim's Regress*," *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature* 51, no. 1 (1998): 21–39.

¹¹²² *Ibid.*, 8. Wheat is quoting Lewis from his corrective addendum ("Preface") to *The Pilgrim's Regress*.

¹¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁴ *SBJ*, 170.

¹¹²⁵ *PR*, 8.

(2. Joy) intense feelings of longing (3. *Sehnsucht*); a desire to journey to and possess¹¹²⁶ the island, to live on it and experience it in its fullest expression.

Wheat notes that such an encounter encapsulates the whole of allegory in that Lewis is communicating his own, and all of humanity's, drive toward dialectical completeness.¹¹²⁷ The cosmographical extremes, however, deter John, as they did Lewis.

John's drive toward dialectical completeness (wandering/pilgrim) within the allegory represents Lewis's use of the "quest" motif first introduced into modern literature by Edmund Spenser.¹¹²⁸ Spenser, according to Lewis, is the progenitor of "Novalis's hero Heinrich, or Alastor, and of Keats's Endymion."¹¹²⁹ This type of hero, according to Lewis, is an allegory for Magnificence. Indeed, we find in Lewis's *Regress* literary mimesis of Spenser. Lewis states how Spenser's Arthur had to be a hero with a childhood (*enfances*), or past, so that he could be projected in the story as "a lover endlessly seeking an unknown mistress whom he had loved in a vision."¹¹³⁰ This is the exact format with which Lewis undertakes the telling of his own wandering: as Arthur sees and pursues a vision, so too does John.

¹¹²⁶ In *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction* English philosopher Roger Scruton writes, "Wanting something for its beauty is wanting it, not wanting to do something with it (p. 16)." Scruton, though he divorces his analysis of beauty from theological claims, fails to account for the origin of the extreme desire which beauty incites in human beings. To desire an object specifically for its beauty, according to Scruton, is to desire that which cannot be satisfied. It is possible to possess a desire that has no goal. We simply desire to contemplate the object of desire. Lewis takes this observation as true in general but makes it his business to use his literary efforts to offer supposals centered on the theological claims Scruton refuses to engage.

¹¹²⁷ Wheat, "The Road Before Him," 8.

¹¹²⁸ C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*, 382.

¹¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

And yet, in all wandering the hero encounters and entertains diversions. The moral error found in the wanderer's desire, therefore, is figured in Lewis's notion of the false Florimell.¹¹³¹ John contemplates his earthly desires—the island—in light of eternity when he says, “I am afraid that the things the Landlord really intends for me may be utterly unlike the things he has taught me to desire.”¹¹³² Lewis here draws upon his Platonism, as well as from his reading of Boethius,¹¹³³ in that inferior goods attract us because they are images of the real good. Lewis writes, “The false Florimell attracts by being like the true, the true Florimell by being like beauty itself. Earthly glory would never have moved us but by being a shadow of or *idolon* of the Divine Glory, in which we are called to participate. Gloriana is ‘the idol of her Maker’s great magnificence’.”¹¹³⁴ Lewis contributes our inability to know our true aim in life until we have achieved it to the nature of the Platonic quest and to *eros* religion—“the thirst of the soul for the Perfection beyond the created universe.”¹¹³⁵ The hero, i.e. the wanderer or seeker, must continue in the pilgrimage of life beyond the false Florimells to Glory itself.

We find this philosophy at play in John's cave discussion with the hermit Father History. John discovers how the landscape and all that the Enemy sets

¹¹³¹ Florimell's character symbolizes the false quest. See Lewis, *Spenser's Images of Life*, 122-123.

¹¹³² *PR*, 154.

¹¹³³ *EL*, 383.

¹¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁵ *Ibid.* Lewis attributes “*eros* religion” to Dr. Nygren. For more on Nygren's notion of *eros* religion see Lewis, *SBJ*, 210. Nygren's notion of *eros* is Aristotelian. R.G. Collingwood notes that Aristotle's term for love is “*eros*,” “which means the longing for what is essentially imperfect for its own perfection. *Eros* is the upward-looking or aspiring love felt by that which feels itself inferior for that which it recognizes as its superior.” See R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, Reprint. Originally Published: Gloustershire, Clarendon Press, 1945; Paperpack Ed. London, Oxford University Press, 1960, Oxford Paperbacks (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960), 87. For a detailed study on Lewis's conception of *eros* see Jason Lepojärvi, “God Is Love But Love Is Not God” (University of Helsinki, 2015).

before him to gaze upon is a sham; it is not the *thing* itself, the “One Thing.” This causes John to worry that his desires may not even stem from The Landlord, but come from a “rival Beauty in the world which the Landlord will not allow me to get.”¹¹³⁶ Here Father History reveals to John how experience plays the great prover of the unattainable desire. He reminds John how sensual pleasures proved themselves to be mere shadows of what John felt the island represented (unattainable desire). When one lust shows that it cannot satisfy, and the desire for the island persists, then the unattainable desire remains as the only tenable solution to salve John’s affections.

Lewis, here, distinguishes shallow finite desire from True Desire. John admits to Father History how his desire for the island felt like a “bodily desire.” Father History warns of such thrilling desire, but does not quell it completely. “It is only a foretaste of that which the real Desirable will be when you have found it,” he says. “Out of the soul’s bliss ... there shall be a flowing over into the flesh.”¹¹³⁷ The physicality and thrill of desiring is not discouraged, and we discover within Father History’s words a hint of *mysterium tremendum*¹¹³⁸ within the experience of desire.

In *The Pilgrim’s Regress*, therefore, we find Lewis taking us along on his own pilgrimage, the impetus being a grand vision of beauty (the island). The Joy of the initial encounter incites John (the hero) toward the source of such beauty. The allegory examines the ontological extremes of sensualism and rationalism

¹¹³⁶ *PR*, 155.

