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GOD IS LOVE BUT LOVE IS NOT GOD

Studies on C. S. Lewis's Theology of Love

Jason Lepojärvi

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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“Love? Do you know what it means?”

—C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) was one of the most influential Christian thinkers of the twentieth century with continuing relevance into the twenty-first. Despite growing academic interest in Lewis, many fields of inquiry remain largely unmapped in Lewis scholarship today. This compilation dissertation, consisting of an introductory overview together with four stand-alone but connected essays, extends critical understanding of Lewis's contribution to the theology of love.

In three of the four essays, Lewis's theology of love is compared to and contrasted with that of Anders Nygren (1890–1978); and in one, that of Augustine of Hippo. Using systematic textual analysis, the essays evaluate Lewis's key concepts, argumentation, and presuppositions.

Nygren, the Swedish Lutheran theologian and bishop of Lund, has virtually dominated modern theological discussion of love. His antithesis between selfless and gratuitous "Christian love" and self-seeking and needful "Pagan love", or *agape* and *eros* respectively, became enormously influential in twentieth century theology. Lewis was initially shaken up by Nygren's work, and it took him decades to formulate his own model, above all in *Surprised by Joy* (1955) and *The Four Loves* (1960).

It is shown that Lewis constructed not only his theology of love, but also his theology of spiritual desire as a form of love, in conscious opposition to Nygren. Lewis's theology of love challenges the denigration of eros and its separation from agape. Nygren's predestinarianism is also rejected. Lewis devises his own vocabulary, avoids the use of *eros* and *agape* in Nygren's sense, and hardly ever mentions Nygren by name. All this suggests a deliberate apologetic strategy to bypass certain defences of his readers and to avoid Nygren-dependency.

Despite their incommensurate love-taxonomies, Lewis's need-love/gift-love and Nygren's eros/agape have often been treated as parallels. This longstanding assumption is shown to be in need of greater nuance. The study demonstrates that Lewis's concept of spiritual longing, which he calls Joy, is relevant to the "Nygren debate" and serves as a potent variant for Nygren's eros. However, no one thing in Lewis's mental repertoire can serve as a perfect translation of Nygren's eros, because for Lewis it is an abstract caricature cut off from real life. In Lewis's theological vision, contra Nygren, spiritual longing, far from obfuscating the Gospel, is a God-given desire that prepares the way for it.

Lewis is not free from the occasional hyperbole or blind spot. For instance, his argument that romantic love is not eudaimonistic is shown to be somewhat convoluted, and his famous disagreement with Augustine is possibly based on a misunderstanding.

A perennial feature in Lewis's understanding of love, reflected in all four essays, is the ambiguity of love. Love is not something pejorative, but neither is it an infallible moral compass. God is love, but love is not God.

(Abstract in Finnish)

C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) oli 1900-luvun vaikutusvaltaisimpia kristillisiä ajattelijoita. Tänäkin päivänä hän on ajankohtainen ja laajalti luettu kirjailija. Kasvavasta akateemisesta kiinnostuksesta huolimatta Lewis-tutkimuksella on vielä paljon kartoitettavaa. Tämä artikkeliväitöskirja valottaa Lewisin näkemyksiä rakkauden teologiasta. Tutkimus koostuu johdannosta sekä neljästä itsenäisestä, mutta toisiaan täydentävästä artikkelista.

Kolme artikkeleista käsittelee Lewisin rakkauden teologiaa suhteessa Anders Nygrenin (1890–1978) näkemyksiin. Neljännessä artikkelissa Lewisin rakkauden teologiaa verrataan Augustinuksen ajatteluun. Väitöskirjan tutkimusmetodina on käytetty systemaattista analyysia. Metodin avulla Lewisin kirjallisesta tuotannosta on analysoitu aiheen kannalta keskeisiä käsitteitä, argumentteja ja ajattelun taustaoletuksia.

Anders Nygren, ruotsalainen luterilainen teologi ja Lundin piispa, on hallinnut rakkautta käsittelevää modernia teologista keskustelua. Nygren asetti vastakkain epäitsekkään ja vastikkeettoman “kristillisen rakkauden” (*agape*) ja omaa etuaan etsivän ja puutteellisen “pakanallisen rakkauden” (*eros*). Tämä erottelu osoittautui 1900-luvun teologiassa hyvin vaikutusvaltaiseksi. Myös Lewisiin Nygrenin työ vaikutti välittömästi. Lewis käytti vuosikymmeniä oman vastineensa muotoiluun, ja hän käsittelee aihetta erityisesti teoksissaan *Surprised by Joy* (1955, suom. *Ilon yllättämä*) ja *The Four Loves* (1960, suom. *Neljä rakkautta*).

Tämä väitöstutkimus osoittaa, että Lewis muotoili tietoisesti rakkauden teologiansa ja siihen sisältyvän hengellisen halun teologiansa vastustamaan Nygrenin näkemystä. Lewisin rakkauden teologia haastaa Nygrenin keskeisimmän väitteen. Lewisin mielestä eros-rakkautta ei ole syytä mustamaalata ja erottaa agape-rakkaudesta. Lewis laati aiheen käsittelylle oman sanaston ja vältti käyttämästä käsitteitä *eros* ja *agape* Nygrenin tarkoittamassa mielessä. Juuri koskaan Lewis ei kuitenkaan mainitse Nygreniä nimeltä. Tämä kaikki viittaa tarkoituksenmukaiseen apologeettiseen strategiaan. Yhtäältä Lewis pyrki kiertämään lukijoidensa mahdolliset ennakkoasenteet, toisaalta välttämään teologiansa määrittymisen Nygrenin kautta.

Lewisin rakkaussanasto on rikasta. Hän puhuu esimerkiksi ”tarverakkaudesta” ja ”lahjarakkaudesta”. Vaikka Lewisin ja Nygrenin sanastot ovat yhteismitattomia, on Lewisin tarverakkaus/lahjarakkaus-luokittelu ja Nygrenin eros/agape-erottelu usein rinnastettu toisiinsa. Tämä sitkeä taipumus on syytä kyseenalaistaa. Tässä väitöskirjassa osoitetaan, että ”Nygren debatin” kannalta Lewisin näkemys hengellisestä kaipauksesta on erityisen merkityksellinen. Lewis nimittää hengellistä kaipausta iloksi (*Joy*). Se on muunnelma Nygrenin eroksesta. Ilon keskeisyydestä huolimatta Lewisin käsitekirjosta on vaikea nostaa esille vain yhtä vastinetta erokselle. Lewisille nygreniläinen eros-rakkaus on lopultakin vain abstrakti, todellisesta elämästä eristetty karikatyyri. Toisin kuin Nygrenillä, Lewisin teologisessa visiossa hengellinen kaipaus ei ole epäilyttävä asia. Hengellinen kaipaus on Jumalan lahjoittama halu, eikä se siten hämärrä evankeliumia. Pikemminkin kaipaus valmistaa ihmistä ilosanoman vastaanottamiseen.

Lewisin ajattelusta paljastuu myös kuolleita kulmia ja ajoittaista liioit-

telua. Esimerkiksi näkemys, jonka mukaan romanttinen rakkaus ei ole eudaimonistista, osoittautuu jokseenkin sekavaksi. On myös täysin mahdollista, että Lewisin kuuluisa erimielisyys Augustinuksen kanssa perustuu väärinymmärrykseen.

Kaikki neljä artikkelia tuovat analyyttisen katseen alle Lewisin rakkauskäsityksen keskeisen piirteen: rakkauden monimerkityksisyyden. Rakkautta ei tule halventaa, mutta se ei myöskään ole erehtymätön moraalikompassi. Jumala on rakkaus, mutta rakkaus ei ole Jumala.

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This is the best part about serious academic study: discharging at least some of the debt you owe to colleagues, friends, and family. I say *some* because what follows really is only a portion of the debt and a portion of those to whom I am indebted.

I begin with my alma mater, the University of Helsinki. Antti Raunio, who has since moved east, supervised my Master's thesis on the theology of the body by John Paul II. Later, as one of my two doctoral supervisors, he helped me see the potential of broadening my focus from bodily and erotic love to love itself. Miikka Ruokanen provided a dogmatic sparring partner, in the best sense of the words. Many colleagues I have the special honour of calling friends. I am grateful to Aku Visala for philosophical road trips and to Emil Anton for theological ones. Rope Kojonen and Gao Yuan are only two of several fellow doctoral students whose peer support I continue to value.

Three professors deserve to be singled out. Olli-Pekka Vainio, my second doctoral supervisor, has helped me in innumerable ways. He was the first, for instance, to encourage me to apply to Oxford and to guide me through the first steps of academic publishing. The other two professors ought to be called "unofficial supervisors" for all the time, resources, and faith they invested in me. Risto Saarinen is an academic exemplar and mentor for many young scholars, not only me. Michael "write your thesis!" Ward has been an invaluable source of "encouragement". When I think of these three men, I think of the words of C. S. Lewis: "the ripest are kindest to the raw and the most studious have most time to spare" (*Surprised by Joy*, 204).

Living in England turned out to be an education in itself. It also gave me an opportunity to make new colleagues and friends. Being the C. S. Lewis capital of the world, many, but not all, of them are Inklings scholars: Judith Wolfe served as my academic advisor, Walter Hooper took me under his affectionate wing, David Baird offered wisdom and friendship, Ryan Pemberton encouraged me to run for President of the C. S. Lewis Society, Alister McGrath was always available – which for such a prolific author is a miracle. Werner Jeanrond, one of the leading experts on the theology of love and yet another unofficial supervisor, has given me a new academic home. St Benet's Hall is a marvellous interdisciplinary institution. I am honoured to belong to its ranks of fellows, tutors, and students, and not only because our Boat Club has offered a much-appreciated waterbalance to time spent indoors.

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Doctoral work, as anyone who has seriously tried it will tell you, is nearly impossible without grants and stipends, and barely possible with them. I have been lucky enough to receive generous support from the Emil Aaltonen Foundation and the Eino Jutikkala Fund. International mobility grants from the Finnish Graduate School of Theology, the Chancellor's Office, and our research group Religion and Society (RELSOC) allowed me to collaborate with and befriend scholars around the world. Winning the Karl Schlecht Award boosted my morale, and I would like to thank Michael Welker, Heike Springhart, and Alexander Maßmann for helping me spend it in Heidelberg.

My family – which over the years has grown in providential ways – has been the bedrock sustaining me in all my fumbling and occasional accomplishment. My Heavenly Father blessed me with a mother and father, Lori and Markku Lepojärvi, who encouraged me to seek wisdom and to invest in relationships: intimacy over intellect. This dissertation was launched in a delightfully cool house in warm Dar es Salaam and completed, some years later, in a delightfully warm house in cool Porvoo. That is, my brother Daniel Lepojärvi and his wife Sirkku helped me begin, and my in-laws Seppo and Kaisuliina Ahonen helped me finish.

My wife, Iisa, the wisest of my unofficial teachers, has been an indispensable source of strength. She has insight from experience I only read about and knowledge of disciplines I only dabble in. While I may have surprised her once at the end of a lecture on love, she surprises me daily with her practical love. Thank you, my dear. Our baby daughter was born three weeks early, two days before we were to board a train from Heidelberg to London. When you grow older, Evelyn, I will tell you all about your agapic arrival, about the five countries you visited before your two-week birthday, and about how now, nine months later, you sat in my lap as I wrote these final words of gratitude. It feels more than fitting to dedicate this work to you both.

Oxford, 20th June 2015
Jason Lepojärvi

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 C. S. Lewis Scholarship: Past Neglect and Present Concerns

"[I]t is only a matter of time before courses on 'The Theology of C. S. Lewis' make their appearance in leading seminaries and universities", Alister McGrath ventures to guess in his recent book on Lewis, which ends with the confession: "Indeed, I am tempted to develop one such course myself."[1] The temptation that has overtaken McGrath is common to many (I myself succumbed to it some years ago), and the prognosis he offers is significant for two reasons. It points both forwards and backwards. As an indicator of academia's *growing interest* in Lewis, it also bespeaks *past neglect* of him.

Why has academic theology, especially in Europe, often ignored Lewis in the past? Reasons are, of course, many and complex. C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) was a disputed figure already during his lifetime. At opposite ends of the spectrum are a suspicion of Lewis and a suspicion of his critics. The following diagnosis offered by J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973), himself a fellow Oxonian, defends Lewis against a certain kind of critic:

> In Oxford, you are forgiven for writing only two kinds of books. You may write books on your own subject whatever that is, literature, or science, or history. And you may write detective stories because all dons at some time get the flu, and they have to have something to read in bed. But what you are *not* forgiven is writing popular works, such as Jack did on theology, and *especially* if they win international success as his did.[2]

Another friend (only friends called Lewis "Jack") remembers that when Lewis was nominated for Professor of Poetry, two dons casually remarked: "'Shall we go and cast our votes against C. S. Lewis?' Not, that is, *for* the

[1] McGrath 2014, 178–179.
[2] Quoted in Michell 1998, 7. The Oxford philosopher J. R. Lucas concurs in his Riddell Lecture: "If he [Lewis] could be understood by Leading Aircraftsmen and ordinary citizens doing their firewatching roster, he could not be profound enough to engage the attention of people clever enough to be at Oxford" (Lucas 1992).

other chap."[3] The philosopher Victor Reppert, who in his doctoral thesis developed Lewis's argument against naturalism, recalls how his examiners "told me I had written a good paper on reasons and causes, but the main problem with it was that I had chosen a 'patsy' (Lewis) to devote my energies to. [Lewis] was … not worthy of serious discussion."[4]

With this, we slide towards another set of answers. The real issue, according to McGrath, "is not Lewis's popularity and literary winsomeness" – although McGrath too believes "these doubtless come into the picture". Rather, it is "a suspicion that Lewis offers simplistic answers to complex questions, and fails to engage with recent theological writers in his discussions".[5] McGrath believes that both are fair concerns. Obviously the latter concern has more to do with the complicated question of whether or in what sense Lewis should be called "a theologian", and less with whether he is a worthy topic for serious theological discussion. Lewis did "not clutter his 'popular' writing with footnotes and name-dropping", as Caroline Simon has put it.[6] While most ordinary readers and some academics consider this tendency meritorious, it has probably contributed to the impression (which McGrath states as fact) that "by failing to engage with more recent theological analyses, Lewis in effect disconnected himself from contemporary theological debate".[7]

Academia's neglect of Lewis is now largely in the past. Professional theologians, even in Europe, are increasingly engaging with Lewis. "Fifty years after Lewis's death, he has *become* a theologian – not because Lewis himself has changed, but because attitudes toward him are shifting."[8] Despite standing outside the professional guild, Lewis has been a catalyst for many budding theologians advancing on to a serious study of the discipline. Academic interest in Lewis is growing, whether spontaneously or reluctantly

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[3] Vanauken 1980, 109. When Vanauken met Lewis in person for the first time, Lewis "suggested that it would be best not to talk of Christian matters in hall or common room. That was my first intimation that some of the other Fellows at Magdalen [College], as well as other dons in the university, were not altogether cheerful about his Christian vocation" (109).
[4] Reppert 2003, 11–15, here 15.
[5] McGrath 2014, 165.
[6] Simon 2010, 152. The irony of this footnote cannot go unnoticed.
[7] McGrath 2014, 165.
[8] McGrath 2014, 178.

in order to meet a demand. The guild is realizing that it cannot afford to disregard him, as the editors of *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* (itself a recent robust work on Lewis) have warned: "For good or ill, literally millions of people have had their understanding of Christianity decisively shaped by his writings… for good or ill, he is too important to be ignored."[9]

Professional theologians may have overlooked his significance of Lewis, but the loyalty of his ordinary readers has been more or less unflinching. Survey after survey[10] has proved Lewis's own prediction – that his books would sink into posthumous oblivion[11] – spectacularly wrong. This has recently prompted *Washington Post* reporter Michael Dirda to announce: "Lewis was clearly no prophet."[12] MacSwain calls Lewis "almost certainly the most influential religious author of the twentieth century, in English or in any other language".[13] McGrath refers to Lewis as "one of the most influential Christian writers of the twentieth century, with continuing relevance into the twenty first".[14] What is more, Lewis's popularity uniquely transcends denominational borders. Roman Catholic readers figure in the millions,[15] and speaking for many Eastern Orthodox readers, Bishop Kallistos Ware has repeatedly branded Lewis an "anonymous Orthodox" (or hijacked him as such, not unjustifiably).[16] Put simply, Lewis is inter-denominationally loved by the Christian masses.

Popular piety, however, is not always self-corrective. Sometimes it can be self-justifying. Lewis feared that in the lives of some Christians, especially Roman Catholics, Mary might loom unhealthily large.[17] Little could he have guessed that fifty years after his death, in the lives of some Christians Lewis *himself* might loom unhealthily large. His biographer A. N. Wilson has

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[9] MacSwain and Ward 2010, 1–4, here 3. The most recent modern theological anthology (Kristiansen and Rise 2013) is possibly the first of its kind to include a chapter on Lewis.
[10] See MacSwain and Ward 2010, 1 n. 2, and McGrath 2014, 176.
[11] Lewis 2006, 150. See also Hooper 1998b, 41.
[12] Dirda 2013.
[13] MacSwain and Ward 2010, 3.
[14] McGrath 2014, 176.
[15] For a compilation of prominent Catholic readers of Lewis, see Pearce 2013. Sheldon Vanauken (1985, 217–218), another Catholic convert, has called Lewis the "New Moses" who through his crypto-Catholic writings has led many to the promised land of the Catholic Church without entering it himself.
[16] Ware 2011 and Ware 1998, esp. 68–69.
[17] See Lewis 2004, 645–647, and Lewis 2006, 209–210. For a critical take on Lewis's objection to Marian devotion see Lepojärvi 2014a, 12–14.

spoken of "Lewis idolatry",[18] and his atheist critic John Beversluis worries about "the escalating hero-worship of Lewis (especially in America)". Many books, Beversluis chides, "venerate Lewis to the point of transforming him into a cult figure".[19] These men hardly mean their accusations of idolatry literally; instead they want to poke holes into the uncritical loyalty of readers who consider the luminary Lewis not only inspirational but infallible.

A related problem is what MacSwain has coined "*Jacksploitation*", a pun on Lewis's nickname and the word *exploitation*. Lewis scholars, MacSwain laments, must sift through the mountain of books on Lewis that have little or no scholarly value but simply seek to "cash in" on his popularity.[20] There is so much money involved that to smuggle the name "C. S. Lewis" into the cover of one's book generally guarantees moderate success. Hence all books with the words *Mere*, *Surprised*, or *Narnia* in the title are suspect until proven innocent.[21] MacSwain insists that the concern over Jacksploitation is "not mere academic snobbery", because it is a real problem that "inhibits objective appreciation of his legacy".[22] It impinges on our responsibility to form learned opinions of his thought and to assess their value.