¹¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁸ Otto, *Holy*, 12-14. Otto describes *mysterium tremendum* as a feeling that “may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship.”

through the movement of pilgrimage, i.e. the wanderings of life. During such wanderings man is prone to deviate from the proper path into the emphatic deviations of false Florimells.

8.5 *Numinous*

In Chapter 7 I showed how the *numinous* operates as religious sense, as well as its relationship and interaction with the beautiful. The beautiful, when viewed as possessing meaning and value, operates in numinous-like fashion as a gateway into other worlds. Next, I want to connect the dots. I want to show how the *Bifrost* aspect of the *numinous* relates to the Christian apologist and why beauty remains an important element in the apologist's poetical defense.

Rebirth of the Beautiful as Apologia

The apologist must become *Bifrost*—a bridge builder from the immediate finite world into the world of the beyond. A phenomenological apologia employs the beautiful, via the arts (i.e., story, music, painting) through *numinous* feeling, i.e., the “bright shadow.” In the case of a literary apologia, we have discovered the historical and mythological significance of utilizing a *Bifrost* character as well. As I have shown, Aslan, Psyche, and Ransom lead other characters into the *ganz andere* just as Lewis himself, as apologist, guides readers into a place of *numinous* beauty. Lewis opens the metaphorical door of the reader's imagination and allows him or her to feel the effects of the *numinous*; meaning, the desire it produces in them to go further up and further into the beyond. In this regard we see how the

numinous connects to *Sehnsucht*; it is that aspect of beauty that reveals a quality or value or presence behind it that haunts even as it lures.

Philip Shaw suggests a return to beauty, meaning, to the beautiful that is full of meaning and *numinous*. He suggests the pathway to recovering beauty is desire (*Sehnsucht*). In his argument he notes how beauty relates to *eros* in the classical sense as, “an embodied desire leading naturally to an elevated desire for true intellectual beauty.”¹¹³⁹ Shaw intimates this “elevated desire” to be eventually articulated by Protestant Christianity in the form of *agape*, a selfless conception of love. He suggests, however, the rise of Protestantism caused the eventual split of *eros* from *agape*. As I noted above, the Kantian notion of the Sublime further sundered from the classical notion of the beautiful, thus voiding the Sublime from any divine residue in meaning. John Milbank suggests that, “If humans cannot desire their God, then love for such a God is rendered ‘cold ... abstract and empty.’”¹¹⁴⁰ With the beautiful unceremoniously deflowered of its *numinous* qualities the postmodern person is not free to desire God through *objets d’art* or natural phenomenon or even another human being. When we remove value from the beautiful and render it just another element of the field of aesthetics, we also remove the human ability to encounter the infinite through mediation of the finite.¹¹⁴¹ The beautiful adds meaning to our desire because the beautiful object possesses a quality and value; it possesses the *numinous*.

I want to return again to Lewis’s cosmic novel *Perelandra*. In *Perelandra* we find a broad mix of the *numinous* applications to which I am referring. First,

¹¹³⁹ Shaw, *Sublime*, 151.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Lewis incorporates the *numinous* to create anticipation at the beginning of the novel. Next, Lewis utilizes beauty and desire as a way to further encounter the *numinous* quality of the strange watery planet. Finally, Lewis shows the relational quality of the *numinous*, and even the *Bifrost* characteristic as the beautiful and *tremendum* connect with human relationship.

First, Lewis opens the novel with the *numinous* as a way to build anticipation into the story. Ransom, the protagonist, summons the narrator (Lewis) to his house. The narrator anticipates their meeting with a mix of delight and dread for he knows Ransom has been to another world, and no one can visit another world and remain unchanged. His dread, however, is more pointed at the *eldila*, the daemonic beings from Mars.¹¹⁴² The narrator lists his emotions as he walks to Ransom's house: distaste, embarrassment, boredom, all of which were facades to his true feeling: fear. He feared getting "drawn in," a feeling he describes as being the sense one experiences when speculations give way to the thing actually happening and being trapped on the inside of belief.¹¹⁴³ The *eldilas* equate to *numinous* beings that defy category, whether angels, ghosts, fairies, and their mysterious and dreadful presence cause the narrator general unease, so much so that he considers Ransom's house as haunted.¹¹⁴⁴ The haunting feeling turns to awe and wonder when the narrator listens in on Ransom talking to the *eldila*: "The sound was astonishingly unlike a voice. It was perfectly articulate: it was even, I suppose, rather beautiful."¹¹⁴⁵ Further, the narrator feels a fear of another kind; his

¹¹⁴² *P*, 10.

¹¹⁴³ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁴⁴ Lewis likens the *numinous* feeling to the notion of haunting. See *PP*, 15.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, *P*, 16.

fear is not of something bad, but of something good. Lewis creates an anticipatory tension of experiencing a presence that fills one with fear or dread and yet is good, morally. We find here the *mysterium tremendum* of the narrator setting the stage for the rest of the novel that nearly overwhelms with this kind of *numinous* beauty.

Next, Lewis bathes his prose in *numinous* beauty. Ransom experiences the pleasure of discovering the ocean to be drinkable, the astonishment of the quivering sky;¹¹⁴⁶ he is haunted by excessive pleasure minus the human feeling of guilt;¹¹⁴⁷ he is dazzled and frightened by a “still green column at the end of the world.”¹¹⁴⁸ Ransom also experiences the sunset for the first time. Lewis draws sharp images and enlists the foreboding presence of darkness to further embroider the otherworldliness of this strange planet. The setting sun varied the colors of the golden dome and created a “great fan of color like a peacock’s tail.”¹¹⁴⁹ The colors on the land began to change as well even as the oceans settled to a haunting stillness; it “smoked towards heaven in huge dolomites and elephants of blue and purple vapour ... The day was burning to death.”¹¹⁵⁰

Lewis then tangles a *numinous* silence into the beautiful spectacle of the sunset. As Ransom sits down to watch the end of day on Perelandra, he considers for the first time that he might have been sent to an uninhabited world; “the terror

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 33.

¹¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 34. Possibly a William Morris echo, i.e., Northernness, as Lewis plays on the feeling incited by a journey to the world’s end. Lewis was familiar with Morris’s tale *The Well at the World’s End*. See *CLI*, 122.

¹¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 38.

¹¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

added, as it were, a razor-edge to all that profusion of pleasure.”¹¹⁵¹ Lewis, however, does not leave the scene without hope. Rather, he pushes further into the razor-edge of terror by adding complete darkness to the solemnity of the scene (*mysterium*). The colors vanish, the ocean calms, and impenetrable darkness shrinks the planet so that Ransom can only spatially sense his own body. It is here Lewis adds a positive *numinous*—a sense of something other. Lewis gives the darkness warmth, sweet fragrance—a fragrance that “made his hammock, swaying ever more and more gently. Night covered him like a blanket and kept all loneliness from him.”¹¹⁵² Finally, Ransom falls to sleep in complete ease and peace “like a fruit which falls into the hand almost before you have touched the stem.”¹¹⁵³ The *numinous* progression of the sunset scene joins terror and delight, dazzling beauty and impenetrable darkness, but not without a hint of something sweet, calm, and inviting on the horizon.

Finally, Lewis shows the relational quality of the *numinous*, and even the *Bifrost* characteristic as the beautiful and *mysterium tremendum* connect with human relationship. After Ransom destroys the Un-man and makes his subterranean journey back to the surface of Perelandra, he spends time being nurtured and healed by the land itself. When he regains his strength he begins to ascend the great mountain to the “secret place which the peaks were guarding.”¹¹⁵⁴ Once Ransom summited the heights, he looked down into a small valley surrounded by nearly a dozen other glowing peaks. A clear pool, identical to the

¹¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁵² Ibid., 39.

¹¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 165.

sky in color, was in the center of the valley and red lilies grew across the valley floor to the edge of the pool. Then, an awe “gained” on him. He sensed it but did not yield, and walked on but with a bowed head.¹¹⁵⁵ The mountain scene echoes of the *axis mundi* of the ancient peoples discussed above.¹¹⁵⁶ It was a holy place, a place where creatures of the material world communicated with liminal creatures or beings and even the gods themselves. As Ransom stood next to the pool he “became gradually aware that there was something odd about the flowers at two places in his immediate neighborhood.”¹¹⁵⁷ But the oddity was not only spatial, it was also in the light and in the air and in the ground. Ransom sensed a presence. The sense caused him to react not only emotionally but physiologically; his blood pressure spiked.¹¹⁵⁸ Ransom realizes he is standing in the presence of two *eldila*, messengers of Maledil.

Thus, Lewis, in this rugged yet delicate scene shows how the beauty of the landscape context¹¹⁵⁹ creates mystery, but also a sense of holy fear as presence is communicated through a disturbance or a fullness breaking through the reality of the moment. The mountain and interaction with angelic-like *eldilas* is also significant in that it vividly shows the relational element of the *numinous* represented in the presence of *Bifrost*.

As we saw in the last section, the beautiful and the *numinous* are not merely static elements of literary communication. They work in concert with one

¹¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁶ See 7.5 of this thesis.

¹¹⁵⁷ *P*, 166.

¹¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁹ Section 8.3 of this thesis explains the notion of context within landscape.

another to prick the imagination to consider things implied by aesthetic experience that reach beyond human rationality. I have shown that the *numinous* is not simply a derivative feeling spawned by aesthetic experience; nor is it simply a reconfiguration of the Sublime.¹¹⁶⁰ Rather, the *numinous* is both the object and the sense or feeling of that object. It is redundant to analyze the *numinous* in terms of moral goodness, for that is the very purpose Otto created the term. The *numinous* explains the holy object itself and the feeling it gives to liminal beings such as humans. Furthermore, the role of *Bifrost* shows the inherent relational aspect of the *numinous* and the beautiful. The *numinous* activates the beautiful with *mysterium* in order to lure, therefore, it makes a strong case for itself as the primary element of a phenomenological apologia.

This chapter suggests a language of beauty at play within Lewis's works of fiction. Of course I do not intend this chapter to be exhaustive by any means. Rather, I intend to establish a rubric by which we can more accurately critique Lewis's literary theology with regard to beauty. I have situated Lewisian Northernness as a primary framework as I believe that Lewis drew from this

¹¹⁶⁰ See Otto, *Holy*, 45-46 for Otto's commentary on the *numinous* relationship to the Sublime. Otto notes two similarities in the *numinous* and the sublime: a) the fact the neither can easily be explicated and b) they both exhibit daunting yet attractive qualities. (42) Otto also concedes that the Sublime is "an authentic 'schema' of the 'the holy.'" That is not to say the terms are synonymous. Otto is quick to remind that aesthetic feelings are not the same as religious feelings. In saying this, however, Otto suggests their relationship to be built on an association with feelings in that it is historically possible that *numinous* feelings awakened the mind to aspects or "feelings" of the sublime. If we concede this notion of related feelings between the *numinous* and the Sublime, then Kant's work to defrock beauty and the sublime of any sense of meaning appears even more egregious.

theme both literarily (or artistically) and theologically in his creation of atmosphere (literarily/artistically) and in the way he conveys his unique apologia by way of eucatastrophe, or Joy. Northernness encapsulates so many aspects of the aesthetic experience inherent in Lewis's language of beauty; like the *numinous* it is a primary way Lewis communicates beauty as a way to not persuade readers about the existence of God, but rather to enchant readers to consider a world in which a God might exist.

I have spent some time showing how Joy conveys vitality, consolation, and unpredictability. Joy, as Lewis's aesthetic gasp (both biographically, as well as literarily and theologically), functions separately from *Sehnsucht* (intense desire) in that it triggers the latter. Joy reveals itself within Lewis's *oeuvre* as indicative of God's glory, or beauty itself. Joy is so much a part of God, as we noted in Aslan's song of creation, that it quickens its subjects.