What is the solution to this double-predicament? By its past neglect of Lewis, I would argue, academic theology is itself partly responsible for both the *idolization* and *exploitation* of Lewis. Cures are generally found in causes. The solution to the idolization and exploitation of any author is a double-solution. First, one must *return to the originals*: read closely what Lewis says, not only what other people say he says.[23] This was Lewis's own prescription.[24] Second, we need *critical scholarship* on Lewis. By critical I do

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[18] Wilson 1990, xvi.
[19] Beversluis 2007, 18.
[20] MacSwain and Ward 2010, 3 n. 7.
[21] Of course many *are* proven innocent. For example, see my review (Lepojärvi 2012c) of Will Vaus's *Mere Theology: A Guide to the Thought of C. S. Lewis* (2004).
[22] MacSwain and Ward, 2010, 3 n. 7.
[23] Many ideas and quotations are falsely attributed to Lewis, most famously and regrettably: "You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body." Such invented quotations or misattributions circulate the social media and are often as popular as any correct ones, if not more popular. For an examination of the most persistent misattributions and their likely origins, see O'Flaherty 2014. See also Root 2014.
[24] See his essay "On the Reading of Old Books" in Lewis 2000, 438–443. The final chapter of *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961) has some animadversions on evaluative criticism and the

not mean 'fault-finding' but using one's judgement. It may be that using one's judgement may lead to the uncovering of faults, but it is also possible that Lewis "might have something to teach academic theologians about their own subject".[25] MacSwain is surely right in insisting that "[i]f only because he is so influential, scholars and students need to be familiar with the specific content of his many books in order to know (and if necessary counter or correct) his impact on the masses".[26]

This is precisely what the present study seeks to do. As a partial antidote to "Jacksploitation", this doctoral dissertation is a humble contribution to Lewis scholarship in the field of the theology of love.

1.2 Theology of Love after Anders Nygren

The author whose work has virtually dominated twentieth-century theological discussions of love is the Swedish theologian Anders Nygren (1890–1978). Nygren's magnum opus *Agape and Eros* (1932–1936) has had "an almost incalculable influence, although it itself may well spring from an idea that has always been present in Christendom".[27]

This idea is the antithesis between a good "Christian love" (selfless and gratuitous) and a bad "Pagan love" (self-seeking and needful) – or *agape* and *eros*, as Nygren called them. The history of Christian theology has been an intense struggle between the two, with significant losses (above all, Augustine's failure to purge Christian love from erotic impurities) and one short-lived victory (the Reformation, during which Augustine's *caritas*, the botched synthesis of agape and eros, "Luther smashed to pieces").

Critical responses to this model – or story – are in no short supply. At the heart of most criticisms is that Nygren's construal, both historical and theological, is a caricature. Some of these responses will be discussed in the four essays themselves, which make up the main body of this dissertation.

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importance of returning "ad fontes".
[25] MacSwain and Ward, 2010, 4.
[26] MacSwain and Ward, 2010, 4.
[27] Pieper 1997, 210.

For the purposes of this introductory overview, we must mention the *astounding longevity of Nygren's dichotomy*, especially as an object of unbroken assaults. Critics seem to have a love–hate relationship with Nygren. Even in their attacks, they often operate under the conditions imposed by him, and in formulating revisionist models find it difficult to break loose from the bounds of his taxonomy. As Risto Saarinen has poignantly observed, "Nygren's model stubbornly refuses to die".[28] Risking an academic cliché, we could label much of twentieth- and twenty-first-century theology of love as a footnote to Nygren.

This is not so much an accusation as a description. Much of the criticism against Nygren's model has been justified, but the continual attention it has enjoyed has not been unjustified. Nicholas Wolterstorff, himself hardly a doting disciple, pays tribute to Nygren's intellectual virtues even when mixed with academic vices: "It is fashionable today to be dismissive of Nygren: his theology is unacceptable, his exegesis untenable, his intellectual history questionable, and so forth. All true; nonetheless, both the systematic power of his thought and the range of his influence make him worthy of attention."[29] Gene Outka admits that Nygren's "critics have been legion, but few have ignored or been unaffected by his thesis".[30] Werner Jeanrond draws attention to how Nygren's dogmatic approach continues "to live in the respective collective subconscious of many scholars".[31]

The Nygren debate, as it has been called, is still very much alive today. Nygren's theology of love "continues to be discussed and disputed today, in works ranging from doctoral theses to papal encyclicals".[32] Pope Benedict XVI's *Deus Caritas Est* (2005) is an example of the latter; and the present study, of the former.

Many will find it surprising to learn of the connection between Lewis and Nygren. Recall what McGrath had said about Lewis "disconnecting" himself from modern theological debates. Lewis may have failed to engage

[28] Saarinen 2012, 131.
[29] Wolterstorff 2008, 98.
[30] Outka 1972, 1.
[31] Jeanrond 2010, 28. For helpful bibliographies of both older classics and modern treatments on love, whether theological, philosophical, ethical, or exegetical, see Jeanrond 2010, 7–8 (esp. notes 16–20).
[32] Wolfe 2010, 1.

with many recent theological works, but *Agape and Eros* is not one of them. Not only did he read Nygren, he read him attentively: "I wonder if he [Nygren] is not trying to force on the conception of love an antithesis which it is the precise nature of love, in all its forms, to overcome… However, I must tackle him again. He has shaken me up extremely."[33]

Lewis was immediately conscious of the *complexity* of Nygren's thesis. For instance, he at once noticed that the contrast between "self-seeking eros" and "selfless agape" was not the *only* contrast drawn. There were others. Theologically the most important was perhaps the contrast between a "wholly active God" and a "wholly passive man". Lewis quickly homed in on Nygren's predestinarianism.

What is perhaps even more surprising, in light of Lewis's familiarity with Nygren's model, is that in formulating his own theological vision of love much later, above all in *Surprised by Joy* (1955) and *The Four Loves* (1960), Lewis almost *avoids* the problem of "Nygren-dependency". First of all, he rarely mentions Nygren by name. Excluding his private letters, Nygren is noted three times in all of Lewis's public writings. Even on those three occasions, Nygren, intriguingly, is not openly criticized. What is more, it seems that only once does Lewis use the words *eros* and *agape* in the Nygrenian sense at all. Rather, he "makes his own terminology, and very useful it is", as one early reviewer of *The Four Loves*, the English theologian V. A. Demant, noticed.[34] Lewis's taxonomy of love is arguably more nuanced than Nygren's.

Whether or not all this was part of a deliberate apologetic strategy (and I find it difficult to believe that it was not), it has in effect helped Lewis largely to avoid one of the *pitfalls of polemics*: that of remaining, in a sense, dependent on one's adversary. In refusing to tackle Nygren head-on in his popular writings Lewis bypasses certain defences of his readers: as a result, only a few will ever have heard of Nygren's book, but all of them will potentially be inoculated against its theses.

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[33] Lewis 2004, 153–154.

[34] Demant 1960, 207, and continues: "Especially could it help those who found themselves lost in the more ponderous treatments of love by Nygren, de Rougemont and Father D'Arcy." V. A. Demant (1893–1983) was at the time the Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford (1949–1971).

In this study, I have singled out some of these theses for closer inspection. This study is a compilation dissertation consisting of an introductory overview (Chapters 1–5) together with four stand-alone yet connected essays (Chapter 6). In what follows, I will outline the general aim of the study, briefly introduce the essay-specific objectives, and discuss some of the central methodological and source-critical decisions underpinning them all.

2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Outline of Objectives

The general aim of this dissertation is to help extend critical and appreciative understanding of C. S. Lewis's theology of love. In three of the four essays, Lewis's theology of love is compared to and contrasted with that of Nygren; and in one, that of Augustine. In the three Nygren-specific essays references to Augustine abound. As noted above, Augustine figures prominently (albeit ingloriously) in the story Nygren sought to tell, and in the theological misadventures he wanted to expose and correct. Augustine is at the crossroads of the Nygren debate.

The first essay, entitled *"C. S. Lewis and 'the Nygren Debate'"*, is a pioneering study that opens the discussion and lays the foundation for the subsequent essays. Its purpose is to establish the basic parameters of the debate, and to establish Lewis's approximate position in it. Lewis's broader theological foundations, ethics, anthropology, hamartiology, and nuanced view of the relationship between nature and grace go a long way in explaining the major points of contention. Not all of these points are meticulously analysed: the essay is a general survey. It leaves many questions unresolved and opens up new ones. Of these questions, three central topics are passed on for closer scrutiny in the remaining three essays. These are love's relation to *happiness*, *vulnerability*, and *spiritual longing*.

As for the objective of the second essay, its title is almost self-explanatory: *"Does Eros Seek Happiness? A Critical Analysis of C. S. Lewis's Reply to Anders Nygren"*. Nygren advanced the charge that human love is always eudaimonistic. It always aimed at the *happiness* of the lover and, as such, was morally bankrupt. In *The Four Loves* Lewis animatedly denies this. Romantic lovers, he claims, actually prefer unhappiness with the beloved to happiness without them. Saarinen believes that Lewis's use of the word 'happiness' is so close to Nygren's 'eudaimonia' that "the showdown must be

conscious".[35] In this essay I follow up on Saarinen's sleuthing. After presenting and deconstructing Lewis's argument, however, I challenge it. Despite his protestations, Lewis is compelled to refine, even if not totally discard, his "reply" to Nygren.

Thomas Aquinas has spoken of how "out of love comes both joy and sadness".[36] The third essay examines the latter association, that between love and *vulnerability*. *"A Friend's Death: C. S. Lewis's Disagreement with St. Augustine"* – the first part of this title is an allusion to the sorrowful story of the loss of Augustine's unnamed friend, recounted in the fourth book of the *Confessions*. The second part alludes to Lewis's hesitant but public rejection of what he took as the moral of the story: that vulnerability is a sign of misplaced love. This is the *only* time Lewis publicly disagrees with Augustine (whom he calls "a great saint and a great thinker to whom my own glad debts are incalculable"[37]) on an important issue concerning love, providing the second compelling reason to incorporate Augustine into this study. Taking the cue from Eric Gregory who has noticed that "Lewis mistakenly refers to Augustine's unnamed friend as 'Nebridius'",[38] this essay critically examines Lewis's objection. Lewis's poem "Scazons" (1933) serves as a literary backcloth for the more systematic analysis, helping, for instance, to highlight another concern (in connection to vulnerability) in Lewis's response that easily goes unnoticed: the disputed legitimacy of *local loves* in light of the call to "love all in God". Are particular loves and universal love compatible?

The final essay on love and *spiritual longing* is perhaps the most ambitious of the four in terms of subject, analysis, and thesis. Entitled *"Praeparatio Evangelica – or Daemonica? C. S. Lewis and Anders Nygren on Sehnsucht"*, it has two objectives. First, while many commentators have found a parallel between Nygren's eros/agape distinction and Lewis's need-love/gift-love distinction, this essay finds this parallel to be in need of greater nuance. Second, if need-love does not exhaustively capture and positively incorporate the multi-dimensionality of Nygren's eros, what other concepts

[35] Saarinen 2006, 172 n. 15.
[36] *Summa Theologia*, II–II, 28, 1.
[37] Lewis 1960a, 137.
[38] Gregory 2008, 280 n. 73.

in Lewis's taxonomy of love catch the leftovers? When we drop Nygren's eros into Lewis's theology of love and look carefully, where does it land? This essay argues that it lands not far from Lewis's understanding of spiritual longing. The eros Nygren distrusted and the *Sehnsucht* that ultimately enticed Lewis to conversion surprisingly have much in common.

A perennial feature in Lewis's understanding of love, reflected in all four essays, is the *ambiguity of love*. Human love is a double-edged sword. It has been said of *The Four Loves* that it "is a philosophical proof of the inadequacy of the natural loves to bring us near to God".[39] This is put rather negatively, as Lewis argues equally and forcibly for the dignity of natural loves. A central principle in his thinking is "the highest does not stand without the lowest", an idea from *The Imitation of Christ* on which Lewis operates throughout *The Four Loves*.[40] In fact, it is "dangerous to press upon a man the duty of getting beyond the earthly love when his real difficulty lies in getting so far".[41] No matter what Nygren believed, human love is not something pejorative.

But neither is it an infallible moral compass. *The Four Loves* illustrates how all earthly love relations, whether affection or friendship or eros, when detached from the allegiance of agape, may cajole the lover to sin. God is love, but love is not God. Human loves lack absolute trustworthiness as moral guides. The apostle John's maxim "God is love" is, in Lewis's mind, complemented or counter-balanced by Denis de Rougemont's maxim "love ceases to be a demon only when he ceases to be a god"[42] – which Lewis rephrases as, love "begins to be a demon the moment he begins to be a god".[43] Love is not a demon, but it can become one. Many of Lewis's other works, too, from his early study *The Allegory of Love* (1936) to his last essay "We Have No 'Right to Happiness'" (1963), discuss the mechanics of a breed

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[39] Malanga 2007, 80.
[40] Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (II, 10).
[41] Lewis 1960a, 135.
[42] This is Lewis's own rendering of the original French ("*Dés qu'il cesse d'être un dieu, il cesse d'être un démon*"). The authorized English translation is: "*In ceasing to be a god, he ceases to be a demon*" (De Rougemont 1983, 312). See the discussion of de Rougemont below in Chapter 3.2.3.
[43] Lewis 1960a, 15.

of love that has turned into "a sort of religion".[44]

2.2 Method and Interpretation

The primary method used in the four essays to uncover and examine the mechanics of love in Lewis's thought has been systematic textual analysis. The primary sources (*texts*) or sections thereof are chosen for a close reading involving three-fold analysis. The three stages, often overlapping and elastic, are *concept analysis* (identifying and defining key concepts), *argumentation analysis* (identifying claims and scanning coherence of argumentation), and *presupposition analysis* (identifying overt presuppositions and unearthing covert ones).

Key concepts relevant to our study are examined over the course of the essays: Lewis's need-love, gift-love, appreciative love, happiness, unhappiness, eros (distinct from Nygren's eros), agape/charity, and Joy or *Sehnsucht* "which is [simply] German for longing, yearning",[45] but is in Lewis never without transcendental implication. Nygren-specific concepts include eros, agape, and eudaimonia (happiness). No attempt has been made to *count* the number of appearances of any of these concepts. Even if possible, in this study such painstaking enumerations would have been unnecessary and even counter-productive.[46]

As an author, Lewis is exceptionally forthcoming in expressing his views in accessible language, making his texts singularly suited for argumentation analysis. His nonfiction especially is replete in argumentation. In disclosing his own presuppositions, Lewis is admirably direct; even so, deeper undercurrents can occasionally be detected, such as varying degrees of "happiness" which Lewis fails to explicate and may even be oblivious to. Theological and anthropological presuppositions explain much of his train of thought and where it forms parallels with, or forks from, that of

[44] Lewis 1960a, 127.
[45] Barfield 2011, 133.
[46] For discussion of the relative advantages and disadvantages between qualitative and quantitative approaches in Lewis scholarship, see Ward 2012.

his interlocutors.

Hypotheses have not played an important role in this study. Questions are asked, but answers are worked towards without much preceding conjecture. In conducting research for the individual essays, I have entertained very few hypotheses, and stated even fewer in writing the essays. An example of an articulated hypothesis is that Joy may be a suitable variant of Nygren's eros. This is suggested in the first essay, strengthened in the second, and finally tested and (partially) confirmed in the last. An example of an unarticulated hypothesis is that Lewis's eros *truly* does not aim at happiness. For a long time I simply took Lewis at his word; however, closer inspection led me to doubt the purported disconnection between the two.

In assessing the sources, I have been ever conscious of the need to strike a healthy balance between a hermeneutic of charity and a hermeneutic of suspicion, and the difficulties involved in achieving it.

On the one hand, I have attempted to avoid theology's first besetting sin: *premature judgment*. Nygren's frustrating hyperbolism, and what I timidly call his theological tunnel vision, proved somewhat challenging in this respect. Lewis is often more temperate in his judgements – but not without occasional ambiguity. Suspending judgement has not always been easy. I have tried to remain mindful of MacSwain's words about Lewis's potential as a theological instructor. Benefit of the doubt is not always academic naivety.[47]

On the other hand, I have aspired to avoid theology's second besetting sin: *premature panegyrics*. Here I must say that my previous reading and congenial preferences must serve as a dormant bias in favour of Lewis. But as there is no favour in favouritism, I have attempted to avoid undeserved adulation. Exacerbating the problem of "Jacksploitation" was not particularly high on my list of objectives. This all is to say that the spirit and tone of this study has been very much a balancing act.

An exemplar for all Lewis scholars, and perhaps for academics in gen-

[47] Janet Soskice's hypercritical engagement with Lewis on love is occasionally perceptive but not particularly commendable as criticism (2007, 157–180). She repeatedly misunderstands and misrepresents Lewis. Unfortunately Jeanrond, too, critiques Lewis out of context (2010, 206).

eral, must be Owen Barfield (1898–1997). Not many people can claim to have known Lewis's intellectual life better than this lifelong friend, "the wisest and best of my unofficial teachers", as the dedication on *The Allegory of Love* puts it. One cannot but admire Barfield's humility in talking about Lewis. He is upfront especially about the limit of any inside perspective he may have had on Lewis. "After Lewis's conversion", he confesses, "we rarely touched on philosophy or metaphysics and, I think I can say, never did we touch at any length on theology".[48] The discursive intercourse that earlier had defined their friendship had dwindled. "I really know no more of what he thought after his conversion than can be gathered from his published writings."[49] That Barfield would place himself in the same boat (even if not the same cabin) with the rest of Lewis's readers ought to instil in us humility.

It ought not to instil in us despair. Considering the challenges involved – regarding subject matter, objectives, methods, sources, and interpretation – the task of reconstructing and objectively evaluating Lewis's thoughts on love might seem daunting, but it is not insuperable. Barfield believed that "the whole *esse* of Lewis was to be consistent".[50] What Barfield said with characteristic understatement about the task of understanding Lewis on "certain primary matters" applies pre-eminently to our subject, love.

> To understand accurately what Lewis believed about certain primary matters must, I think, be as important for those who admire and follow him, and would like to see his moral influence grow in the longer as well as the shorter run, as for his detractors and adversaries. It is a task which his perfect lucidity as a writer and his transparent honesty and outstanding consistency as a thinker do seem to bring within the bounds of possibility.[51]

Lewis may not have been a systematic theologian, but in his theology of love he was not unsystematic.[52]

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[48] Barfield 2011, 109–128, here at 110.
[49] Barfield 2011, 79.
[50] Barfield 2011, 78.
[51] Barfield 2011, 81–82.
[52] Showing Lewis's consistency is "the whole *esse*" of Feinendegen 2008. For another systematic study of Lewis's theology see Brazier 2012–2014.