Sehnsucht, on the other hand, reaches out past Joy. It is the longing that incites our questing. We find this evident in Lewis's writing as well as in his personal life. *Sehnsucht* defines Lewis as wanderer, as it does the spiritual journey of every person.

Lewis employs the *numinous* as way to enhance literary atmosphere and, in a way, to contrast the temporal with the infinite. The presence of the *numinous* intimates relation to the divine, to the overwhelming presence of something there.

Chapter 9: What Beauty Demands

A Concluding Discussion

“Everything I have said about the experience of beauty implies that it is rationally founded. It challenges us to find meaning in its object, to make critical comparisons, and to examine our own lives and emotions in light of what we find.”¹¹⁶¹

—Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*

9.1 Introduction

In his “Memoir of C.S. Lewis,” Warren Lewis, Lewis’s older brother, recalls how “Jack” (C.S. Lewis’s self-chosen childhood nickname) did not envy the modern child save for their ability to use “gumboots and oilskins and a sou’wester”¹¹⁶² for outdoor play during periods of rain. As the brothers reminisced about their childhood years later, Warren notes how, aside from those modern inventions, “Jack” lamented “the lost simplicity of country pleasures: the empty sky, the unspoilt hills, the white silent roads on which you could hear the rattle of a farm cart half a mile away.”¹¹⁶³ The theme of beauty remained a central thread throughout Lewis’s life, according to the ones who knew him best and whom he loved most, Warren Lewis and Arthur Greeves.¹¹⁶⁴

Beauty, for Lewis, began in the simple beauty of landscape and transposed itself into the literature Lewis came to love and master. “Jack’s mind was

¹¹⁶¹ Scruton, *Beauty*, 163.

¹¹⁶² Warren Lewis, “Memoir of C.S. Lewis” in Warren Lewis ed., *Letters of C. S. Lewis*, 2.

¹¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹⁶⁴ Hooper, *C.S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*, 16.

developing and flowering on lines as unpolitical as can be imagined,” writes Warren Lewis. “His letters of the time are full of landscape and romance: they record his discovery of George MacDonald—a turning point in his life—and his first and characteristic delight in Chaucer, Scott, Malory, the Brontës, William Morris, Coleridge, de Quincey, Spenser, Swinburne, Keats.”¹¹⁶⁵ During the time in Great Bookham, Surrey noted in the memoirs by Warren Lewis, Lewis’s intellectual powers developed in lockstep with his imaginative acumen, both fueled by the natural beauty of the Surrey countryside.

Contemporary Lewis readership, along with the large swath of scholarship I discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, however, tend to emphasize the intellectual powers of Lewis while isolating the imaginative aspects of his writing to “another side” of Lewis. Certainly Lewis’s capabilities as a first-rate scholar are not in question. Indeed, they are solidified by works like *The Allegory of Love*, which remains an academic mainstay in medieval scholarship,¹¹⁶⁶ *The Discarded Image*, and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*. What is in question is why, until this study, has beauty not been explored as an equal element of Lewis’s literary and theological program? Furthermore, in light of my research findings—which show beauty as a core element in Lewis’s thought—is a reframing of Lewis in order?

This thesis is an attempt to direct Lewis scholars away from constantly framing Lewis as “King of the Rational Argument” and towards Lewis in his role as lover and hunter of beauty. Regarding the lack of scholarship on Lewis’s notion

¹¹⁶⁵ Warren Lewis, *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, 6-7.

¹¹⁶⁶ See McGrath, *C.S. Lewis: A Life*, 182-186.

of beauty, as I noted in the introduction, I agree with Michael Ward in that Lewis scholarship fails to consider Lewis's work as a whole, thereby creating a fragmented and even slanted view of him that is largely dictated by the interests of the scholars. With regard to the question of reframing Lewis, I believe it seems clear that due to the lack of cohesive Lewis scholarship on his core themes, a recasting of Lewis is necessary.

In what follows I hope to summarize my research in such a way as to, first, show its achievement, second, its unique contribution to Lewis scholarship and theology in general, and third, to offer a concluding reflection on the cultural application of my findings.

9.2 The Unique Achievement of This Research

In this section I want to answer two questions: What has this research achieved? What has this research added to current Lewis scholarship?

In this thesis I have asserted that when one considers the emphasis and value Lewis placed on beauty, two things emerge (and I consider the second to be tertiary, not a primary consideration, but what seems to be a logical outcome of this study). First, Lewis's language of beauty, which consists of Northernness (including landscape), *Sehnsucht*, Joy, and the *Numinous*, surfaces with notable assertiveness and vitality. Second, in light of this prominent language of beauty, one must consider reframing Lewis from King of the Rational Argument (my phrasing) to the Beautiful Apologist.

Beauty, therefore, presides as the impetus of my inquiry into Lewis's work. This interpretive study boasts a unique *telos* in that it seeks to define the

aesthetic shape of Lewis's thought—Lewis's language of beauty. In my view, it is impossible to read Lewis without noticing his use of beauty in his fictional work, with regard to literary atmosphere, as well as in his theological works of theological *apologia*, as rhetorical poetics. Due to the sheer lack of scholarship on Lewis's conception of beauty (see "Introduction") this inquiry engaged principally with primary resources as well as the secondary resources that influenced Lewis the most, namely Plato, Augustine, Otto, and MacDonald, among others.

My analysis was initially guided by two basic research questions that contributed to my forming of Lewis's language of beauty: 1) How does C.S. Lewis define beauty? and 2) How is beauty more than aesthetic form?

1) I have answered question one by suggesting Lewis employed a language of beauty consisting of elements germane to the aesthetic experience in general, and to Lewis's personal experience in particular. Rather than describe Lewis's formulation of beauty using a narrow Platonic framework, I endeavored to delineate the entire aesthetic experience based upon Lewis's own life experience and the way in which he expressed beauty throughout various works in his *oeuvre*. This approach exposes Lewisian beauty as consisting of more than simple aesthetic categorizations, such as Platonism or a Kantian perspective. It reveals a highly nuanced and rich understanding and expression of beauty as an aesthetic experience, in which the subject encounters beauty in its various forms and responds to the encounter through expressive feeling. It also informs our understanding of why Lewis employed beauty as a cognitive jamming device.

For example, by using *numinous* elements, which arguably find their origin in Northernness, Lewis was able to infuse his fiction with a subtle religious

sense, thus sneaking past a person's preconceived notions of religion ("watchful dragons"). This feeling of the *numinous* within Lewis's fiction incites *Sehnsucht*—a deeply significant felt experience—thus establishing *Sehnsucht* as emblematic of a preexisting human bent toward that which exists beyond the finite material world. *Sehnsucht* signifies humankind's metaphorical journey from imperfection toward perfection; a journey spurred by the human feeling of hope. Hope connects to Lewisian Joy. It works as an element of the aesthetic experience in its relation to realizing the source of the One Thing, that being beauty itself, or God. Lewis's Joy intermingles with *Sehnsucht* in a climactic way as the Joy becomes the desiring itself. Lewis's use for Joy, he says, waned in later years but I suggest that is in regard to Joy in the desiring.¹¹⁶⁷ Lewis shows in the story of *Perelandra* and *Till We Have Faces*, as well as *The Last Battle*, that desire leads into a place of perpetual Joy; a consummation of the seeker discovering the source of their longing. This does not diminish or cancel Joy, only the journey for it. Lewis as *Viator* or Wanderer, shows us how the human spirit can find fulfillment via hope and Joy of further discovery into the beyond—when one crosses the *numinous* bridge and into the other world itself. Furthermore, Lewis's use of beauty as a literary and theological language reveals his understanding and use of *intellectus* and *ratio* respectively.

2) Next, in formulating Lewis's language of beauty I answered question two and showed how Lewisian beauty extends beyond mere surface aesthetics and informs the subject of beauty's quality. The current field of aesthetics is mired in confusion due, in part, to the eighteenth-century Kantian bifurcation of beauty and

¹¹⁶⁷ See 2.1, fn., 173, of this thesis.

the Sublime. The study of beauty has been forfeited to theories of art as aesthetics now deals more with the fine arts than with nature.¹¹⁶⁸ More recent scholarship, however, utilizes the entirety of the aesthetic experience and considers new findings in neuroaesthetics, which curiously corroborate the notion of beauty attaching to an ontological source.¹¹⁶⁹ Peter de Bolla, Elaine Scarry, and G. Gabrielle Starr have showed us that the beautiful incites mutism,¹¹⁷⁰ the inexplicable feeling sensed when one encounters the Beautiful in an *objet d'art*. I have, by and large, circumvented aesthetic theory, and even, to a certain degree, modern theological aesthetics, which tend to rely heavily upon Hans Urs von Balthasar's framework, in order to show how Lewis's unique understanding and application of the *numinous* speaks to the undeniable relational aspect of beauty. I have shown how the *numinous* connects to Northernness, especially with regard to the *Bifrost*, and how one might consider the relational role of the *numinous* to be intertwined with the Beautiful. The *numinous* directly links to the quality of the Beautiful in that it names it. For Lewis the *numinous* was an object—the Divine—with the *mysterium tremendum* acting as the feeling one receives when encountering the *numinous*. Furthermore, I suggested how it is possible that Lewis used *Bifrost* characters to connect the material world with the source of its meaning and quality. Characters like Aslan, Ransom, and Psyche work as bridge

¹¹⁶⁸ Mary Mothersill, "Beauty," in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, 44-46.

¹¹⁶⁹ Roger Scruton rejects the ontological notions considered by the early thinkers on beauty. He does so, however, in order to ask the questions of beauty in the correct order. Scruton believes inquiries on beauty should begin with the aesthetic experience itself and not the object of beauty. The "feeling" of beauty is primarily in question, according to Scruton.

¹¹⁷⁰ Peter de Bolla uses this term to describe the way he feels when he is struck dumb, as it were, by a beautiful piece of art. Rudolf Otto's *numinous* relates to mutism in that it is an indescribable "sense" experienced, and in many cases the experience is with the Beautiful.

builders between the finite and divine, exposing a world of deep meaning beyond the material objects that incite wonder and human desire.

Approach

As I developed this language of beauty it became clear that a myopic view of Lewis's writing as engaging on mere rhetorical didactics could not stand. We must read Lewis's work as a composite whole, withholding our categorizations until we gain a broad view of his literary program. Keeping Ward's scholarly exhortation in mind, I employed an interpretive approach to my research. In doing so I am now able to offer first of its kind research on Lewis's affection for Northernness (his "Norse Complex").

Unique Contribution and Further Research

Lewis scholarship has thus far treated Northernness within Lewis's *oeuvre* as a mere biographical footnote. If we, however, examine Lewis's Northernness influence we begin to see aesthetic contours that not only emerge as lexical or aesthetic echoes in his writing, but we also discover a panoramic view of the conceptual-theological influence of Northernness on Lewis's worldview. In unearthing this unique research related to Lewisian Northernness I have opened the door for further exploration along this stream of Lewis scholarship, to use Ward's visual of Lewis scholarship existing in seven dominant "streams."

For my own part, I look forward to extending my research of Northernness as it applies to the entire collection of the Narnia chronicles. I exposed what I believe to be clear elements of Northernness within *The Lion, The Witch and The*

Wardrobe, The Silver Chair, and The Last Battle. But I believe a strong case can be made for Northernness as an atmospheric and theological muse throughout the chronicles, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* in particular.