2.3 Sources (I): Accounts over Expressions

Most of the essays benefited from *research trips* to the two most pertinent libraries for any study on Lewis: the archives of the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College, Illinois, and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. Gaining access to the archives in Oxford in late 2010 was the single most important material breakthrough, for reasons I discuss later. I was able to return to Oxford as a visiting scholar for the academic year of 2012–2013, during which time I also served as the President of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society.

It would be slightly optimistic to say that Lewis's *personal library* remains intact today. Before the Wade Center acquired the bulk of the collection from Wroxton College in Oxfordshire in 1986, a number of volumes had gone missing.[53] That being said, the Wade Collection boasts a whopping 2,500 volumes (out of an estimated 3,000). In late 2012, I spent a week perusing the catalogues, ordering up promising items, trying (unsuccessfully) to locate one source in particular. The extensive collection of studies on Lewis solidified my growing inkling that the philosophy and theology of love was still largely an unmapped area in Lewis scholarship. Several studies were robust, but few were directly relevant.[54] Any lingering fear that I was reinventing the wheel soon dissipated.[55]

A significant number (between 115–120) of the more coveted volumes from Lewis's personal library are not kept at the Wade Center but form the

[53] Hooper (1998a, 770–771) traces most stints of the library's adventures. Roger's study (1970) is an account of the library's time at Wroxton College.

[54] Three recent landmark studies on Lewis's theological and philosophical thought are Feinendegen 2008, Ward 2008, and Barkman 2009.

[55] Some of the most gratifying finds were reviews of *The Four Loves* from the very year of its publication (1960). To my knowledge, their content has not seen print since their original appearance. (The exception is Martin D'Arcy's review [1960], referenced in Hooper 1998a, 377.) Written mostly by notable theologians and philosophers, some reviews had picked up on the link to Nygren. One young scholar would become the most prominent of them all. In his review in the *Guardian* on 13 April 1960, the then thirty-one year old Alasdair MacIntyre says that his justified high hopes of Mr Lewis's *The Four Loves* had been dashed: "…his book is such a tangle of analysis and apologetics. More than that, his book does not *help*" (MacIntyre 1960, 13). Unfortunately MacIntyre did not explain why the book does not help readers, so his 180-word review does not help scholars. Eric Gregory has since drawn my attention to another original reviewer, Bernard Williams, prominent British philosopher. His review in the *Spectator* on 1 April 1960 charged Lewis with a "willed superficiality".

Walter Hooper Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. How they ended up there is another story.[56] This collection includes books from authors such as Aristotle, Dante, Homer, Hooker, Plato, Virgil, and so on – most of them underlined, annotated, and even self-indexed, as is customary for Lewis's most prized literary possessions.[57]

Nicholas Wolterstorff has described the difference between *The Problem of Pain* and *A Grief Observed* respectively as the difference between "an *account* of suffering" and "an *expression* of suffering". "For those who want to know how Lewis thought suffering fits into a Christian understanding of reality", Wolterstorff says, *The Problem of Pain* is "the basic text". The genre of *A Grief Observed* is different. It is "not an account of but an *expression* of suffering – a cry over the death of his wife, Joy, from cancer".[58]

Wolterstorff's description hits upon a distinction that cuts through much of Lewis's writing, not just on suffering. It is reminiscent of two ways every mental act, two ways of attending to and communicating reality – one more cerebral and detached, the other more experiential and involved – which Lewis himself variously describes as "Contemplation" and "Enjoyment",[59] "looking at" and "looking along",[60] or "knowledge-about" (*savoir*) and "knowledge-by-acquaintance" (*connaitre*).[61] Many of Lewis's own works could be paired up along these lines. *The Abolition of Man* and *That Hideous Strength* respectively discuss and exemplify natural moral law; *Surprised by Joy* and *The Pilgrim's Regress* explore and illustrate conversion driven by spiritual longing; and, as Peter Schakel notes, the central ideas of *The Four*

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[56] Originally the number of volumes given to the University of North Caroline was 176 (Hooper 1998a, 770).

[57] When I attended the AAR/SBL conference in 2010 in Atlanta, and visited adjacent states including North Carolina, I was not aware of this collection, alas. In hindsight, the mishap was not as drastic as I had initially feared. However, I may have benefitted from studying Lewis's annotated copies of Augustine's *Confessions* in English and *De Civitate Dei* in Latin. On my next visit to Chapel Hill, I shall also look up Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* in English.

[58] Wolterstorff 2010, 5.

[59] Lewis first learnt of this distinction from Samuel Alexander's *Space, Time, and Deity* (1920) and immediately adopted it as "an indispensable tool of thought" (Lewis 1955, 205–206, here 206).

[60] Lewis's essay "Meditation in a Toolshed" (1945) is basically a popularization of Alexander's distinction in these non-technical terms. See Lewis 2000, 607–610.

[61] See, for instance, Lewis 1960a, 143; Lewis 1961, 139; Lewis 1964, 109; Lewis 2004, 206; Lewis 2006, 1173; and his essays "De Audiendis Poetis", "The Anthropological Approach", and "The Pains of Animals – A Problem in Theology" in Lewis 2000.

Loves "are embodied in literary form in *Till We Have Faces*".[62]

This dissertation wants to know how Lewis thought *love* fits into a Christian understanding of reality. Its *primary sources* ("basic texts") have been Lewis's *nonfiction*, the "accounts". Two reasons nudged me towards a nonfictional focus. The first is obvious: the wealth of primary sources imposed an inevitable need for focus in general. Lewis's literary legacy is comprised of a staggering "forty published books during his lifetime, not to mention numerous articles, poems and countless letters".[63] By the same token, an over-ambitious scholar would have "great difficulty in coping with the many genres in which Lewis expresses his ideas".[64] My training better equipped me to engage Lewis's more analytical treatises: for literary criticism proper, a whole different set of tools would have been necessary.[65]

This does not mean that literary sources have been *totally* ignored or excluded from this study. Many of them are deeply relevant to the Nygren debate. "Expressions" of love and longing have served an *ancillary* purpose: they have been incorporated into this study to support, supplement, or exemplify ideas and arguments extracted first from Lewis's more analytical writings. References to the *Cosmic Trilogy*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, poems (most notably "Scazons"), among others, are scattered across the breadth of the four essays. For example, Saarinen believes that *Till We Have Faces* is even more critical of Nygren than *The Four Loves*.[66]

Excluding sporadic references, the four essays include no *biographical* discussion. I do not intend to provide one here either. Gilbert Meilaender observed already in 1978 how biographical data is "rather wearisomely repeated in just about every book written on Lewis".[67] The definitive biography of Lewis, however, is (I think) yet to be written. It will have to exhibit the strengths and avoid the limitations of the leading existing ones.

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[62] Schakel 2010, 286. Especially Orual's character gives "concrete embodiment to ideas about love" (285).
[63] Vaus 2004, 231.
[64] Meilaender 2003, 3.
[65] Carnell (1999, 116) confesses that *Till We Have Faces* is a particularly difficult myth to interpret, for "there are aspects left over which do not fit in with any systematic approach".
[66] Saarinen 2010, 344–346.
[67] Meilaender 2003, 2.

Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper's book (1974), "though rather perfunctory, comes close to being an authorized biography".[68] A. N. Wilson's work (1990, 1991) is the most entertaining and periodically probing, but it indulges in rather irresponsible psychoanalysis.[69] Lewis's pupil-turned-friend George Sayer's account (1988, 1997) is more temperate but less gripping than Wilson's. Most recently, Alister McGrath's well-researched study (2013) is naturally most up-to-date but somewhat uneven.[70] Lewis's definitive biography, in order to cover both his *life* and *ideas*, may actually require three volumes, divided roughly along the lines of Lewis's three-volume letter collection.[71]

2.4 Sources (II): Lewis on Nygren

As for Nygren's *Agape and Eros*, all four essays have referred to its authorized one-volume English edition (1953). Although my training allowed me to consult the original Swedish, this proved unnecessary. Virtually all commentators use the English edition.[72] As is both fitting and paramount when translating theologically sophisticated opuses, *Den kristna kärlekstanken genom tiderna: Eros och Agape* (1930 and 1936) was translated by a fellow professional theologian, Philip S. Watson – and Nygren was evidently very pleased with the result. In the preface to the 1953 edition Nygren expresses his deep gratitude "to Professor Watson" for translating his thesis, which is "being republished without alteration".[73] Likewise, I have

[68] Meilaender 2003, 2 n. 3. Presumably, Meilaender is referring to the 1974 edition. Hooper revised and expanded it in 2002.
[69] See Meilaender 1990, Beversluis 1992, Smilde 2004.
[70] Arend Smilde's review essay (2014a) of the McGrath biography offers critical counter-balance to its numerous ovations. Other noteworthy biographies include Downing 2002 and Jacobs 2005. The former is strong on Lewis's literary formation and output and the latter focuses on his early philosophical and theological development.
[71] If there is ample material in the life of Lewis's onetime pupil, the poet John Betjeman (1906–1984) to demand a three-volume biography (Hillier 1998–2004), this is no less true for Lewis.
[72] Including Werner Jeanrond who, like Nygren, has served as the professor of systematic theology at Lund University, Sweden. In his *A Theology of Love* (2010, 113 n. 21) Jeanrond notes the Swedish original in a footnote, but otherwise engages with the English edition.
[73] Nygren 1969, xiii–iv. Philip S. Watson, himself a distinguished Luther scholar, was later to translate much of Nygren's most important subsequent work.

excluded Nygren's other works from this study, though I was aware of some of them.[74] Even if space and scope had allowed it, they are not necessary for understanding the self-contained thesis of *Agape and Eros*.

I noted above that one source proved especially elusive. It was *Lewis's copy of Nygren's book*. The evidence attests that what had originally "shaken up" Lewis was reading part one of *Agape and Eros*, which was published in English in 1932.[75] Regrettably, there are *no traces* of this edition, or any other edition, in the archives of the Bodleian library, the Wade Center, Chapel Hill, or in the collections of the most resourceful Lewis aficionados.

This is a shame. Were such a book ever to resurface it would conceivably be a goldmine for future research on Lewis, Nygren, and love, as it is likely to be underlined, annotated, and self-indexed. But what would have been the most pertinent source for my research does not seem to exist. The most probable but least breath-taking scenario is that, after "tackling him again", Lewis simply returned the book to his colleague in mint condition. After all, it was a loan. Whether or not he ever proceeded to acquire for himself or read subsequent editions is a remaining scruple to be discussed later.

Compensation for this wild-goose chase was an important breakthrough made in Oxford. At the outset of my research, I was aware of only two explicit references to Nygren in Lewis's writings. "Dr. Nygren" is mentioned in *Surprised by Joy*, and in a letter to Corbin Carnell, shared in his study *Bright Shadow of Reality*, Lewis had said Nygren's book gave him "a good 'load of thought'".[76] This led me to suspect there may be more epistolary tributes to Nygren.

Indeed, it turned out that there were *six* more. These included Lewis's candid immediate responses, snippets of which have been glimpsed above. Lewis's literary magnum opus *The Oxford History of English Literature in the Sixteenth Century: Excluding Drama* ("OHEL" among friends) also cites Nygren once. Lastly, honouring the fiftieth anniversary of Lewis's passing in

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[74] Second to *Agape and Eros*, Nygren's most important work is probably *Meaning and Method* (1972) which utilizes the then new trends in analytic philosophy.
[75] See essay one (Lepojärvi 2011, 208 n. 2). The 1932 edition was translated by A. G. Hebert. Nygren says that it was "somewhat abridged" (1969, xiii).
[76] Carnell 1999, 69. Lewis 2006, 980.

2013, Cambridge University Press published a collection of Lewis's short pieces, among them the reprint of a 1938 book review that also instances Nygren once. This makes a total of *ten* explicit references to Nygren. More may yet crop up in the future: two of the letters were only discovered in the late 1990s.[77]

Most of the references are brought into the essays in one way or another, but no one essay systematically analyses them all. As a helpful sounding board for the three Nygren-specific essays, but above all to encourage and facilitate further research into the subject, I have provided the references below. They are of unequal length and importance, and these do not always coincide. Some are one-sentence comments; others are multi-paragraph commentaries. The seven private letters are listed in chronological order, and the three public sources according to their year of publication. Five are from the 1930s, and five from the 1950s. This split is not irrelevant, as will become apparent later.[78] As noted above, I knew of only two references (9 and 10) at first. Seven references (1–4 and 6–8) were uncovered later and one (5) was brought to our collective attention in the jubilee year of 2013. The italics are all original.

#1. 1934: Letter to Janet Spens, dated 16 November 1934.

> Can you tell me something more about Professor Nygren's *Eros and Agape*? I haven't heard of it.[79]

#2. 1935: Letter to Janet Spens, dated 8 January 1935.

> You will have begun to wonder if your *Agape & Eros* was lost forever! It is an intensely interesting book. I am inclined to think I disagree with him. His central contrast – that Agape is selfless and Eros self-regarding – seems at first unanswerable: but I wonder if he is not trying to force on the conception of love an antithesis which it is the precise nature of love, in all its forms, to overcome.
>
> Then again, is the contrast between Agape (God active coming to man passive) and Eros (man by desire ascending to God qûa passive object obef desire) really so sharp? He may accuse me of a mere play upon words if I pointed out that in Aristotle's "He moves as the beloved" (κινεῖ ὡς ερωμενον

[77] Private correspondence with Walter Hooper (1 March 2010).
[78] See Chapter 4.1 below.
[79] Lewis 2004, 147.

[*sic*]) there is, after all, an active verb, *κινεῖ*. But is this merely a grammatical accident – is it not perhaps the real answer? Can the thing really be conceived in one way *or* the other? In real life it feels like both, and both, I suspect, are the same. Even on the human level does any one feel that the passive voice of the word *beloved* is really exclusive – that *to attract* is a – what do you call it – the opposite of a deponent? However, I must tackle him again. He has shaken me up extremely.[80]

#3. 1935: Letter to Paul Elmer More, dated 5 April 1935.

The view I am *not* holding for the moment always seems unanswerable. Have you read Nygren's *Eros and Agape*? It is a closely related problem and leaves me equally puzzled.[81]

#4. 1935: Letter to Paul Elmer More, dated 23 May 1935.

Of Nygren, another time. I don't fully agree – Protestant is not for me a dyslogistic term.[82]

#5. 1938: Review of Leone Ebreo's *The Philosophy of Love*.

Professor Nygren has emphasized the antagonism between systems based on Eros, the love of the lower for the higher, with an unmoved mover, an unloving Beloved, as the Highest of all, and those based on Agape, the love of higher for lower, where the Highest is a god conceived as purposive and capable of interfering in history. Philosophy, and specially Greek philosophy, inclines to the former: religious experience, and specially Jewish and Christian experience, to the latter. Spinoza walked the Eros road as far as any man has ever done: Abrabanel, with equal temptation to do so, obstinately refuses it, and his central problem is how to combine his philosophical conception of God as the Beloved with his religious conception of God as the Lover. He has two methods of doing so. One is to argue that Eros in practice is Agape, that love for the end or the Higher must work to raise the lower, since the perfection of the lower somehow or other (he is timid, though immovable, on this point) contributes to the perfection of the end. The other is to introduce within the Deity itself distinctions between God as self-loved, and God as self-lover, united to beget Love, which bring him to the verge of Trinitarianism.[83]

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[80] Lewis 2004, 153–154.
[81] Lewis 2004, 158.
[82] Lewis 2004, 165. Paul Elmer More had earlier replied to Lewis: "Yes, I have read *Agape and Eros*, and I don't like it at all, indeed I very heartily dislike it. It seems to me the last word of the most abominable form of Protestantism in a straight line from Luther through Barth" (letter dated 26 April 1935, cited in Lewis 2006, 164 n. 37 and 165 n. 38). Unfortunately there seems not to have been "another time" for continuing this titillatingly begun subject.
[83] Lewis 2013, 277–280, here 279–280. Abrabanel or Leone Ebreo (ca. 1465 –ca. 1523) was a Jewish poet and philosopher who is best known for his work *Philosophy of Love* (*Dialoghi d'amore*).

#6. 1954: *The Oxford History of English Literature in the Sixteenth Century: Excluding Drama*.

> We know, if we are Christians, that glory is what awaits the faithful in heaven. We know, if we are Platonists – and a reading of Boethius would make us Platonists enough for this – that every inferior good attracts us only by being an image of the single real good… Earthly glory would never have moved us but by being a shadow or *idolon* of the Divine Glory, in which we are called to participate… Arthur is an embodiment of what Professor Nygren calls "Eros religion", the thirst of the soul for the Perfection beyond the created universe… [Arthur's experiences] must, it seems to me, be taken for a picture not of nascent ambition and desire for fame but either of natural or celestial love; and they are certainly not simply a picture of the former… The seeker must advance, with the possibility at each step of error, beyond the false Florimells to the true, and beyond the true Florimell to the Glory.[84]

#7. 1954: Letter to Mary Van Deusen, dated 4 December 1954.

> The great merit of Nygren, so far as I'm concerned, was that he gave one a new *tool of thought*: it is so v. [very] convenient and illuminating to be able to talk (and therefore to think) about the two elements of love as *Eros & Agape*. You notice that I say "elements". That is because I think he drives his contrast too hard and even talks as if the one cd. [could] not exist where the other was. But surely in any good friendship or good marriage, tho' Eros may have been the starting point, the two are always mixed and one slips out of one into the other a dozen times a day? … I doubt whether even fallen man is *totally* incapable of Agape. It is prefigured even on the instinctive level. Maternal affection, even among animals, has the dawn of Agape. So, in a queer way, has even the sexual appetite, for each sex wants to give pleasure as well as to get it. So there is a soil even in nature for A. [Agape] to strike roots in, or a trellis up wh. [which] it can grow.[85]

#8. 1955: Letter to Mary Van Deusen, dated 19 January 1955.

> Yes: I wd. [would] certainly agree with "the disfigured image of God"; to some degree disfigured in the best of us, but still an image in the worst. Nygren is surely wrong if he says that merited love is sinful. It can't be wrong to love the hand that feeds you. How much more wisely Christ put it: "if you love only them that do good to you, do not the Gentiles [do] as much?" i.e. not that it is sin (indeed not to do it wd. [would] be sin) but that it is no great matter, is elementary and merely natural. When we say to a boy of 17 "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, doing simple long division" we don't mean that there's anything wrong with long division but that he ought by now to have got on to something more advanced. Is it by some such *confusion* N. [Nygren] has got where he is? Still his book was well worth reading: we both have the v. [very] important idea of Eros and Agape now clearly in our minds, and can keep it

[84] Lewis 1954, 382–383.
[85] Lewis 2006, 538.

> after we have let all his exaggerations fade out of our minds.[86]

#9. 1955: *Surprised by Joy*.