Moreover, I believe my initial research regarding Northernness as a conceptual-theological influence upon Lewis's thought invites further exploration. In his epilogue¹¹⁷¹ to *On Fairy-stories*, J.R.R. Tolkien developed a concise literary theology around the concept of eucatastrophe, or the "joyous turn," within storytelling. Tolkien showed how the theological notion of redemption, when enlisted in storytelling, proves a vital area of connection between the disciplines of literature and theology. Beyond whatever current misgivings exist about Lewis as theologian, I believe by developing the Northernness influence within Lewis's theological thought it will become apparent that while Lewis may not have been a theologian in the strict sense of the definition, his comparative literary capabilities prove to develop strong theological chords worthy of further examination. In this regard, I can see Lewisian Northernness working in the way eucatastrophe informs Tolkien's literary-theological thought.

This new research on Lewisian Northernness further underpinned my tertiary notion that a reframing of Lewis is in order. Though I initially set out to analyze how Lewis defined beauty and employed it as *apologia*, I see now how this study suggests the popular and scholarly view of Lewis as a writer and thinker in general appears to be heavily tilted toward a modernist perspective. A reframing of Lewis, therefore, stands as a necessary by-product of my foray into his notion of beauty. For example, I believe the current evangelical Christian view

¹¹⁷¹ Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 77-79.

of Lewis treats his work as apologetic talking points for mounting arguments against secularism and the so-called New Atheists. I am not suggesting Lewis's theological/apologetic works are antiquated or unusable in contemporary theological-philosophical debates. Rather, I am suggesting that instead of devising how to combat differing worldviews, Christians should follow Lewis's example in producing beautiful and compelling works of art. In Chapter 4, "To The North," I showed how Lewis interacted with William Morris's grim worldview; how Lewis used Northernness elements in his writing but infused it with a Christian perspective of the world with regard to hope and despair. Of course Lewis answers Morris's chilling worldview in a didactic essay. The locus of Lewis's *apologia*, however, can be found in his treatment of eschatological matters in *The Last Battle*, his hope of a future heaven in the beautiful world of *Perelandra*, and in his showcase of a *numinous* joy that reveals beauty and truth in the conclusion of *Till We Have Faces*. Instead of memorizing Lewis quotes for debate, it is my view that Christians immerse themselves in the narrative of Northernness in order to understand and show how beauty does not writhe in temporal despair, but rather bridges that gap—it acts as *Bifrost*, a bridge from this world into the beyond.

I have thus far summarized the impetus and approach for my analysis into Lewisian beauty. I have also briefly emphasized my unique Lewis research on the topic of Northernness. In what follows I want to offer concluding reflections on Lewis's language of beauty as a whole, and briefly suggest why it matters.

9.3 What Beauty Demands

Lewis's particular poetic language emerges from his affection for landscape, which developed in him as a young boy. This locus of Lewis's thought expands into various areas of aesthetic experience, which I have submitted to be *Sehnsucht* and Joy, with the encompassing element of the *numinous*. Beauty speaks through these elements of aesthetic experience and influences a person's innerscape in that they deal with ontological aspects of the human soul. The *numinous* operates as a kind of aesthetic glue that binds and infuses *Sehnsucht* and Joy with relational qualities that sneak past previously held religious presuppositions—the watchful dragons, as Lewis put it—and invites one to look beyond the temporal and into *ganz andere*. These elements of Lewis's language of beauty work in unison and present readers with an entire aesthetic experience. I believe viewing Lewis's language of beauty in this light illuminates what Lewis is up to. Lewis did not attempt, *per se*, to define beauty for his readers; he did not begin with ontological questions or hints to that effect. Indeed, he believed apprehending the quality of beauty was intuitive. The *experience* of beauty, however, confronts a person and forces him or her to judge its meaning. I believe this is how Scruton frames his discussion in *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*. Though, as I noted in chapter three that Scruton rejects the Platonist and Neoplatonist approach to viewing beauty first from an ontological perspective, he does not eschew deriving meaning from beauty after one experiences it.¹¹⁷² Scruton points not to the objects in the world, but to the experience of those objects from which a person can derive meaning based on their experience. This is

¹¹⁷² Scruton, *Beauty*, 163.

what Lewis's language of beauty does; it outlines the experience of beauty and reveals how one translates meaning from their experience. Through the lens of experience we are able to see that, indeed, beauty does confront, and in its confrontation it also demands something of us, the subject.

So, what does beauty demand? Perhaps this question seems a bit harsh given the connotation of the word *beauty* itself. Lewis, however, framed beauty in words such as "enchantment," which can be either good or evil, and he also employed war-like phrases such as "arrows of Joy," with regard to his own early aesthetic experiences pre-conversion. That is not to say that beauty wields some kind of pagan magic or to suggest beauty to be used against another person. Rather, it is to say that everyday experience suggests beauty; it cannot be hidden, as Lewis proposes.¹¹⁷³ Beauty announces itself through the natural world: at the turn of the season, in the midnight sky, in the first morning light. It declares itself via works of art—fine art and craftsmanship. It also announces itself through human beings: through interpersonal relationships and through a person's desires and delights. In this way, it demands our attention.

O'Hear suggests as much when he states that art criticism performs more than mere emotive ramblings. Critics point to features about certain works, like Ruskin's critique on Turner, "which we are urged to accept; they *demand* a response of a certain sort."¹¹⁷⁴ If O'Hear is right, then certain features, or elements, of beauty transcend subjective critique and invade our cognitive faculties—namely our *intellectus*—and require interaction. I think it is helpful to

¹¹⁷³ *TWG*, 42-45.

¹¹⁷⁴ O'Hear, *Beyond Evolution*, 188.

keep in mind that such a view of beauty enforces my previous statements about contemporary Christian *apologia*. If clergy, professional academics, and lay people alike understood the nature of beauty and what it demands via one's experience with it, then I believe rhetorical didactics within the Christian subculture would, to some degree, cede to rhetorical poetics. Lewis painted a Christian vision through storytelling and through the images and symbols found within his stories as a way to suggest universal human themes.¹¹⁷⁵ It is my view that in order to understand how beauty may be properly employed in the theological discipline of apologetics, we must begin by answering: What does beauty demand?