> But this was a religion that cost nothing. We could talk religiously about the Absolute: but there was no danger of Its doing anything about us. It was "there"; safely and immovably "there." It would never come "here," never (to be blunt) make a nuisance of Itself. This quasi-religion was all a one-way street; all *eros* (as Dr. Nygren would say) steaming up, but no *agape* darting down. There was nothing to fear; better still, nothing to obey.[87]

#10. 1958: Letter to Corbin Scott Carnell, dated 13 October 1958.

> Otto's *Das Heilige* I have been deeply influenced by. Nygren's *Eros & Agape* gave me a good "load of thought", a useful classification instrument, tho' I don't think his own use of that instrument v. [very] profitable.[88]

So much for Lewis's ten references on Nygren. The final issue I would like to address before turning to reflection on the essays themselves is the chosen *publication forum*.

2.5 Publications: Casting the Net Wide

The overarching criterion that guided my deliberation in choosing the optimal publication venues was maximizing *broad international impact*. By "broad" I mean reaching both theologians and Lewis scholars, and by "international" I include both European and North American readership. With a mere four papers, this is easier said than done.

Casting the net wide like this, however, had two further advantages. I benefitted from continual feedback from interdisciplinary peer-reviewers, and gained vocational experience from engaging with different editorial philosophies.

The harvest of this cast is displayed in the figure below.

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[86] Lewis 2006, 555.
[87] Lewis 1955, 198.
[88] Lewis 2006, 980.

	Lewis journals	Theology journals
European-based	[1] "C. S. Lewis and 'The Nygren Debate'" *Chronicle of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society* (or *Journal of Inklings Studies*) vol. 7 (2010) pp. 25–42 8 000 words	[2] "Does Eros Seek Happiness? A Critical Study of C. S. Lewis's Reply to Anders Nygren" *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* vol. 53 (2011) pp. 208–224 8 500 words
North American-based	[3] "A Friend's Death: C. S. Lewis's Disagreement with St. Augustine" *Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal* vol. 5/6 (2012) pp. 67–80 6 500 words	[4] "Praeparatio Evangelica – or Daemonica? C. S. Lewis and Anders Nygren on *Sehnsucht*" *Harvard Theological Review* (Accepted for publication) 13 000 words

The first essay was published in *The Chronicle of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society*, known since 2011 as the *Journal of Inklings Studies* (*JIS*). The recent transformation better reflects the journal's broader interests: not only matters relating to Lewis but also to his peers and forebears. Today, this UK-based journal is a joint collaboration of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society, the Charles Williams Society, the Owen Barfield Literary Estate, and the G. K. Chesterton Library.

The second essay was published in *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* (*NZSTh*). What increased its appeal as a publication venue was its predominantly *German-speaking readership*. Excluding Josef Pieper, Pope Benedict XVI, the Austrian Cardinal Schönborn, and some others, few German-speaking theologians and

philosophers have shown interest in engaging Lewis.[89] For whatever reason, Lewis remains lesser known in German-speaking centres of learning than in many others. This is a shame, for "there is more to Lewis than can be said in English".[90]

The third essay was published in *Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal*, the only double-blind peer-reviewed journal of its kind in North America. Unlike the leaner *JIS* that is issued twice annually, *Sehnsucht* is an annual tome. Two other notable North American-based journals are *VII: An Anglo-American Literary Review* (*SEVEN*), a publication of the Wade Center, and the informatively titled *CSL: The Bulletin of the New York C. S. Lewis Society* (*CSL*). Both *SEVEN* and *CSL* have long publication records (unbroken since 1980 and 1969 respectively), as did *The Canadian C. S. Lewis Journal* before its cessation in 2001.[91]

The fourth essay has long been accepted for publication in the *Harvard Theological Review* (*HTR*). Due to editorial delays, the publication was pushed back to 2015.

While the four essays coincide in theme, Lewis on love, overlap of content and argument has been kept to a minimum. Due to multiple audiences, however, some incidental repetition has been inevitable. For example, Nygren's thesis is introduced more than once. But in terms of argument and analysis, each essay is a stand-alone contribution to scholarship. Earlier versions have been presented as lectures and talks at various conferences and seminars. My gratitude for on-site feedback, some of it anonymous, far exceeds the people acknowledged in the essays themselves. As for spelling styles, reference apparatus, word limits, and other technicalities, I have of

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[89] Lewis, however, showed interest in engaging German-speaking theologians and philosophers. There was one spectacular exception: "Barth I have never read, or not that I remember" (Lewis 2006, 980). This did not deter him from calling Barthianism "a flattening out of all things into common insignificance before the inscrutable Creator" (Lewis 1954, 449, also 453) – a description that, chimes McGrath, "has won him [Lewis] few theological admirers" (McGrath 2014, 179 n. 6). If McGrath is right it is only because few theologians are aware of it.

[90] Smilde 2013, 16. I do not object to Smilde's suggestion that new and interesting light on Lewis "is now perhaps as likely to come from outside the English-speaking world as from within" (111).

[91] The Canadian journal, though more popular than academic for most of its existence, contained a wealth of first person accounts from people who knew Lewis. Two collections were published in book form, see Schofield (1983) and Graham (2001).

course followed the in-house rules and peculiarities of each journal. While the essays vary in length, the arguments within are all equally compressed.

3 RESULTS AND REFLECTION

In this chapter, I will briefly reflect on each of the four essays. First, I will return to the principal objectives of the essay and discuss relevant exclusions. Second, I will highlight the key arguments of the essay and the contributions to the existing literature. Last, I will acknowledge and evaluate some potential limitations and weaknesses of the essay, and point out prospective avenues for further research.

3.1 Essay 1: C. S. Lewis and "the Nygren Debate"

3.1.1 Objectives

The first essay, entitled *"C. S. Lewis and 'the Nygren Debate'"*, opens the discussion and sets the stage for the three subsequent essays. Its main *objective* is to compare and contrast Lewis and Nygren's theologies of love. Locating Lewis's approximate position in "the Nygren debate" requires first locating the basic parameters of the debate itself.

Two important *exclusions* are worth pointing out. First, as noted above, the essay's principal concern is with *direct* evaluations between Lewis and Nygren, unmediated by Nygren's other commentators and critics, whether his contemporaries or ours. Some of them are briefly introduced, but mainly for historical background. What I call "the Nygren debate" refers primarily to the disputed questions, not the cloud of disputants.

Second, the essay does not provide meticulous analyses of every point of contention. It is very much an *overview*. To accomplish this, it has been paramount not to follow up on every lead. Establishing even the proximate parameters of the debate (let alone Lewis's position in it) is a tremendous challenge, because the debate is tremendous, touching nearly all aspects of life and tenets of doctrine. Indeed, this insight is one of the essay's contributions.

3.1.2 Contributions

The results of essay one could be summed up under four headings: taxonomies, theologies, tactfulness, and teleology. Together they set the stage for future inquiries into the subject, making this essay, I hope, a useful, perhaps even an essential, contribution to the subject for anyone interested in Lewis's theology of love, especially vis-à-vis the eros versus agape question.

First, the essay shows how Lewis and Nygren's love-taxonomies are incommensurate. Their toolboxes are quite dissimilar, and the few shared concepts overlap only in name. While Nygren's arsenal displays two loaded concepts, eros and agape, Lewis approaches love with a multitude of concepts: need-love, gift-love, appreciative love, affection, friendship, eros, charity, and Joy (*Sehnsucht*), to name the most central ones. This makes comparing and contrasting their theologies of love a fascinating but toilsome affair.

Second, the essay shows how very dissimilar Lewis and Nygren's theologies are. They rarely see eye to eye. Lewis's theology of love can be traced back to his broader theological foundations and, above all, his theological anthropology. These go a long way in explaining where he stood in "the Nygren debate". For instance, Lewis would defend the role of evaluative reason, needfulness, and desire in authentic human love.

Thirdly, the essay shows that *The Four Loves* is not the only work by Lewis that is relevant to the Nygren debate. Nygrenian themes run through much of Lewis's writing, both accounts and expressions of love, and resurface in surprising locations. Lewis displays tactfulness in disagreeing with Nygren. The hidden disagreement with "Dr. Nygren" in *Surprised by Joy* is made explicit. Even when Nygren is not named (and most often he is not), the latent clash is probably intentional at times.

Fourthly, the essay shows how central Lewis's concept of spiritual longing (Joy/*Sehnsucht*) is to the discussion. This vein would later prove richest in terms of further research. For Lewis, there is a teleological connection between the desiring self and the highest good, a connection never wholly

severed by the fall. The relevance of Lewis's concept of Joy to the Nygren debate, especially as a potential variant of Nygren's eros, would later be confirmed by the help of additional documents on Nygren.

3.1.3 Further Research

The most glaring *limitation* of this first essay is that, at the time of writing it, I was aware of only two explicit and brief references to Nygren in Lewis's writings. I had not yet made my archival discoveries (see Chapter 2.4 above). Knowledge of the remaining eight references would have saved me a lot of trouble.

It would not, however, have affected the analysis. Nothing in the sleuthed sources actually detracts or undermines the analysis of the first essay. On the contrary, they buttress it. This is a sign of a close reading of the originally available sources – essay one had followed implicit evidence of what would later be corroborated explicitly. It is also a sign of the consistency of Lewis's thinking (see Barfield's description in Chapter 2.2). The greater patterns of its fabric are detectable even in partial light. The consistency allowed us to connect various dots, and in this case, the complete blueprint discovered later confirmed the results.

In addition to potent primary sources, I was ignorant of some secondary ones. For example, Gilbert Meilaender's 1978 study of Lewis's ethical thought, *The Taste for the Other*, makes relevant observations on the difference between Lewis and Nygren's theologies. Caroline Simon's article "On Love" in *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* (2010) also discusses Nygren, but it was published a little too late. Both of these studies, and more, have of course been consulted and incorporated into the subsequent three essays to supplement the bigger picture.

Some of the limitations of the four essays are not fundamental, but rather invitations for further research. This applies, for instance, to the somewhat underdeveloped section on *virtue ethics* ("*Ethics* before the *Summa*") in essay one. Lewis's virtue ethics has implications for his theology of love, because, for him, love is properly a virtue. Not many of these

implications are spelled out, however. "Nowhere does Lewis provide an extended discussion of a morality of virtue; yet, it is a matter of concern for him."[92] Lewis's virtue ethics remains largely an unmapped area in scholarship. Protestant theologians who today are regaining interest in virtue theory might be intrigued to learn that one Protestant never abandoned it, and why.

What Lewis did abandon, and at a very early stage of his life, if he ever seriously entertained it, was the doctrine of *total depravity*. Human deprivation was deep, but not total. God's image is "to some degree disfigured in the best of us, but still an image in the worst".[93] Will Vaus has argued that Lewis "seems to misunderstand the doctrine of total depravity"[94] (at least in his treatment of it in *The Problem of Pain*). Vaus explains that this doctrine "means not, as Lewis suggests, that people are as bad as they could be but rather at no point are people as good as they should be", and that "every aspect of a person's being has been affected by sin, including the ability to choose".[95] This would be worth investigating further. Did Lewis misunderstand this doctrine? What consequences does it have on his theology of love? My hypothesis is that regardless of precise doctrinal formulations, what Lewis ultimately objects to are certain anthropological presuppositions and a spirit that (to borrow extracts from Vaus himself) have led "some Christians writers [to] find pleasure itself to be sinful" and to nurture "a permanently horrified perception of our sin".[96] Lewis was not the sort of man who would call human virtues "splendid vices". Nor would he feel comfortable with a "Flacian" doctrine of sin.[97]

This relates to another problem worthy of further analysis: the *goodness versus motive dilemma*. Nygren operates with one understanding of goodness and one only: goodness-*as*-motive. For him, they are unbreakably linked. If we acknowledge any goodness in the object of love, our love becomes erotic, "value-based" and "motivated". But agapic love is "indiffer-

[92] Meilaender 2003, 225–226.
[93] Lewis 2006, 555.
[94] Vaus 2004, 50.
[95] Vaus 2004, 50.
[96] Vaus 2004, 75, 181.
[97] Matthias Flacius (1520–1575) was the target of the article on Original Sin in the Formula of Concord, when it rejected the teaching that original sin is the substance or nature of man.

ent to value" and thus "unmotivated", "altogether spontaneous".[98] That the object could be in some sense good without that goodness becoming a damnable motive for love is not a viable option for Nygren.[99] This blind spot introduces a tremendous source of confusion into his model.

The causal connection between goodness and motive, in this form, can be challenged. Lewis himself challenges it *The Problem of Pain*: "Love may, indeed, love the beloved when her beauty is lost: but not because it is lost. Love may forgive all infirmities and love still in spite of them: but Love cannot cease to will their removal."[100] Love is never "disinterested" in Nygren's sense of the word. Although Lewis's position is more nuanced than Nygren's, his choice of words creates vagueness. What exactly does he mean by "losing one's beauty"? My hypothesis is that, ultimately, Lewis does not believe "infirmities" can ever *totally* negate what he calls "our value in the Creator's eyes".[101] Hence the references to "unlovable people" in his books cannot to be taken literally. There are no such things.[102] What he means are people we find difficult to love.

Despite these unresolved ambiguities, could Lewis's theology of love contribute to the goodness versus motive question? Lewis introduces a distinction into the notion of goodness in *The Problem of Pain*.[103] This is encouraging. Could we find another distinction, perhaps an implicit one, which could help solve the dilemma? I am thinking primarily of something along the lines of what Burnaby has called "natural goodness" and "ethical goodness". By virtue of creation, the first kind of goodness is "unalterable", while the second can be "lost or gained".[104] Natural goodness is a *prerequisite* for love, regardless of motive. Goodness-as-prerequisite for love is the notion that Nygren's theology of love, with its weak doctrine of creation, lacks.

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[98] Nygren 1969, 75–77.
[99] See Wolterstorff 2010, 98.
[100] Lewis 1998b, 31–32.
[101] Lewis 1998b, 32.
[102] With the exception of one character in the *Cosmic Trilogy*, tellingly named "the Un-man".
[103] Lewis 1998b, 89–90. Lewis speaks of "simple good" and "complex good". The latter is created by God's exploitation of our evil behaviour for redemptive purposes.
[104] Burnaby 2007, 40. Essay one makes a similar distinction (Lepojärvi 2010, 29). Nygren comes close to this distinction when he talks about God's "entirely unmotivated, groundless love, which justifies not the man who is already *righteous and holy*, but precisely the *sinner*" (Nygren 1960, 687, emphasis added).

I aim to tackle some of the questions sketched above in future publications. As noted in the outline of objectives above, the first essay opened up three important questions that I have *already* confronted in the remaining essays of this study. They analyse love and happiness (essay 2), love and vulnerability (essay 3), and love and spiritual longing (essay 4). We now turn to the first of these.

3.2 Essay 2: Does Eros Seek Happiness?

3.2.1 Objectives

One of the arguments of essay one was that Lewis preoccupied himself with "Nygrenian" themes in several of his writings. Nygren is a likely target of some of Lewis's arguments on love even if Lewis rarely names his opponent or even hints that one might exist. For example, in *The Four Loves* Lewis forcefully denies that eros aims at the happiness of the lover. The one who famously argued the opposite is, of course, Nygren. Saarinen surmises that Lewis's use of the word 'happiness' is so close to Nygren's 'eudaimonia' that the resulting clash is probably there by design.

The second essay, entitled *"Does Eros Seek Happiness? A Critical Analysis of C. S. Lewis's Reply to Anders Nygren"*, follows up on Saarinen's surmise. Its main *objective* is to examine Lewis's dissatisfaction with what he calls Nygren's "central contrast", that between a self-regarding eros and a selfless agape.[105] This essay continues the investigation into both men's theologies of love from a more focused angle. Is human love essentially eudaimonistic, seeking the happiness of the lover? Is human love selfish?

While examining Lewis's answer and "reply" to Nygren, this essay brings in some of the new primary sources and secondary literature found after the publication of the first essay (see Chapter 2.4). This is its second objective. In doing so, essay two supplements, tests, and sharpens the investigation begun in essay one.

[105] I have also written on this elsewhere, see Lepojärvi 2013.

3.2.2 Contributions

This essay's argument is a cumulative one. It develops layer by layer as the analysis proceeds. I begin by deconstructing Lewis's argument in *The Four Loves* in which he claims that eros (romantic love) does not aim at the happiness of the lover, but would rather share unhappiness with the beloved than remain happy on any other terms. A careful analysis of what Lewis means by "happiness" and "unhappiness" exposes, however, that his argument is a bit convoluted.

In *The Four Loves* Lewis operates, probably unwittingly, with *two* notions of happiness. I argue that while his eros is indeed ready to renounce what can be called *conventional happiness* (health, wealth, home, and honour) it does so precisely in the name of a more *meaningful happiness* (above all, a life spent with the beloved). Despite his protestations, even Lewis's eros seeks happiness of a more lasting and meaningful kind. On this point, I show that he is compelled to agree with Nygren.

I bolster this argument by comparing and contrasting *The Four Loves* with Lewis's late essay "We Have No 'Right to Happiness'" (1963). In this essay, it becomes apparent, Lewis is more candid about eros's pursuit of happiness. The resulting seeming contradiction between *The Four Loves* and the essay erodes, at least partially, when filtered through the "conventional" versus "meaningful" distinction. More than this, however, the different *agendas* of the two texts help explain the difference of emphasis.

In this section of *The Four Loves*, essay two suggests, Lewis's *main concern* is to show that human love has *an agapic opening* – or "the dawn of agape" as Lewis elsewhere calls it.[106] Maternal and romantic loves are prime examples of love that is capable of towering personal sacrifices and thus overcomes Nygren's antithesis. What Lewis found revoltingly untrue is a concept of human love that by nature calculatingly demotes the beloved simply to a *means* by which personal happiness is sought.

While getting this point across, however, Lewis is driven to exaggeration by denying the happiness-seeking character of eros altogether. His eros

[106] Lewis 2006, 538. See Chapter 2.4 above.

can renounce conventional happiness, but it is not willing or even capable of renouncing meaningful happiness. However, this drive is *not* sinful: it is embedded in given human nature. For Nygren, it makes no difference what *kind* of happiness is pursued, because the real problem is the *pursuit* of happiness itself. On this anthropological presupposition Lewis's disagreement with Nygren continues to hold.

The distinction between 'conventional happiness' and 'meaningful happiness' is one of the essay's more valuable *contributions* to existing literature. It helps to make sense of one of the most important and animated arguments in *The Four Loves*. If Lewis operates with two notions of happiness unwittingly, as seems to be the case, the distinction may show up also elsewhere in his works. It may prove helpful for Lewis scholarship generally, not only on questions pertaining to love.

Another valuable contribution is the analysis, and first proper incorporation into Lewis scholarship, of some of the Nygren-specific commentary found in his lesser-known writings. This essay is also the first to point out that Lewis only refers to the first part of Nygren's *Agape and Eros*. Whether he ever read part two will be discussed later.

To help analyse Lewis's "reply" to Nygren, I deconstructed also Nygren's "eudaimonistic charge" against human love, breaking it down into four parts. This enabled me to elucidate a rather clustered charge and to pinpoint Lewis's deviation from it more delicately. The four-fold schematization of Nygren's argument might facilitate theological reflection of human desire(s) more broadly. I myself re-applied it in essay four while comparing and contrasting two fundamentally different approaches to spiritual desire.

3.2.3 Further Research

In essay one, I said that Lewis's concept of *spiritual longing*, what he calls Joy, is "relevant" to the Nygren debate, even suggesting that it has "surprisingly much in common" with Nygren's concept of eros. Essay two takes this up a notch. It suggests, albeit in the bracketed safety of a footnote, that Joy does not merely resemble Nygren's eros but may actually be "a more

comprehensive 'translation'" of it than Lewis's need-love. This compounds the motivation and pressure to investigate the issue properly.

The analysis of the nature and differences of *selfless and self-regarding love* could also to be taken further. Essay two showed that, in Lewis's mind, loves by their very nature ought to overcome this contrast. At their best, human loves do not instrumentalize the beloved for personal gain. Be that as it may, personal gain would not necessarily "stain" the act of love. Seeking a reward is not in itself wrong, not even in love. But surely it is sometimes? Under what circumstances does love become mercenary?

Lewis's sermon "The Weight of Glory" sketches a fascinating answer, or the beginning of one. This is one of the key texts that ought to be consulted were one to deepen the analysis. Basically, Lewis distinguishes between different kinds of rewards. Their appropriateness (or lack of) hinges on the nature of their relation to the corresponding act. "Mercenary" rewards bear "no natural connection" with the act. "Proper" rewards, per contra, are "not simply tacked on to the activity for which they are given, but are *the activity itself in consummation*".[107] Does Lewis's guiding principle hold water? What is the proper reward of love?

A third question that merits closer attention is the role of Denis de Rougemont (1906–1985) on Lewis's thinking. We noted earlier how de Rougemont's maxim against idolatrous love ("love ceases to be a demon") is one of the lodestars guiding readers through *The Four Loves*. It is also the key string in Lewis's bow in "We Have No 'Right to Happiness'", so much so that one wonders whether the essay is not simply a popularization of de Rougemont's moral argument in English.[108] What is more surprising in light of essay two is this: de Rougemont, too, operates with *two* kinds of happiness. In his review of de Rougemont's book, Lewis dubs one "world 'happiness'",[109] and according to de Rougemont "beyond tragedy another

[107] Lewis 2000, 96–117, here 97, emphasis added.
[108] Astonishingly, even the passionate dynamics between "Mr A" and "Mrs B" find a precursor in de Rougemont (1983, 283–295 [Book VI, Chapters 4–6]). Lewis's review of *Passion and Society* in the journal *Theology* (vol. 40 [June 1960], 459–461) has recently been republished in Lewis 2013, 59–62 (where the book is mistakenly referred to as *Poetry and Society*). A revised and augmented edition of de Rougemont's books appeared in 1956, and in America under the name *Love in the Western World* for which it is best known today.
[109] Lewis 2013, 61: "…the modern notion according to which every marriage must have

happiness awaits".[110]

De Rougemont's influence on Lewis's thinking is clearly one of the many still uncharted areas in Lewis scholarship. This influence, I now suspect, is wider than previously gathered. Lewis called de Rougemont's book "indispensable".[111] That its "absolutely first class *moral* thesis"[112] found its way into Lewis's works is now obvious. But how many remember that one of the book's chapters is titled "Curious and Inevitable Transpositions"?[113] Years before Lewis, de Rougemont uses this term in the sense "given" to it in Lewis's sermon-turned-essay "Transposition". Perhaps instead of calling it "Lewis's term"[114] we have reason to speak of the term he adopted? Lewis's heavily annotated copy of *L'Amour et l'Occident* awaits researchers in the archives of the Wade Center.[115]

Unlike de Rougemont, John Beversluis has not impacted Lewis: it is Lewis who has impacted John Beversluis. Beversluis is one of Lewis's most outspoken and observant critics. Being "the first systematic and radical critique of C. S. Lewis's theological arguments", as Anthony Flew blurbed the first edition, Beversluis's treatise has been the object of waves of rebuttals. It has recently been argued against Beversluis (and Peter Kreeft) that Lewis never intended to present his doctrine of spiritual longing as a self-contained, syllogistic argument for God's existence.[116] While this debate is interesting, I am most drawn to Beversluis's *reading of Nygren against Lewis*. Essay two applauded him (in a footnote again) for being one of the first scholars to bring up the name Anders Nygren in connection with Lewis.

Beversluis summons Nygren to counter Lewis's theology of love – but he is unaware of Lewis's familiarity with, and rejection of, Nygren's theses. Is this a mere peccadillo, a trivial oversight, or has it perhaps adumbrated the

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'falling in love' [*eros*] as its efficient, and world 'happiness' as its final, cause."

[110] De Rougemont 1983, 323.

[111] Lewis 2013, 61.

[112] Lewis 2004, 379. Lewis discusses the book with his brother Warnie in a letter dated 29 March 1940.

[113] De Rougemont 1983, 151–152, see also 162–166.

[114] Brazier 2009, 680. What is more original in Lewis's essay is the way he applies it "to the theology – or at least to the philosophy – of the Incarnation" (683).

[115] The problem of tracing Lewis's influences is a general one, with or without annotated copies. There may be countless further similar discoveries waiting to be made.

[116] Smilde 2014b. Smilde is developing a point made by Feinendegen (2008).

resulting analysis? In essay four I seek to pay not uncritical respect to Beversluis. I think he is correct, for example, in suggesting that on the question of spiritual longing as *praeparatio evangelica* Lewis and Nygren must disagree. Lewis's teleological anthropology places him in the natural law tradition with "Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas",[117] and (as far as Nygren is concerned) other untrustworthy guides on love.

It is with the insight from Aquinas that essay two ends: "Ex amore procedit et gaudium et tristitia", out of love comes both joy and sadness.[118] This essay addressed the first association, that between love and happiness. The next essay proceeds to examine love and vulnerability. Lewis generally trusted Augustine, but even saints could err.

3.3 Essay 3: C. S. Lewis's Disagreement with St. Augustine

3.3.1 Objectives

The third essay is entitled *"A Friend's Death: C. S. Lewis's Disagreement with St Augustine"*. In the Nygren-specific essays, references to Augustine abound. This is no coincidence: Augustine plays a central role in Nygren's understanding of the history and theology of Christian love. Basically, he is the villain of the piece. Intriguingly, the *only* time Lewis explicitly disagrees with Augustine, he does so on an important question on love. Essay three is an investigation of this rare disagreement.

In book four of *Confessions*, Augustine shares a story that poignantly reminded him of the frailty and dangers of human love. In *The Four Loves*, Lewis takes issue with what he considers the moral of Augustine's confession: that vulnerability is symptomatic of a misplaced or incomplete love. Taking the cue from Eric Gregory who notes that Lewis misnames Augustine's deceased friend (hence "A Friend's Death") as "Nebridius", essay three

[117] Beversluis 2007, 48.
[118] *Summa Theologia*, II–II, 28, 1.

returns to the death scene, so to speak, to investigate further. The case is obviously not a mere academic squabble, but of mandating relevance to everyday life.

The second objective is to analyse Lewis's poem "Scazons" (1933), and to use it as a literary backcloth for the disagreement. While Lewis probably did not have Augustine in mind when composing it, this early poem serves uncannily well as an "expression" of the "account" found in *The Four Loves* decades later. It also helps to show that in upholding love's vulnerability, Lewis also wanted to uphold its particularity.

3.3.2 Contributions

This essay investigates Lewis's famous disagreement with Augustine on whether intense grief over the death of a beloved is a sign of incomplete or misplaced love. Lewis suspected that Augustine's Platonic Christianity had not shaken off some of its non-Christian dust (at least at the time of writing the *Confessions*). The passage recounting the death of his dear friend is, Lewis thinks, an intellectual-spiritual hangover, with toxic whiffs of neo-Platonic mysticism and residual Stoicism.

Using Lewis's poem "Scazons" as a literary backdrop, I first argue that while Lewis agrees that sometimes intense grief is a sign of inordinate love, he rejects both what he took to be Augustine's overriding *diagnosis* (intense grief is the punitive result of excessive and particular loves) and his purported *solution* to inordinate love (one must love cautiously and impartially). The parallel analysis of the poem is no mere tag-on, but explicates the two-fold nature of Lewis's concern. Ultimately at stake is the legitimacy of both the vulnerability and the particularity of human love.

Lewis, however, does indeed misremember the name of Augustine's friend. Here I agree with Eric Gregory, and offer a likely explanation for the error: Augustine mentions his "dearest friend Nebridius" in close proximity to the death scene. Could this slip have led Lewis to miss the context as well? There are persuasive reasons to suppose Lewis not only misremembers but also misunderstands. Gregory's revisionist reading defends Augustine

against critics who detect in (or read into) him vestiges of Platonic spirituality and attraction to Stoic invulnerability. Augustine's grief, argues Gregory, is not that he loved "too much", but that he did not really love his friend at all.

My final verdict leans toward leaving the question open; not as a cop-out, but for lack of conclusive evidence. Lewis is right to detect something different in Augustine's attitude towards human loves, even if his post mortem goes wrong in a certain way. Augustine provides a wealth of material, some of it ambivalent, for *both* the revisionist reading *and* critics such as Hannah Arendt and Lewis. What is certain is – and this is my closing argument – that if Lewis misunderstood Augustine, it is merely a misunderstanding and not a fundamental disagreement. He can let out a theological sigh of relief for not having to disagree with this "great saint and a great thinker to whom [his] own glad debts are incalculable".[119]

3.3.3 Further Research

A few months after the publication of this paper, I was pleased to learn that someone else was pursuing these very same issues. Joseph Zepeda makes an independent case in his article "'To whom my own glad debts are incalculable': St. Augustine and human loves in *The Four Loves* and *Till We Have Faces*".[120] I cannot do full justice to it here, but I would briefly like mention the most relevant similarities and dissimilarities between our studies.

First, Zepeda also notices (independently, for Gregory is not cited) that Lewis wrongfully calls Augustine's unnamed friend "Nebridius". Second, he also critically examines Lewis's objection, and argues that Augustine's constellating category is not security but *truth*. In book four, Augustine is really talking about *how* we ought to love the things we love, not how we ought to choose *which* things to love. He regrets loving his friend as if he was immortal, mocking his deathbed baptism, and thus estranging a friend and jeopardizing a soul. Thirdly, and most delightfully, Zepeda also turns to one of Lewis's literary works for support. *Till We Have Faces*, he says, expresses admirably the very Augustinian ideas that were missed in the account of *The*

[119] Lewis 1960a, 137.
[120] Zepeda 2012.

Four Loves. Finally, both papers agree that if Lewis indeed misunderstood, it is not a fundamental disagreement.

But here Zepeda drops the "if". Lewis obviously misunderstands. My paper does not definitely settle the matter. While neither of us "blame him too much for losing count of the incalculable on this occasion"[121] (to borrow Zepeda's brilliant wordplay), this is for different reasons. I would forgive a miscalculation because Augustine can at times be ambiguous; Zepeda, because Lewis made "such marvelous use of these very ideas in the novel".[122]

The other noteworthy difference between the studies relates to method. Whereas I provide more scholarly background on Lewis and sources on Augustine, Zepeda provides more source material by Augustine. His is very much a narrowly drawn textual investigation, both of Lewis and Augustine. This exposes the most striking *limitation* in *my* presentation: I fail to provide the disputed passage in book four in full. As a result, being fully privy to only one side of the correspondence (not unlike in *The Screwtape Letters*), the reader is forced to look it up for him- or herself. Luckily, Augustine's *Confessions* is readily available, even if Lewis's annotated copy of it is not.

Lewis's annotated copy of the *Confessions* nonetheless exists (see Chapter 2.3 above). So does his copy of *De Civitate Dei*. A worthwhile undertaking would be to analyse Lewis's notes in order to deepen and test existing studies on Augustine's influence on Lewis, including the present study. Such an undertaking might lead to new discoveries across disciplines.

One of the many questions that call for examination, or re-examination, is Lewis's understanding of *ordo amoris*. Some scholars suspect that Lewis "seems to lack an *ordo caritatis*",[123] but surely this must depend on what we mean by it. Lewis refers to a hierarchy of loves often in his works, and in *The Abolition of Man* he writes approvingly: "St Augustine defines virtue as *ordo amoris*, the ordinate condition of the affections in which every object is accorded that kind of degree of love which is appropriate to it."[124] Meilaender detects a hierarchical approach in Lewis's theology of love, even if he "did not

[121] Zepeda 2012, 26.
[122] Zepeda 2012, 26.
[123] Saarinen 2006, 171 n. 14.
[124] Lewis 1943, chapter 1. Lewis refers to "*De Civ. Dei*, xv. 22. Cf. ibid. ix. 5, xi. 28".

want to take over the medieval model in its full-blown complexity".[125] What exactly *did* Lewis take over?

My hypothesis is that, for Lewis, a right order of loves does not depend on quantifiable ingredients, like comparative feelings or scalable intrinsic values. If Lewis subscribes to any "order of loves", it is primarily in terms of *loyalty*. A right order of loves is a right order of loyalties. "Inordinate love" in such a scheme would mean misplaced ultimate loyalty. This insight may even help to discern the difference between *worship* (love due to God only) and *veneration* (love due to people), and thus contribute to the solution to a pressing ecumenical challenge.[126]

3.4 Essay 4: C. S. Lewis and Anders Nygren on Spiritual Longing

3.4.1 Objectives

The fourth and final essay, entitled *"Praeparatio Evangelica – or Daemonica? C. S. Lewis and Anders Nygren on Sehnsucht"*, is also the last of the three Nygren-specific essays. It has two main objectives. First, it aims to critically re-evaluate the longstanding assumption that Lewis's distinction of need-love and gift-love is a translation of Nygren's eros/agape distinction. This parallel is found to be simplistic and in need of greater nuance.

Building on this, the essay then evaluates the novel and rival assumption that it is actually Lewis's concept of *spiritual longing* (Joy or *Sehnsucht*), not need-love, that captures most of Nygren's eros. Essay one had argued that Joy is relevant to the Nygren debate, and that Joy somewhat overlaps with Nygren's eros. In essay two, I went as far as to suggest that Joy might actually be a more comprehensive translation of eros than need-love. Essay four can be described as the outburst of the compounded impetus to

[125] Meilaender 2003, 74–75, here 75.
[126] I have, in fact, already begun to work on this. See my article "Worship, Veneration, and Idolatry: Observations from C. S. Lewis", in *Religious Studies* (Lepojärvi 2014a). See also Lepojärvi 2012b and 2014b.

investigate the issue properly. This is done by carefully comparing and contrasting Joy with the *three* main features of Nygren's eros.

I must mention one important *exclusion*. As Lewis and Nygren's opposite stances on the nature and value of spiritual longing are gradually unpacked, the astute reader might begin to discern (correctly) a possible convergence with the contemporaneous debate among Catholic theologians over *desiderium naturale* that followed Henri de Lubac's (1896–1991) seminal *Surnaturel* (1946). No discussion of this convergence is forthcoming, however, except as a topic for further research. In terms of subject, analysis, and contribution to existing literature, this essay is already the most ambitious of the four.

3.4.2 Contributions

This essay begins by noting two remarkable facts about *The Four Loves*. First, Nygren is not mentioned, although *The Four Loves*, beginning with its opening page, is a conscious rebuttal of what Lewis elsewhere calls Nygren's "central contrast" between self-regarding and selfless love. Second, the refutation of this contrast, the denigration of *eros* and its separation from *agape*, is executed without adopting or even using Nygren's terms. I suggest that both decisions are part of a deliberate apologetic strategy to bypass certain defences and avoid the paradox of polemics.

Professional theologians and philosophers, however, immediately recognized the relevance of *The Four Loves* to the Nygren debate. In chronologically enumerating scholars who have made this connection, this essay makes use of source material from 1960 that, to the best of my knowledge, has not seen print since its original appearance. Lewis's own terms *need-love* and *gift-love* overcome Nygren's central contrast. But they are not, so I argue, perfect translations of Nygren's eros and agape. To suggest a parallel, as many scholars have done, between Lewis's need-love/gift-love distinction and Nygren's eros/agape distinction is not inaccurate, but I show through conceptual analysis that it has not been accurate enough.

Moreover, a close reading of Lewis's references to Nygren (none of which are in *The Four Loves*) reveals that Lewis himself was from the very outset conscious of the complexity of Nygren's model. This makes it unlikely that he ever intended his need-love and gift-love as exhaustive translations of eros and agape. This assumption has been our doing, eisegesis instead of exegesis. The fact alone that Lewis introduces a third element (appreciative love) should prevent us from hasty equations.

The other cluster of contributions results from testing the hypothesis that, in Lewis's taxonomy of love, his concept of spiritual longing (Joy) is actually a better translation of Nygren's eros.

On the one hand, the analysis shows that, in the end, no one thing in Lewis's mental repertoire *can* serve as a perfect translation on Nygren's eros. The reason for this is that eros, Lewis believes, is an *abstract caricature* of love (just as Nygren's agape is a caricature of excellent love). Lewis posits Joy as *a real good* in sync with a real universe, so by its very nature it cannot be an unqualified equivalent of Nygren's unreal eros. On the other hand, the analysis shows that Joy positively incorporates *all three* main features of Nygren's eros, while avoiding their derogative exaggerations. Joy is essentially a *purified version* of eros.

The differences that remain allow us to see what Lewis thought amiss in Nygren's three-fold portrayal of spiritual longing as a form of love. First, Joy (like eros) is a value-based love of desire, but (unlike eros) it is non-hierarchical and neither idolizes nor demonizes nature. Second, Joy is eudaimonistic and teleological, but it is not simply egocentric and possessive. Finally, Joy is a human drive toward the divine, but it is not delusionally self-sufficient. These differences are more or less agapic. This is not unexpected. Lewis believes that Nygren tried to force on the conception of love artificial either-or contrasts that real love, in all of its forms, overcomes.

The essay also proves that Lewis himself was conscious of the incongruities between his and Nygren's understanding of spiritual longing. This lends further support to my conviction that Lewis constructed his model in conscious opposition to Nygren. In Lewis's theological vision, far from obfuscating the Gospel, spiritual longing is a God-given desire that prepares

the way for it.