To conclude this chapter, I offer three brief reflections on this question. It is not my intent for these reflections to contribute to the broader field of aesthetics or theology. Rather, I intend these reflections to offer theological application in light of the way Lewis experienced and expressed beauty throughout his life and work.

In the first place, therefore, beauty demands attentiveness. Second, beauty demands that we account for the natural world, but in more than just a superficial aesthetic experience. Rather, we should account for it in such a way as to invite inquiry into the meaning and value of things, both natural and man-made. Third, beauty demands that just as it incites wonder and inquiry beyond itself, so too must the Christian show efficacy and excellence in the way he or she seeks to utilize the beautiful.

¹¹⁷⁵ See Brian Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories*, 7-10.

Beauty Demands Attentiveness

First, beauty demands attentiveness. Lewis states, “The first demand any work of art makes upon us is surrender. Look. Listen. Receive. Get yourself out of the way.”¹¹⁷⁶ Though Lewis here is not necessarily attributing beauty to “any work of art” *per se*, I believe he is touching on an important aspect of our encounter with beauty in general. Roger Scruton describes our contemporary modern times as existing between two forms of sacrilege: on one side, there are the sugary dreams of *kitsch*, and on the other, the savage fantasies of postmodernist desecration. Both reject the higher life of beauty along with its values. “Kitsch deprives feeling of its cost, and therefore of its reality; desecration augments the cost of feeling, and so frightens us away from it.”¹¹⁷⁷ Scruton suggests the remedy to kitsch and desecration is found in the relational notion of sacrifice. It is “when sacrifice is present and respected, life redeems itself; it becomes an object of contemplation, something that ‘bears looking at,’ and which attracts our admiration and our love.”¹¹⁷⁸ There is, however, one great obstacle to this remedy for these two sacrileges. It lies in the reality that kitsch and desecration exist because we are not attentive to the values of beauty. We live as if beauty does not exist.¹¹⁷⁹ Attentiveness, therefore, must precede understanding and expression of beauty. How will we recognize and express it without first

¹¹⁷⁶ Lewis, *EC*, 19. Lewis wrote this about artwork in his *Experiment in Criticism* (1961), and he also wrote it about nature in *The Four Loves* (1960): “The only imperative that nature utters is, ‘Look. Listen. Attend.’” See *FL*, 29.

¹¹⁷⁷ Scruton, *Beauty*, 160.

¹¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Here Scruton quotes the poet Rilke, from the “Archaic Torso of Apollo”: “you must change your life.” Such an admonition leads us to realize that contemporary modern culture is in need of far more than surface aesthetics; we need beauty imbued with relational value and divine quality.

listening for and to it, and observing it in our own lives and contexts? When we heed beauty's demand to live attentively toward it, we gain wisdom into the by-product of the attentive subject.

Attentiveness possesses at least one by-product worth noting: It provides a renewed sense of self and vitality when one realizes the inherent sacrificial nature of beauty. Scruton's notion of sacrifice echoes within Lewis's language of beauty. If kitsch and desecration deny sacrifice by their very nature, then a beauty built upon sacrifice can course correct. We find the theme of sacrifice within Northernness, in the Norse code of heroism. We discover the redemptive nature of sacrifice in the landscape, as Lewis notes in his references to the Corn King.¹¹⁸⁰ Some of the most beautiful scenes in Lewis's writing—which I highlighted throughout this thesis—combine heroic sacrifice and redemption. In *The Pilgrim's Regress* the protagonist John throws himself from the ledge into the dark waters of the pool, only to surface on the other side as a changed man. The *numinous* character Aslan sacrifices himself for Edmund upon the Stone Table—a dark tragic scene that ends with the joy and *numinous* beauty of redemption. Likewise, Ransom's resurfacing and time of healing and replenishment follow his heroic killing of the Unman in *Perelandra*. His heroism is rewarded by his witnessing of perhaps one of the most beautiful scenes in the Lewis *oeuvre*, "The Great Dance." Finally, Psyche willingly journeys to meet her likely doom on the mountain, to the home of the Shadowbrute. The attentive reader, therefore, discovers beauty in these redemptive acts. These acts reach beyond the self, and act as a bridge into something beyond. The *numinous* infuses these acts with beauty in that it acts as

¹¹⁸⁰ See Lewis, *M*, 181-188.

both a bridge to the Divine and as a gateway into the Good. This is what the reader feels when the redemptive act creates eucatastrophe within the narrative.

Beauty Demands We Endeavor Beyond Aesthetic Experience

Second, beauty demands that we account for the natural world or an *objet d'art* in more than just a superficial aesthetic experience. Rather, we must account for it in such a way as to invite the inquiry into the meaning and value of things, both natural and man-made.¹¹⁸¹ In this accounting of beauty, then, it follows that we must also consider what we ourselves feel when we experience the beautiful. In this way, the beautiful, for both the Christian and the unbeliever, acts as dialectic, a poetic interpretation of life that bears witness to something beyond. To illustrate this concept, I will utilize Elaine Scarry's personal experience.

Scarry, in *On Beauty and Being Just*, describes her encounter with a palm tree just outside her window. Scarry never thought palm trees were particularly beautiful until she found herself face to face with one—lying under it, staring at it until nightfall. The distinctiveness of the palm tree struck Scarry, convincing her of a beauty she failed to see before. In this epiphanic moment she discovered something about beauty and perception. “The beautiful thing seems—is—incomparable,” writes Scarry, “unprecedented; and that sense of being without precedent conveys a sense of the ‘newness’ or ‘newbornness’ of the entire world.”¹¹⁸² It is the unprecedented nature of Scarry's discovery with which I am

¹¹⁸¹ Allison Milbank, “Apologetics and the Imagination: Making Strange” in *Imaginative Apologetics*, 34. Millbank suggests the poeticizing of reality to be “a priestly action whereby the chaos of nature is given meaning and value, and becomes a demonstration of divine creativity.”