3.4.3 Further Research

Ignorance of Gilbert Meilaender's study *The Way that Leads There* (2006) prevented me from consulting its chapter "Desire", making this omission one of two *limitations* of essay four. Meilaender discusses human desire, including spiritual desire, in the thought of a dozen or so theologians – among them Nygren and Lewis. I found out about this important secondary source too late but managed to acknowledge it in a footnote. The only upshot of my ignorance and lost opportunity is that the present essay remains entirely independent.

The other limitation relates to my first objective. The list of scholars who since 1960 have noted the parallel between need-love/gift-love and eros/agape is incomplete. While I did not state it openly, I intended to give a comprehensive overview. Since completing this study, however, I realized that I had failed to mention two additional references. In her doctoral thesis (1987), Paulette G. Sanders notes: "In fact, what Nygren has just described [as eros] sounds like Lewis's definition of Need-love."[127] More recently, in his article "Love, the Pope, and C. S. Lewis" (2007), Cardinal Avery Dulles writes: "Eros and agape (which he [Lewis] prefers to designate as 'Need-love' and 'Gift-love') can exist, he says, on either the natural or supernatural plane."[128]

I now turn to three possible avenues for further research encouraged by the results of essay four. "I have no time for mere *either-or* people", Lewis told his friend Dom Bede Griffiths in a letter in 1951.[129] The reader whose mind jumps to Nygren cannot be blamed. While Nygren is not mentioned, the main topic of discussion is the relation between the natural and supernatural. Interestingly, the only theologian who *is* mentioned is the one who famously bridged the two planes. A number of events, Lewis explains,

[127] Sanders 1987, 21. Nygren is discussed briefly on pp. 19–21.
[128] Dulles 2007. Dulles notes that *Deus Caritas Est* ("the Pope" is Benedict XVI), unlike *The Four Loves*, makes "no mention of appreciative love".
[129] Lewis 2006, 111.

"have so far kept me from tackling [Henri de] Lubac." So far as I can tell, this is the sole reference to de Lubac in all of Lewis's writings, so we do not know whether he ever got around to reading him.[130]

Lewis's direct knowledge of the contemporaneous *desiderium naturale* debate is, of course, less interesting than the debate itself. As explained above, I had to exclude it from this essay, but *Lewis's position in the debate* could be constructed retrospectively. A good starting point would be an analysis of spiritual longing in the Cosmic Trilogy. The *hrossa* – an unfallen race – desire union with God, perhaps signalling where Lewis's sympathies lie. In nonfictional works, like *Surprised by Joy* and "The Weight of Glory", Lewis makes observations about the complex, mysterious but real, connection between pre- and post-lapsarian longing and between pre- and post-conversion longing. In speaking, for instance, of an unknown desire that at first seems disconnected from (because it cannot desire directly) its ultimate object, Lewis could possibly even contribute to the discussion.

Another worthwhile undertaking would be to re-evaluate *Rudolf Otto's influence on Lewis*. Work has been done on this front,[131] but at least two questions merit closer scrutiny. First, like Denis de Rougemont (see Chapter 3.2.3), Otto may have influenced Lewis in more astonishing ways than previously fathomed. I claimed that the accounts of Joy in *The Pilgrim's Regress* and *Surprised by Joy* echo "sometimes almost verbatim" Otto's account of numinous awe. For textual evidence, one may begin by comparing their accounts of (1) numinous awe and Joy as *sui generis* phenomena, (2) the primacy of experience for correct interpretation, (3) the request to discontinue reading without such experience, (4) the disproportion between the stimuli and the experience, and (5) the ultimate object desired for its own sake.[132]

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[130] Karl Rahner (1904–1984), another key player in the *desiderium naturale* debate, is not mentioned at all.

[131] Relevant existing studies include Carnell (1999), Downing (2005), Saarinen (forthcoming 2016), and especially Barkman (2015).

[132] Snippets to whet our inquisitorial appetite: (1) Numinous awe is "perfectly *sui generis* and irreducible" (Otto 1953, 7) and Joy is "distinguished from [all] other longings" (Lewis 1998a, xii). (3) Whoever has not experienced numinous awe "is requested to read no farther" (Otto 1953, 8) and whoever has not experienced Joy "need read this book no further" (Lewis 1955, 23). (5) The object of numinous awe is desired "for its own sake" (Otto 1953, 32) and the object of Joy is desired "for what it is in itself" (Lewis 1955, 218). Cf. Barkman (2015) advises

Secondly, while Lewis felt comfortable using *Sehnsucht* and Joy interchangeably, he did not adopt the term *numinous awe*. Why not? It was probably not only to avoid technical theological jargon. They are closely related experiences but may not be perfectly synonymous. In fact, Lewis in one place seems to distinguish between the two. At one – rather late – phase of his experiences of Joy he *entered*, he says, "into the region of awe".[133] This may imply that Joy approaches numinous awe as its religious content and relation to the divine begins crystallize. There may also be other factors that set them apart. Like his copies of the works of de Rougemont and Augustine, Lewis's copy of Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* is annotated and invites closer inspection.[134]

The third profitable project would be "fitting together what Lewis says about love in *The Problem of Pain* with what he says about various forms of love in *The Four Loves*".[135] Essay four noted how one of the several reasons why Lewis's need-love is an inadequate translation of Nygren's eros is that, at least in *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis says that in one sense we can speak of *divine* need-love. Surprisingly, this aspect seems entirely absent in *The Four Loves*. There we find only the echoes of *The Problem of Pain*'s "ringing declaration"[136] of divine impassibility: "[What] can be less like anything we believe of God's life than Need-love?"[137] and again: "This primal love is Gift-love. In God there is no hunger that needs to be filled, only plenteousness that desires to give."[138] There is, however, necessarily no fundamental contradiction between the two works, written two decades apart. Some (not all) of the friction diffuses when we mark, as Meilaender has, that it is God's love in the *original act of creation* ("this primal love") that is pure giving; but

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against exaggerating the significance of Otto's influence on Lewis. He also points to some evidence (123–124) suggesting that Lewis read *The Idea of the Holy* in 1936, which is *after* the publication of *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933) but long before *Surprised by Joy* (1955).

[133] Lewis 1955, 208.

[134] Lewis's copy of *The Idea of the Holy*, found in the Walter Hooper Collection at Chapel Hill, may not be the only work by Otto that Lewis was "deeply influenced by" (Lewis 2006, 980). The Wade Center has copies of Otto's *Religious Essays: A Supplement to 'The Idea of Holy'* (London, 1931) and *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man: A Study in the History of Religions* (London, 1943/1951?), both annotated.

[135] Wolterstorff 2010, 4 n. 3.

[136] Wolterstorff's description (2010, 5).

[137] Lewis 1960a, 9.

[138] Lewis 1960a, 144.

"in that very act of giving he binds himself to man so that he [*thereafter*] forever desires fellowship with him".[139] Nonetheless, the total absence of divine need-love in *The Four Loves* continues to baffle me.

[139] Meilaender 2003, 59 n. 23.

4 REMAINING SCRUPLES

The previous chapter offered synopses of the objectives and contributions of each essay. It also introduced topics for further research. This final chapter discusses two remaining scruples. The first is Lewis's curious respect for Nygren. The second is the question I myself am most likely to direct my energies to after the completion of this study.

4.1 Lewis's Curious Respect for Nygren

Lewis's respect for Nygren is curious because the rift between their theologies of love could not be steeper. "Lewis would not, in the end, agree with all of Nygren's views"[140] is somewhat of an understatement; it would be better to stress, with Caroline Simon, how "Lewis had serious disagreements with Anders Nygren".[141] My three Nygren-specific essays go even further by suggesting that significant points of agreement between Lewis and Nygren on the theologies of love and longing are scant. The agreements are not even peculiarly Nygrenian, but are rather pan-Christian platitudes like "God is love" and "God first loved us" and so on. For that reason, they are rather superfluous to "the Nygren debate", however crucial theologically otherwise.

This raises a perplexing question. Why did Lewis not criticize Nygren more openly? Lewis often chooses not to name his opponents or those with whom he is interacting. There is no mention, for example, of the literary critic F. R. Leavis (1895–1978) in *An Experiment in Criticism*, but the "Vigilant Critics" are clearly the Leavisites. Elizabeth Anscombe (1919–2001) is not mentioned in the revised *Miracles*. Augustine appears simply as "a famous Christian" in *Mere Christianity*. At other times Lewis does criticize authors, even ones he most emphatically respects like Augustine and Spenser, and even his contemporaries like Otto and de Rougemont. Omitting Nygren from *The Four Loves* in particular, I suggested, may have been a

[140] Vaus 2004, 164.
[141] Simon 2010, 154.

deliberate apologetic move. Why give publicity to an author you think only muddies the waters?

This is not to say that Lewis never mentions Nygren in his popular writing. He does, as we have seen. But on these occasions Nygren is never criticized – or not explicitly. Let the following passage from *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* exemplify the curious mixture of respect and distrust Lewis had for Nygren's work.

> Earthly glory would never have moved us but by being a shadow or *idolon* of the Divine Glory, in which we are called to participate… Arthur is an embodiment of what Professor Nygren calls "Eros religion", the thirst of the soul for the Perfection beyond the created universe… [Arthur's experiences] must, it seems to me, be taken for a picture not of nascent ambition and desire for fame but *either of natural or celestial love; and they are certainly not simply a picture of the former*… The seeker must advance, with the possibility at each step of error, beyond the false Florimells to the true, and beyond the true Florimell to the Glory.[142]

The connections to Joy are conspicuous. The reference to Nygren, however, is frustratingly ambiguous. Is Lewis paying "Professor Nygren" a compliment by summoning him as a theological authority? It is difficult – indeed, without prior knowledge of Lewis's epistolary critique, it is almost impossible – to catch the *swallowed disagreement* with Nygren, implicit even here. The seemingly innocent words "not simply a picture of the former" carry the innocuous punch. "A precious straw, this last hesitating sentence, to show where the wind is blowing."[143] For Nygren, spiritual longing could in reality *never* be "celestial love". Natural love it can be, but only in the postlapsarian sense: nascent ambition or desire for fame at best, sinful self-deification at worst. Lewis's more "optimistic" interpretation confuses loves that, in Nygren's original theory, should never be confused. The student or literary critic reading this passage without theological training could hardly surmise what is at stake here.

But we have not fully answered the question. What accounts for Lewis's unwillingness to criticize Nygren publicly? I propose three additional reasons. I begin with the most speculative one.

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[142] Lewis 1954, 382–383, emphasis added (except *idolon*). See Chapter 2.4 for the full passage.
[143] A recalcitrantly memorable sentence from Burnaby (2007, 64) on Augustine.

Did Lewis ever read *both* parts of Nygren's magnum opus? It has already been established that in the mid-1930s Janet Spens and Lewis were discussing *only* part one, since part two – two-thirds of the entire work – was not published until 1938 and 1939 in two separate volumes. Given Lewis's keen interest in Nygren's theory it seems almost inconceivable that Lewis would not have known about part two and not read it. But this is exactly what I think happened. One should think twice about proving a negative, but the case is quadruply strong.

First, as already noted, there is no trace of any edition of Nygren's book in Lewis's library. On the one hand, this is not surprising: the copy Lewis read in the 1930s was a loan. But apparently Lewis was not moved by this encounter to acquire his own copy of part one. Why would he acquire the sequel? At least there is no historical evidence that he did. Secondly, there seems to be no textual evidence either. None of the ten references to Nygren in Lewis's writings pertain to part two's main thrust (more of this below) in any meaningful way. Thirdly, in his letter to Mary Van Deusen in the mid-1950s Lewis writes: "Nygren is surely wrong *if* he says that merited love is sinful."[144] Does Lewis not know what Nygren's thoughts are on this matter? Fourthly, the letters to Mary Van Deusen are from 1954 and 1955 – soon after the publication of the one-volume edition of *Agape and Eros* in English in 1953. Is this a coincidence? It seems fair to suppose that *she* had recently read it, and that is why the questions that were topical for Lewis in the 1930s were now topical for her in the 1950s. Van Deusen had the full text at her disposal. Lewis did not.

The difference this makes is this. *Lewis was probably not aware of the full scope of Nygren's project*. Nygren was not merely contrasting Pagan eros with love in the New Testament, which is the line of argument in part one. The remaining undulating history of Christian love is described in part two – up to its "natural solution in the Reformation".[145] Only then do we learn of Augustine's botched "synthesis of *eros* and *agape*" which Luther "smashed to

[144] Lewis 2006, 555, emphasis added. See Chapter 2.4 for the full passage.
[145] Nygren 1969, xv.

pieces".[146] The combined book's historical and theological climax is "Luther's Copernican revolution" in his "campaign against Catholic Christianity".[147] Augustinianism is the bogey of the story; Luther, "the man who vanquishes it".[148] Lewis had respect for Luther but not uncritical respect, and though "Protestant" was not for him "a dyslogistic term", the history of the Reformation was a "tragic farce".[149] It is Augustine, not Luther, whom Lewis salutes as "a great saint and a great thinker to whom my own glad debts are incalculable".[150] How would Lewis have reacted to Nygren's full portrayal of the history of Christian love? Would he have objected to Nygren's caricatures of both Augustine and Luther had he been aware of them?

The second reason for Lewis's charitable outlook is less controversial or nebulous. *Lewis was grateful to Nygren*. We remember what Outka said about Nygren's critics being "legion, but few have ignored or been unaffected by his thesis".[151] Lewis's letters are particularly forthcoming in this respect. Nygren had shaken him up in the 1930s. Twenty years later, Lewis looks back with gratitude: "The great merit of Nygren, so far as I'm concerned, was that he gave one a new *tool of thought*: it is so [very] convenient and illuminating to be able to talk (and therefore to think) about the two elements of love as *Eros & Agape*."[152] His appreciation of Nygren is reserved but genuine: "Still his book was well worth reading: we both have the [very] important idea of Eros and Agape no clearly in our minds, and can keep it after we have let all

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[146] Nygren 1969, 560.
[147] Nygren 1969, 681ff.
[148] Nygren 1969, 562. While Luther provided the theological grammar for a coup d'état, Nygren believes Augustine's view of love continues to dominate Christian thought. "Not even the Reformation succeeded in making any serious alteration. In Evangelical Christendom to the present day, Augustine's view has done far more than Luther's to determine what is meant by Christian love" (540).
[149] Lewis 1954, 37. In a letter to an Italian Catholic priest, Don Giovanni Calabria (1873–1954), later canonized by John Paul II in 1999, Lewis writes: "That the whole cause of schism lies in sin I do not hold to be certain. I grant that no schism is without sin but the one proposition does not necessarily follow the other. From your side Tetzel, from ours Henry VIII, were lost men: and, if you like, Pope Leo from your side and from ours Luther (although for my own part I would pass on both a lighter sentence). But what would I think of your Thomas More or of our William Tyndale? All the writings of the one and all the writings of the other I have lately read right through. Both of them seem to me most saintly men and to have loved God with their whole heart" (Lewis 2004, 815; translated from Latin by Martin Moyniham). While Lewis was familiar with many of Luther's works, there is no evidence that he was ever moved to acquire any copies for himself.
[150] Lewis 1960a, 137.
[151] Outka 1972, 1. See Chapter 1.3 above.
[152] Lewis 2006, 538. See Chapter 2.4 for the full passage.

his exaggerations fade out of our minds."[153] By the time he sat down to write *The Four Loves* in the late 1950s, Lewis, as an academic, has earned his spurs, and as a Christian, is at the height of his maturity. He can afford to assimilate the good and, unless he sees pressing reasons not to, forgo the bad. "[T]he ripest are kindest."[154]

The third explanation for Lewis's public silence about his disagreement is this. *Lewis may have never clearly resolved the theological implications of spiritual longing*. In *The Pilgrim's Regress*, as recounted in essay four, Lewis had said that disparaging spiritual longing is "evil".[155] But in *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis qualifies his legitimation of spiritual longing with a mild reservation: "Such is my opinion; and it may be erroneous."[156] Austin Farrer has commended Lewis for such temperance: "Is romantic yearning an appetite for heaven, or is it the ultimate refinement of covetousness? One cannot but respect his sense of responsibility in voicing his doubt about what so deeply moved him."[157] While Lewis was confident that this yearning had been for him *praeparatio evangelica*, it is possible – nay, fairly probable – that Nygren's warnings helped curb this confidence from swelling into overconfidence. "Perhaps this secret desire is part of the Old Man and must be crucified before the end. But … hardly any degree of crucifixion or transformation could go beyond what the desire itself leads us to anticipate. Again, if [my] opinion is not true, something better is. But 'something better' – not this or that experience, but beyond it – is almost the definition of the thing I am trying to describe."[158]

So much for Lewis's definition of spiritual longing. What about his definition of love?

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[153] Lewis 2006, 555. See Chapter 2.4 for the full passage.
[154] Lewis 1955, 204.
[155] Lewis 1998a, xvi. See the discussion of this in essay four.
[156] Lewis 1998b, 123.
[157] Farrer 1965, 40. Austin Farrer (1904–1968), the English theologian and philosopher, was a close friend of Lewis.
[158] Lewis 1998b, 123–124.

4.2 Lewis's Curious Definition of Love

Lewis's definition of love is curious because he does not seem to have one. While many of Lewis's other writings have "formulations that sound like definitions of love",[159] the one book where you would expect to find one, *The Four Loves*, fails to provide one. This, one might say, is mildly surprising.

I am not being particularly brave or original. It was noted already in the direct aftermath of its publication: "By distinguishing four loves and including so much under each", observed Martin D'Arcy in his otherwise favourable review, "interest is kept up, but the meaning of *love itself* risks being vague and fluid".[160] Simon puts it in Aristotelian language: "Lewis … never gives us an explicit definition of the genus of which [the various loves] could be considered candidate species."[161]

Whatever the reason for the omission, in one sense it is wise. It is safer to discuss "features" and "modes" and "elements" of love than to advance a purportedly sufficient definition of "love itself". Like a bar of soap, one might lose it if squeezed too tightly. But then, one might lose it by gripping too loosely. To say that Lewis withheld his definition of love because he trusts "our capacity to grasp the rudiments of love from lived experience"[162] is perhaps to let him off the hook. *The Four Loves* remains open to the charge of "a tangle of analysis"[163] and "a dizzying variety of formulations".[164] What is "simply love, the quintessence of all loves whether erotic, parental, filial, amicable, or feudal"[165]?

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[159] Meilaender 2003, 60–61. For a concatenation for these formulations, see Meilaender 2003, 59–70. The most promising appears in a discussion on war: "Love is not affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person's ultimate good as far as it can be obtained" ("Answers to Questions on Christianity" in Lewis 2000, 317–328, here 318). See also Lewis 2006, 722 n. 95.

[160] D'Arcy 1960, emphasis added.

[161] Simon 2010, 148. Simon (2010, 148–149) offers a helpful summary of the various divisions of love found in *The Four Loves*.