¹¹⁸² Scarry, *On Beauty*, 22.

concerned. If beauty found in a palm tree seems unprecedented, then does it not follow that something *beyond* sets the precedent? Or to use Scarry's own admission:

“One can see why beauty—by Homer, by Plato, by Aquinas, by Dante . . . —has been perceived to be bound up with the immortal, for it prompts a search for a precedent, which in turn prompts a search for a still earlier precedent, and the mind keeps tripping backward until it at last reaches something that has no precedent, which may very well be the immortal.”¹¹⁸³

Scarry suggests theologians wrap beauty up with truth because truth “abides in the immortal sphere.”¹¹⁸⁴ If we revisit our analysis of the *numinous* and Lewis's encounter with George MacDonald's writing, we find Lewis experienced something similar to Scarry's encounter with the palm tree. Lewis's experience, however, was not with natural phenomenon, but with an *objet d'art*. As we discovered earlier, Lewis felt as if a light—we might say a kind of *numinous* brilliance—emanated through the pages and illumined everything in his real world. The pre-conversion Lewis *knew* something was different about the author and about the story he was reading, but he could not articulate it. Lewis, like Scarry, admits to experiencing a certain quality about the beautiful. His inability to describe the experience did not detract from his “knowing” of it. He experienced the *numinous* through the imaginative literary beauty of MacDonald's storytelling and knew, without fully understanding, that the beauty of the literature

¹¹⁸³ Ibid., 30

¹¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 31

contained a value beyond its material surface.¹¹⁸⁵ In his essay “De Futilitate,” Lewis suggests such a value to beauty when he states that just as we must logically grant moral standards to a standard giver, we must also do the same for beauty. “There is no reason,” writes Lewis, “why our reaction to a beautiful landscape should not be the response, however humanly blurred and partial, to a something that is really there.”¹¹⁸⁶ For Lewis, beauty apprehended with the eye and further perceived with the imagination should naturally point us toward a beauty giver. Scarry and Lewis agree in that all human beings sense a feeling of wonderment, which makes us ponder the infinite—the supernatural.

Beauty Demands Excellence in Christian Poetic Witness

Finally, beauty demands that just as it incites wonder and inquiry beyond itself, so too must the Christian show efficacy and excellence in the way he or she seeks to utilize the beautiful. In examining the *numinous* in chapter eight, we discovered that although the *numinous* properly understood acts as a religious experience, or sense, that imbues the beautiful object—whether that be a novel or Icelandic landscape—with qualities of fascination, terror, majesty, and veneration, it also characterizes an individual who possesses a bridge-building role. I have labeled this role *Bifrost*. The *Bifrost* acts a bridge-builder between the material

¹¹⁸⁵ Seen in this light, language, in the form of literature, may also be recognized as a *Bifrost*; a bridge-building device between the material world and *ganz andere*. This notion would further support the notion of a “language of beauty” used by Lewis, especially a language steeped in Northernness imagery from pagan myth. Such a language wields a transposing power, able to carry readers from the world of material reality into an imaginative secondary world.

¹¹⁸⁶ C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *The Seeing Eye*, 96. In this essay Lewis makes the case for “something” behind the symbol; in this case, beauty. His argument posits that we must, by the very agency used in making this argument, grant logic to our reality; as reality demands order and logic so too does beauty demand a beauty giver.

world and the world beyond, into the divine. This is how we can view Lewis's great character Aslan as *Bifrost*. He not only provides a portal into the world of Emperor of Narnia, but he acts as ambassador of the Emperor's values. Likewise, I believe one of the most powerful *apologias* of the Christian faith to be poetic witness—the beautiful life of the Christian as *Bifrost*. Lewis enjoyed using the image of the pagan “Corn King” as a symbol for Christ as *the* Corn King; the God who died and rose, not at every harvest, but for all time. In order for Christ to be the final Corn King, however, he had to dwell among humankind. He routinely exhorted his followers to be unified as he and the father are unified (John 17:21), and to love one another as Christ himself showed love: through the beauty of *numinous* sacrifice (1 John 3:16).

Fin

In his essay “Is Theism Important,” Lewis asserts a strong case for a Christian faith that reaches past “a settled intellectual assent” and into a “trust, or confidence, in the God whose existence is thus assented to.”¹¹⁸⁷ Lewis believed true Christian belief was procured not through “philosophical arguments for the existence of God”¹¹⁸⁸ but rather through deep religious experience. Lewis invites readers into his own thought-shaping in his spiritual memoir *Surprised by Joy* as he details his aesthetic experiences with the currant bush, the works of Beatrix Potter, and the miniature toy garden built by his brother, Warren. Aesthetic experience, for Lewis, works like a portal into knowing the morally good. He

¹¹⁸⁷ Lewis and Walmsley, *C.S. Lewis*, 54.

¹¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

evidenced this in his imaginative approach to creating a Christian *apologia*. Lewis produced much more than mere rhetorical didactics or theological treatises designed to persuade readers of the value of Christian belief. Indeed, Lewis invited his readers into his own experience. Works like *The Pilgrim's Regress*, "The Weight of Glory," *The Great Divorce*, *Perelandra*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* serve as invitations to readers to join Lewis's own pilgrimage to the source of the beautiful. In the introduction I suggested we view Lewis as I believed he viewed himself, as an Odin-like wanderer, a *viator*, a hunter for the beautiful. Lewis as *viator* strengthens my suggestion to view his work as invitation. He is, in essence, inviting readers along on the journey to discover where all the beauty came from. Approaching Lewis's work as invitation rather than proselytization provides a fresh and unique perspective for both the casual reader of Lewis and the scholar.

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