[162] Simon 2010, 148. I agree that the variety of formulations serve as "mutually illuminating schemata" (Simon 2010, 147), at least to some extent. But yet another recurring distinction that Lewis fails to explain is the difference between "pleasures" and "'loves' (properly so called)" (Lewis 1960a, 21).

[163] MacIntyre 1960, 13.

[164] Meilaender 2003, 59.

[165] Lewis 1954, 505. Lewis is here not trying to define love but to convey what Shakespeare in some of his Sonnets says about love.

The British science fiction television series *Blake's 7* (1978–1981) took its name from the hero Roj Blake and his team. The composition of characters changed considerably throughout the series. Some actors left, others were replaced. By the end of season four, there was no Blake, nor were there seven of them. Something similar has happened to my view of *The Four Loves* over the course of this study. There are not "four", nor are they even "loves".

What is needed, I believe, is a *total re-examination* of the purpose and nature of *The Four Loves*. What is its underlying genus of love? What exactly does Lewis mean by charity? What is a good lover?

I suspect an analytical investment in Lewis's original *radio talks* on love (1958), on which the book is based, might pay a helpful dividend.[166] The talks are almost a third shorter than the subsequent book, making their argument leaner and more focused. The opening sentence is at once blunt and revealing: "In Greek, there are four words for love." Not, that is, four loves, but four words for love. Moreover, the concepts *need-love* and *gift-love* are entirely missing; instead, Lewis speaks simply of "need" and "gift" in love. The leaner frame also helps to see how Lewis's main concern is *ethics*, not theology per se.[167] Lewis's original acceptance of the invitation to give a series of radio talks on a topic of his own choosing reads: "The subject I want to say something about in the near future, in some form or other, is the four Loves – Storge, Philia, Eros, and Agape. This seems to bring in nearly the whole of Christian *ethics*."[168]

The first three of these, I now think, are not loves at all. They are best understood as simply *human relationships* and *feelings*.[169] As relationships, they provide the *venue* for love proper (the space and occasion for it), and as feelings, they provide *fuel* for love (the material and motivation). Towards

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[166] The only existing study of the radio talks that I know of is a rhetorical analysis (Keefe 1968). For an amusing account of the hiccups involved in production of the talks, see Hooper 1998a, 86–90.

[167] This may in part explain, for instance, the book's rather one-sided doctrine of God (see Chapter 3.4.3). It has been superadded to the original frame.

[168] Lewis 2006, 941, emphasis added. The letter continues: "Wd. [Would] this be suitable for your purpose? Of course I shd. [should] do it on the 'popular' level – not (as the four words perhaps suggest) philologically."

[169] Cf. Simon 2010, 148: "Though at one point he [Lewis] calls love 'mere feeling', this is not a serious attempt of definition, even of the natural loves."

the end of the book, Lewis refers to the natural loves as "the general fabric of our earthly life with its affections and relationships".[170] If I am right, Lewis could have spoken on a dozen "loves" in this sense.

Finding the genus of love ("simply love") is tricky but within the bounds of possibility. Perhaps surprisingly, it is to be found not in the "fourth" love, charity/agape, but rather in the tripartite schema of need-love, gift-love, and appreciative love. For Lewis, love is essentially *an appreciative and receptive commitment to the other's flourishing*. Our relationships deserve to be called love only when we can say to the beloved: "It is good that you exist! I will involve myself in your well-being, and welcome your love in return." How do we succeed in this? This is where charity, rightly understood, steps in.

Lewis's idea of charity is most misunderstood and thus most in need of meticulous re-examination. It has been advocated that despite the differences between Nygren and Lewis, "Nygren's definition of Agape, however, fits Lewis's definition [of charity] given in *The Four Loves*".[171] Indeed, in my correspondence with ordinary readers of *The Four Loves*, something like Nygrenian understanding of agape is regularly read into charity, the climax of the book. But this is misguided. Lewis's charity is very unlike Nygren's agape. It is not an abstract, celestial solvent that is miraculously poured down from heaven to somehow replace our earthly loves. It is something much more practical: the unity of character.

> William Morris wrote a poem called *Love is Enough* and someone is said to have reviewed it briefly in the words "It isn't". Such has been the burden of this book. The natural loves are not self-sufficient. Something else, at first vaguely described as "*decency and common sense*" but later revealed as *goodness*, and finally as the *whole Christian life in one particular relation*, must come to the help of the mere feeling if the feeling is to be kept sweet.[172]

Once we discard our Nygrenian lenses, we notice that "decency", "common sense", and other "moral principles" appear over and over again in every chapter as protectors and sustainers of love. Take affection, for instance:

> Affection produces happiness if – and only if – there is common sense and

[170] Lewis 1960a, 154–155; see also 156 ("love-relations").
[171] Saunders 1987, 21.
[172] Lewis 1960a, 154–155, emphasis added (except for *Love is Enough*).

> give and take and "decency". In other words, only if something more, and other, than Affection is added. The mere feeling is not enough. You need "common sense", that is, reason. You need "give and take"; that is, you need justice, continually stimulating mere Affection when it fades and restraining it when it forgets or would defy the art of love. You need "decency". There is no disguising the fact that this means goodness; patience, self-denial, humility, and the continual intervention of a far higher sort of love than Affection, in itself, can ever be.[173]

In his essay "We Have No 'Right to Happiness'", Lewis says something strikingly similar: "When two people achieve lasting happiness, this is not solely because they are great lovers but because they are also – I must put this crudely – good people; controlled, loyal, fair-minded, mutually adaptable people."[174] Notice the breakdown of character into a unified list of virtues: self-control, loyalty, fair-mindedness, adaptability, and so on. A good lover displays these qualities in eminence. As a younger man, Lewis had written approvingly how "the virtues of a good lover were indistinguishable from those of a good man".[175] In the end, he retains this definition of a good lover. Good lovers are good people.

[173] Lewis 1960a, 24; see also 66–67, 107–108, 127, 131–134. Lewis discusses "common sense" also in *Studies in Words* (1960b, 146–150) and *The Discarded Image* (1964, 164–165).
[174] Lewis 2000, 388–392, here 391.
[175] Lewis 1936, 199.

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6 ESSAYS

The four essays are reprinted here in either the format of their original publication (essays 1–3) or in the format in which they were accepted for publication (essay 4). For the outline of essay-specific objectives, see Chapter 2.1 above. For more information on the four journals, see Chapter 2.5.

Essay 1

"C. S. Lewis and 'The Nygren Debate'," in *The Chronicle of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society* (or *Journal of Inklings Studies*), vol. 7 (2010) pp. 25–42

Essay 2

"Does Eros Seek Happiness? A Critical Study of C. S. Lewis's Reply to Anders Nygren," in *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, vol. 53 (2011) pp. 208–224

Essay 3

"A Friend's Death: C. S. Lewis's Disagreement with St. Augustine," in *Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal*, vol. 5/6 (2012) pp. 67–80

Essay 4

"Praeparatio Evangelica – or Daemonica? C. S. Lewis and Anders Nygren on *Sehnsucht*," in *The Harvard Theological Review*, accepted for publication (2015) pp. 1–31

C. S. Lewis and 'the Nygren Debate'

Jason Lepojärvi

Dr. Nygren

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

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

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

A Firestorm of Scholarly Debate

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

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

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

sense of the words[21]—without explicitly mentioning Nygren himself, as is customary in Papal encyclicals when criticism is offered.

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

Ethics before the *Summa*

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

Was Lewis a Thomist or a Platonist? His Platonism is unmistakable. Yet his insistence on reason, for example, has led many to believe he was essentially a Thomist[24]: If his Platonism is unmistakable, so is the influence of Aristotle. This, according to Lewis himself, accounts for the appearance of a strong Thomist influence in his thought. Especially on ethics, he often followed Aristotle where Aquinas also followed him. 'Aquinas and I,' he said, 'were, in fact, at the same school—I don't say the same class! And I had read the *Ethics* long before I ever worked at the *Summa*'.[25] This aspect—his virtue ethics—is still largely an unmapped area in Lewis studies. Obviously it has implications for a theology of love as well, for love is properly a virtue.

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

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

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

Native Luminosity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'The Necessary Was Always Possible'

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

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

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

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

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

We Do Not Disparage Silver

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Inconsolable Wound

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wondelone

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

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

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

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

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

Notes

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

(Finnish theological journal), vol. 2 (2006), p. 169.

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

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

love flows' (p. 735). Nygren's conception of love is almost predestinarian, as 'all choice on man's part is excluded. Man loves good … because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him and taken control of him, so that he cannot do other than love God' (pp. 213–214).

65. In Lewis' Christology, too, love is a filial response to the love of the Father. As Christ surrenders himself back to the Father, '[f]rom the highest to the lowest, self exists to be abdicated and, by that abdication, becomes the more truly self, to be thereupon yet more abdicated, and so forever' (Lewis, *Pain*, p. 127).

66. Ward (*Planet Narnia*, p. 189) suggests two biographical sources for the prominence of the rival loves theme: the loss of his mother at an early age, and his long relationship with Janie Moore, who, by all accounts, never reconciled to the loss of her son.

67. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 118.

68. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 119, italics added.

69. According to Saarinen, Lewis is not an advocate of an Augustinian caritas-synthesis, because 'he seems to lack an *ordo caritatis*' and because 'the natural affinities between the loves are weaker than in Thomas' ('Eros', p. 171 n. 14). Saarinen's Lewis-analyses are usually accurate, but I do think Lewis accepts a certain order of loves.

70. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p 75. Lewis is here commenting on Shakespeare's *Troilus* speeches and says that for Ulysses it is moonshine. Ward, after quoting this passage (*Planet Narnia*, p. 139), adds a postscript: 'For Lewis, too'.

71. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 61. In Lewis' opinion 'comparative evaluations of essentially different excellences are … senseless' (referring to the maxim *heterogenea non comparari possunt*). See Lewis, *The Discarded Image. An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2005 [1964]), p. 20.

72. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 117.

73. See Lewis, 'First and Second Things', in *Essay Collection*, pp. 653–656. First published in 1942, this essay was reproduced in *Undeceptions* (1971) and *First and Second Things* (1985), and is now in *Compelling Reason* (1998).

74. Digory realizes that 'there might be things more terrible even than losing someone you love by death', *The Magician's Nephew* (London: HarperCollins, 2005 [1955]), p. 203 (chapter 12). Ward comments on this: '[T]hat is, he [Digory] acknowledges the possibility of denying his love for Aslan for the sake of clinging on to his Mother' (*Planet Narnia*, p. 189).

75. Lewis, 'Five Sonnets', in *Poems*, pp. 126–127. To ask for the Morning Star is to ask for Christ.

76. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 87.

77. Sheldon Vanauken, *A Severe Mercy. With Eighteen Letters by C. S. Lewis* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980 [1977]), p. 29. See also Vanauken, *Under the Mercy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988 [1985]), pp. 141, 143, 149.

78. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 105.

79. *The Imitation of Christ* (Book 2, ch. 10).

80. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 3.

81. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 113.

82. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 127.

83. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 2.

84. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 3.

85. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 2.

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

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

108. Lewis, *Surprised*, pp. 160–161.

109. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 161; also *Pilgrim's*, pp. xiii, 14–18.

110. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 161: He continues: 'I sometimes wonder whether all pleasures are not substitutes for Joy'.

111. Lewis, 'The Weight of Glory', in *Essay Collection*, pp. 96–106 [here p. 104]. Originally a sermon, it later appeared in *Transposition and Other Addresses* (1949), *They Asked for a Paper* (1962), and in *Screwtape Proposes a Toast* (1998).

112. Carnell's expression, in *Bright Shadow*, p. 137.

113. See Carnell on this point (*Bright Shadow*, p. 149).

114. Lewis, *English Literature*, pp. 356–357.

115. Vanauken, *Severe Mercy*, p. 93. See also Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: HarperCollins, 1977 [1961]), pp. 114–115.

116. Lewis, 'Weight', p. 99.

117. Lewis, *Hideous Strength*, p. 448. The allusion is to the Holy Spirit, cf. Acts 2:1–4. Ward comments: 'Nothing on earth, no appetite of flesh and blood, could satisfy the longing for the beauty symbolized by Venus' (*Planet Narnia*, p. 168). See Ward's analysis of the Venus motif in Lewis' writings, especially in *That Hideous Strength* and *The Magician's Nephew* (*Planet Narnia*, pp. 164–189).

118. Austin Farrer commends Lewis: 'Is romantic yearning an appetite for heaven, or is it the ultimate refinement of covetousness? One cannot but respect his [Lewis'] sense of responsibility in voicing his doubt about what so deeply moved him'. 'The Christian Apologist', in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, ed. Jocelyn Gibb (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1965), p. 40.

119. Lewis, *MacDonald*, p. 20.

120. Lewis, *Surpised*, 208.

121. Carnell believes Lewis never clearly resolved *Sehnsucht's* importance theologically. Following Gunnar Urang, he asks the crucial question: Does this romantic experience mediate revelatory reality or merely reflect it? Carnell sketches an answer: 'He [Lewis] insists that longing, conscience, and myth contain divine revelation, yet they do not have the same *objective* value as the revelation in Christ, though especially for those who have not heard of Christ, they have *subjective* value… In cold prose Lewis seems to take a negative view, claiming that for Sehnsucht only a reflective function. But his fictional and poetic images give it a greater import than that, suggesting that there is indeed a revelatory reality in *Sehnsucht*' (*Bright Shadow*, p. 162).

122. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 215.

123. Lewis, *Surprised*, p. 198.

Does Eros Seek Happiness?

A Critical Analysis of C. S. Lewis's Reply to Anders Nygren

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I. Introduction: A Conscious Showdown

C. S. Lewis first learned of the Swedish theologian Anders Nygren's *Eros och Agape* through a female colleague, Dr Janet Spens. Lewis responded with immediate interest. In a letter dated 16 November 1934, Lewis asks her, 'Can you tell me something more about Professor Nygren's *Eros and Agape*? I haven't heard of it.'[1] Spens then lends Lewis her copy of the first English translation *Agape and Eros: A Study of the Christian Idea of Love*.[2] On 8 January 1935, Lewis writes again: 'You will have begun to wonder if your *Agape & Eros* was lost forever! It is an intensely interesting book. I am inclined to think I disagree with him. […] However, I must tackle him again. He has shaken me up extremely.'[3]

Lewis was not the first, nor would he be the last, to be shaken up by this seminal work. As Eric Gregory, a former president of the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society, rightly notes, Nygren 'set off a firestorm of scholarly debate that preoccupied much of twentieth century Protestant and Roman Catholic thought'.[4] During Lewis's lifetime, two influential books were written in response to Nygren's theses: John Burnaby's *Amor Dei* (1938) and the

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1 C. S. Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. II, ed. by Walter Hooper (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004), 147.

2 The Swedish original, *Den kristna kärlekstanken genom tiderna: Eros och Agape*, was published in two parts in 1930 and 1936. The English translation was first published in three volumes in England by SPCK in 1932 (Part I), 1938 (Part II, vol. I), and 1939 (Part II, vol. II), and as a revised, in part retranslated, one-volume edition in 1953. In their correspondence, Lewis and Spens must be referring to Part I of the work, since Part II had not been published in English. Part I, which in terms of length accounts for roughly one-third of the entire work, 'consists of a study of the Christian idea of love as it appears in the New Testament and in contrast to the Hellenistic idea,' and Part II describes this history 'up to the point where the problem of "Agape and Eros" finds its natural solution in the Reformation.' See the translator Philip Watson's preface to *Agape and Eros* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1969), xv. Hereafter all citations of *Agape and Eros*, using *AE* for its abbreviation, are from this edition.

3 Lewis, *Collected Letters,* vol. II (see above, n. 1), 153, 154.

4 Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3–4.

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English Jesuit Martin D'Arcy's *The Mind and Heart of Love* (1945). By this time, *The Four Loves* (1960) had not been published, but D'Arcy had read Lewis's earlier scholarly study of medieval love, *The Allegory of Love* (1936), describing it as 'very important', 'magisterial', and in some historical analyses, 'definitive'.[5]

Anders Nygren notes Burnaby and D'Arcy's works in the preface to the revised English edition of *Agape and Eros* (1953). He insists that 'the reason why these important and interesting works come to different conclusions from my own, is essentially that they start from different premises. […] I have found no reason to abandon my original position at any point, and my work is therefore being republished without alteration.'[6] Indeed, despite these Roman Catholic and also Protestant critiques, Nygren's antithetical juxtaposition of the 'selfish pagan *eros*' and the 'unselfish Christian *agape*' became, if not normative, at least enormously influential in twentieth-century Protestant theology. Although this model has since proven to be somewhat a caricature, Nygren's theology of love 'continues to be discussed and disputed today, in works ranging from doctoral theses to papal encyclicals'.[7] Pope Benedict XVI's *Deus Caritas Est* (2006) explicitly analyses the relationship of *eros* and *agape* in the Nygrenian sense of the words – without explicitly mentioning Nygren himself, as is customary in Papal encyclicals when criticism is offered.[8]

Walter Hooper, the editor of Lewis's posthumously published works and the literary advisor to the C. S. Lewis Estate, notes that Lewis went on to spend years 'thinking his way towards the conclusions he reached regarding the various natural loves and their relation to Agape in *The Four Loves*'.[9] To say, as Will Vaus does, that 'Lewis would not, in the end, agree with all of Nygren's views'[10] is true but perhaps an understatement. Although in 1958, just two years before the publication of *The Four Loves*, Lewis names Nygren's *Agape and Eros* among the theological books that had influenced him,[11] significant points of agreement between

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5 Martin D'Arcy (S.J.), *The Mind and Heart of Love: Lion and Unicorn. A Study in Eros and Agape* (New York: Henry Holt, 1947, 1st ed. 1945), 12, 54, 28. As far as I can see, Nygren is not mentioned in *The Allegory of Love* (1936).

6 Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (see above, n. 2), xiii-xiv.

7 Brendan Wolfe, 'Editorial', in *The Chronicle of the University of Oxford C. S. Lewis Society*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2010), 1.

8 For a brief yet insightful analysis of *Deus Caritas Est*, see Werner G. Jeanrond, *A Theology of Love* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), 161–169.

9 Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. II (see above, n. 1), 154 n. 3, 538 n. 392.

10 Will Vaus, 'Lewis in Oxford: The Early Tutorial Years (1924–1939)', in *C. S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy*, vol. I, ed. by Bruce L. Edwards (Westport: Praeger, 2007), 164.

11 This he relates to Corbin Carnell in a letter dated 13 Oct. 1958. See Corbin Carnell, *Bright Shadow of Reality: Spiritual Longing in C. S. Lewis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, 1st ed. 1974), 69. Lewis must have been quite conscious of Nygren at the time of his letter to Carnell in October 1958. In August that same year, Lewis had recorded the radio talks that later, in June 1959, formed the completed manuscript for *The Four Loves* which, in turn, was finally

Lewis and Nygren – whether on theological anthropology, soteriology, the doctrine of sin, or the relationship between nature and grace – are scant. Like Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Est*, Lewis never targets Nygren explicitly in *The Four Loves*, but it would eventually include an implicit and tactful criticism of the heart of Nygren's project, the denigration of *eros* and its separation from *agape*.[12] Lewis also preoccupied himself with very Nygrenian themes elsewhere in his oeuvre, sometimes in surprising locations. For instance, Risto Saarinen thinks that Lewis's mythopoeic novel *Till We Have Faces* (1956) is even more critical of Nygren than *The Four Loves*.[13]

C. S. Lewis also had good things to say about Nygren. In May 1935, when one letter correspondent, the American literary critic and philosopher Paul More, had called Nygren's *magnum opus* 'the last word of the most abominable form of Protestantism in a straight line from Luther through Barth', Lewis felt compelled to object, 'I don't fully agree – Protestant is not for me a dyslogistic term'.[14] Writing nearly two decades later, in December 1954, Lewis is able to show candid appreciation of Nygren's work in a letter to Mary Van Deusen: 'The great merit of Nygren, so far as I'm concerned, was that he gave one a new *tool of thought*: it is so v. [very] convenient and illuminating to be able to talk (and therefore to think) about the two elements of love as *Eros & Agape*.'[15] Lewis explains that he

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published in March 1960. See Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (London: HarperCollins, 2002, 1st ed. 1974), 387–389.

12 For an outline of C. S. Lewis's position in 'the Nygren debate', see Jason Lepojärvi, 'C. S. Lewis and "the Nygren Debate"', in *The Chronicle of the University of Oxford C. S. Lewis Society*, vol. 7, no. 2, (2010), 25–42. See also Gilbert Meilaender, *The Taste for the Other: The Social and Ethical Thought of C. S. Lewis* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003, 1st ed. 1978), 56–57, 122–123; and Caroline Simon, 'On Love', in *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis*, ed. by Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 154–155.

13 According to Saarinen, need-love and altruism remain properly separate in the mind of Orual, the heroine of the story. But Saarinen argues that Orual is wrong – in other words, that the author of Orual is right – for 'true love does not arise from their separation, but from their fusion'. Given this, Nygren's theological position resembles more the 'Puritan-minded pagan perspective of Orual' than Christianity. In fact, Saarinen thinks *Till We Have Faces* is helpful in attempting to outline 'a constructive Protestant alternative to Nygren's *Agape and Eros*'. See Risto Saarinen, 'Eros and Protestantism: From Nygren to Milbank', in *Gudstankens aktualitet: Bidrag om teologiens opgave og indhold og protestantismens indre spændinger*, ed. by E. Wiberg Pedersen (Copenhagen: Anis, 2010), 344–346. Corbin Carnell, making no note of Nygren, agrees in general: the purification of Orual's loves and longings is 'the burden of the story' (Carnell, *Bright Shadow* [see above, n. 11], 116).

14 Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. II (see above, n. 1), 165.

15 Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. III, ed. by Walter Hooper (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 538. In a later letter to Mary Van Deusen (555), Lewis writes: 'Is it by some […] *confusion* N. [Nygren] has got where he is? Still his book was well worth reading: we both have the v. [very] important idea of Eros and Agape now clearly in our minds, and can keep it after we have let all his exaggerations fade out of our minds.' Mary Van Deusen's letters from Lewis

is nonetheless forced to say 'elements', because he thinks Nygren drove his contrast too hard, believing them to be mutually exclusive.[16]

The main purpose of this article is to discuss *eros*'s relationship to happiness. This is a theme that has received barely cursory attention in scholarship on Lewis. Nygren promulgated the idea that *eros* is by nature always eudæmonistic, i.e. always seeking the happiness of the lover. In *The Four Loves*, Lewis vehemently denies this. Risto Saarinen believes that Lewis's use of the word 'happiness' in *The Four Loves* is so close to Nygren's *eudæmonism* that 'the showdown must be conscious'.[17] I agree with Saarinen on both counts: the engagement is conscious, and, given its passionate nature, is best described as a showdown. However, after presenting and deconstructing it, I shall challenge Lewis's argument. I will argue that *eros* does, as Nygren suggests it does, seek happiness – although not only this. Perhaps surprisingly, Lewis, despite all appearances, may actually agree with Nygren on this point. But not on every point. The final analysis will reveal what I take to be Lewis's true concern.

II. Does Eros Aim at Happiness?

The three main characteristics that, for Nygren, define the *eros* motif are: '(1) Eros is the "love of desire", or acquisitive love; (2) Eros is man's way to the Divine; (3) Eros is egocentric love' (*AE*, 175). A 'eudæmonistic scheme' which is 'decidedly egocentric' underlies them all (530). According to Nygren, 'all desire, or appetite, and longing is more or less egocentric', but 'the clearest proof of the egocentric nature of Eros is its intimate connection with *eudæmonia*,' the individualistic pursuit of happiness (180). 'Christian love,' on the other hand, 'is *spontaneous in contrast to all activity with a eudæmonistic motive*,' that is to say, 'is free from all selfish calculations or ulterior motive' (726).[18] For our purposes here, Nygren's 'eudæmonistic scheme' can be broken down into four interconnected claims: (1) *Eros* always seeks the happiness of the lover, and (2) this happiness-seeking character is morally culpable, because (3) it entails selfish incapability of *agapistic* sacrifice, and (4) calculatingly demotes the Beloved to a means to this end.

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only came to light in 2000. See Green and Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (see above, n. 11), 297.

16 Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. III (see above, n. 15), 538: 'But surely in any good friendship of good marriage, tho' Eros may have been the starting point, the two are always mixed and one slips out of one into the other a dozen times a day?'

17 Risto Saarinen, 'Eros, leikki ja normi: Rakkauden fundamentaaliteologiaa', *Teologinen aikakauskirja* (Finnish Theological Journal), vol. 2 (2006), 172 n. 15.

18 The 'eudæmonistic way' is to have one's own 'concerns and interests guaranteed' (736).

C. S. Lewis disagrees with all four. In *The Four Loves*, Lewis means by *eros* 'a state which we call "being in love"; or, if you prefer, that kind of love which lovers are "in"' (87),[19] a state that Sheldon Vanauken named 'inloveness'.[20] Lewis's concept of *eros* is, thus, not synonymous to Nygren's.[21] However, the comparison of their *eros* loves is possible, justified, and fruitful, because Nygren's denouncement of the happiness-seeking character of *eros* is simultaneously a denouncement of the happiness-seeking character of all human love in general – including Lewis's *eros*. And Lewis is quite conscious of this.

To lay the foundation for the following analysis, we are forced to quote Lewis at length. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, I wish to show that to a certain – minimal but important – extent Lewis's argument depends on rhetoric rather than on logic. Secondly and more importantly, the question of whether or not *eros* seeks happiness is complex and multilayered, making simple paraphrases of Lewis's ideas less helpful – and certainly less interesting.[22] Lewis's argument in *The Four Loves* is as follows:

> 'Eros does not aim at happiness. We may think he does, but when he is brought to the test it proves otherwise. Everyone knows that it is useless to try to separate lovers by proving to them that their marriage will be an unhappy one. This is not only because they will disbelieve you. They usually will, no doubt. But even if they believed, they would not be dissuaded. For it

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[19] C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: HarperCollins, 1998, 1st ed. 1969). Hereafter all in-text citations of *The Four Loves*, using *FL* for its abbreviation, are from this edition.

[20] Sheldon Vanauken, *A Severe Mercy: With Eighteen Letters by C. S. Lewis* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980, 1st ed. 1977), 29; and its unofficial sequel, *Under the Mercy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988, 1st ed. 1985), 141, 143, 149.

[21] Several scholars have noted the similarity of Lewis's 'need-love' and Nygren's *eros*. See Walter Hooper's remark in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. II (see above, n. 1), 154 n. 3; Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love* (German original: *Lieben, Hoffen, Glauben* [1986]), transl. by Richard and Clara Winston (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 209–210, 221–222; Simon, 'On Love' (see above, n. 12), 154–155; and Meilaender, *Taste for the Other* (see above, n. 12), 55–56. Meilaender is right to remind that to contrast Nygren's *eros* and *agape* with Lewis's 'need-love' and 'gift-love' is not entirely accurate for, unlike Nygren, Lewis 'is not making a simple contrast between human love and divine love. [...] Both need-love and gift-love are natural components of human love' (57). (I would add that 'need' encapsules only *one* element of Nygren's multidimensional *eros*, of which a more comprehensive 'translation' would, in fact, be Lewis's concept of *Sehnsucht*, which he calls *Joy*. Another profitable undertaking would be to compare *Joy* with Nygren's *eros* vis-à-vis happiness.) In any case, by the helpful 'new tool of thought' that Lewis mentions to Mary Van Deusen (see above, n. 15), he most certainly meant the 'need' and 'gift' elements in Nygren's *eros* and *agape* respectively.

[22] Lewis's outspoken critic, John Beverluis, observes that paraphrasing Lewis is always problematic, not only on points of love. See John Beverluis, *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion*, 2nd ed. (Prometheus Books: Amherst, NY, 2007, 1st ed. 1986), 19–20. Beverluis is one of the first scholars to bring up the name of Anders Nygren in connection with Lewis (59–61) and for this he deserves credit. However, he seems wholly unaware of the historical connection between Lewis and Nygren. He simply summons Nygren to the arena to refute some of Lewis's ideas, unconscious of Lewis's acquaintance with (and rejection of) Nygren's position.

is the very mark of Eros that when he is in us we had rather share unhappiness with the Beloved than be happy on any other terms.' (101–102)

Lewis makes a very strong claim. Not only does *eros* not aim at happiness, it prefers unhappiness with the Beloved than happiness on any other terms. Lewis continues:

> 'Even if the two lovers are mature and experienced people who know that broken hearts heal in the end and can clearly foresee that, if they once steeled themselves to go through the agony of parting, they would almost certainly be happier ten years hence than marriage is at all likely to make them – even then, they would not part. To Eros all these calculations are irrelevant – just as the coolly brutal judgment of Lucretius is irrelevant to Venus. Even when it becomes clear beyond all evasion that marriage with the Beloved cannot possibly lead to happiness – when it cannot even profess to offer any other life than that of tending to an incurable invalid, of hopeless poverty, of exile, or of disgrace – Eros never hesitates to say, 'Better this than parting. Better to be miserable with her than happy without her. Let our hearts break provided they break together.' ' (102)

Lewis is adamant: 'If the voice within us does not say this, it is not the voice of Eros.'

How can we respond to this? Is Lewis right about the nature of *eros*? It must be noted that Lewis does not claim that a life of *eros* is necessarily free of good things – although he consistently refuses to call these good things 'happiness'. For instance, speaking of the 'playfulness of Eros', he writes: 'And even when the circumstances of the two lovers are so tragic that no bystander could keep back his tears, they themselves – in want, in hospital wards, on visitors' days in jail – will sometimes be surprised by a merriment which strikes the onlooker (but not them) as unbearably pathetic' (102). Some merriment, at least, may be involved.

We might ask, is not merriment somehow congenial to happiness? Even if Lewis thought it was, the passage only shows that merriment can be a happy by-product of *eros*, not the thing sought for in itself, not the force by which *eros* is driven.[23] That the eventual life of *eros* is not completely free of merriment does not mean that merriment is what *eros* was aiming at. The distinction is very important. On the very next page Lewis yet again denies the happiness-seeking character of *eros*: '[its] reckless disregard of happiness' (103). It is one thing to seek something, and another to stumble upon it. Another important distinction is between 'happiness' and 'unhappiness'. A closer examination of how Lewis uses these words in the chapter on *eros* suggests possible confusion on Lewis's part.

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[23] In fact earlier Lewis had said something to this effect when speaking of pleasure: 'Eros, although the king of pleasures, always (at his height) has the air of regarding pleasure as a by-product' (Lewis, *Four Loves* [see above, n. 19], 91). We return to the element of pleasure at the very end of this article.

III. Conventional and Meaningful Happiness

What does the 'unhappiness' that Lewis says *eros* favours over 'happiness' look like? Lewis offers a list of characteristics: '[a life] of tending an incurable invalid, of hopeless poverty, of exile, or of disgrace' (*FL*, 102). Admittedly, the list is grim. Even within these unfortunate circumstances some good, in the form of merriment, may and often does prevail. Merriment in tending an incurable invalid ('in hospital wards'), in hopeless poverty ('in want'), in exile or in disgrace ('on visitors' days in jail'). Nonetheless, these are all different states of want. Important factors normally connected with well-being are lacking: health, wealth, home, and honour. Or it would be more accurate to say happiness, not simply well-being, involves health, wealth, home, and honour – since unhappiness involves their opposites.

Health, wealth, home, and honour – is this a sufficient list of elements congenial to happiness? I will argue that this is not an exhaustive definition of happiness – and Lewis himself probably never intended it to be. This is, however, Lewis's *explicit* definition of happiness. As a technical term, for now, we may call this kind of happiness 'conventional happiness'. The implicit rationale of his argument, however, betrays that he is simultaneously operating with yet another definition of happiness. His *eros* does not seek conventional happiness. But despite all appearances, even his *eros* aims at happiness of another, perhaps deeper, kind.

Many details in Lewis's argument come together to suggest that *eros*'s relation to happiness (or purported lack thereof) is not as simple as Lewis presents it to be. Some of these details are noted almost in passing. Firstly, Lewis admits that most lovers would disbelieve the claim that 'their marriage will be an unhappy one' (102). Why would they disbelieve it, if *eros* makes no promises of happiness? Secondly, Lewis speaks of 'the agony of parting' (102). Whence comes the agony, if not, in part at least, from an *unhappy* prospect of a life without the Beloved? Thirdly, *eros*, according to Lewis, says, 'Better this than parting. Better to be miserable with her than happy without her. Let our hearts break provided they break together' (102). By 'this', Lewis means unhappiness – unhappiness understood as loss of conventional happiness as described above. Lewis's use of the word 'better' here is revealing. It is a comparative, posited between two competing states of affairs. Why is one state of affairs 'better' than the other? Is not 'better' somehow congenial to happiness? I think it would be difficult for Lewis to deny that it is. In many of his works, Lewis himself ridicules attempts at rooting value judgments in anything but goodness.[24]

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[24] See, for instance, LEWIS, 'The Poison of Subjectivism' (1943), in *C. S. Lewis: Essay Collection and Other Short Pieces*, ed. by Lesley WALMSLEY (London: HarperCollins, 2000), especially 658–660; and the chapter 'Invasion' in *Mere Christianity*. I thank Grayson Carter for directing my attention to these.

I spoke of a second kind of happiness that Lewis (somewhat subtly) operates with. The answer, whatever it is, to the question 'In *what* way better?' points the way to a definition of the second kind of happiness. We may safely assume that in some way it is *more meaningful* than the conventional kind. This 'meaningful happiness' consists of, above all, a life spent with the Beloved. The prospect of losing *this* good, the Beloved and a life spent with the Beloved, is worse than losing *other* kinds of goods – like wealth, health, home, and honour.

Lewis says it is 'the very mark of Eros that when he is in us we had rather share unhappiness with the Beloved than be happy on any other terms' (102). Understood as conventional happiness, the statement is unproblematic: 'We would rather share [conventional] unhappiness with the Beloved than be [conventionally] happy on any other terms.' But based on our analysis above, in light of the more meaningful happiness which is the hidden backdrop of Lewis's argument, it would be just as truthful to say something strikingly different: 'We would rather share [meaningful happiness] with the Beloved than be [conveniently] happy on any other terms.' The profound implication being: 'We would rather share [meaningful happiness] with the Beloved than be [meaningfully unhappy] on any other terms.'

It would be tempting to call these two kinds (or levels) of happiness simply *hedonism* and *eudæmonism*.[25] Other possible names could be 'short-term' and 'long-term' happiness, or 'material' and 'spiritual' happiness, or 'external' and 'internal' happiness, or 'acquisitive' and 'self-giving' happiness. These all have their strengths but equally their limits, as some are obviously misleading and others too vague. We must also accept that *The Four Loves* offers no perfectly unambiguous definition. For these reasons I have preferred the more temperate 'conventional' and 'meaningful' happiness. They are suggestive enough without being rigid.

Nygren is aware that 'happiness' is understood in many ways. Speaking of ancient Greek ethics, for instance, he writes: 'The dominant question was that of *eudæmonia*, happiness; and although different answers might be given – the answer of Hedonism, that happiness is the pleasure of the moment; or of Aristotle, that it consists in activity and the attainment of perfection; or of Stoicism, that it is *ataraxia*, independence and indifference towards the external vicissitudes of life – yet the statement of the question remains always the same' (*AE*, 44).[26] Unsatisfied with these answers, Augustine, Nygren explains, sought for happiness in something more endur-

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[25] For an etymological and philosophical study of *eudæmonia*, see Marcel SAROT, 'Happiness, Well-being, and the Meaning of Life', in *Happiness, Well-being, and the Meaning of Life: A Dialogue of Social Science and Religion*, ed. by Vincent BRÜMMEL and Marcel SAROT (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing, 1996), 1–23.

[26] See also 501: 'To this question different philosophical schools had given different answers: the highest good is the momentary pleasure of the senses; or it is a spiritualised enjoyment of life;

ing and dependable. This he eventually found in God. In Augustine's words: 'He is the source of our happiness, He is the end of all desire.'[27]

This famous 'rest in God' is not, however, unproblematic. 'Antiquity taught Augustine to ask the eudæmonistic question,' so his answer is 'simply a continuation of the endless discussion of ancient philosophy about what is the "highest good"' (*AE*, 501). In other words, Augustine simply substituted a heavenly bribe for an earthly one, which is unfortunate because it 'implies no condemnation of this egocentric and eudæmonistic question' (503). 'Christianity,' on the other hand, 'makes a revolutionary change […] Agape, or love, is a social idea which as such has nothing in common with individualistic and eudæmonistic ethics.' Instead of an individualistic quest for one's 'Highest Good', it becomes a question of 'the Good-in-itself' (44–45).

For these reasons, Nygren is less interested in what *kind* of happiness is at stake. It makes no difference, and he commits himself to none in particular. The problem for him is the *pursuit* of happiness itself, which as a necessary constituent of human love is essentially flawed and morally culpable. Despite his protestations, incredibly enough, Lewis in fact agrees – or is compelled to agree – with part of this claim. Lewis's *eros* pursues happiness, insofar as we mean a truly 'meaningful' kind.

IV. We Have No 'Right to Happiness'

The Four Loves was published in 1960, three years before Lewis's death in November 1963. The last thing he wrote is an aptly titled essay 'We Have No "Right to Happiness"', published posthumously in December 1963. The title itself speaks volumes. I hope that the following analysis will persuade those who remain unconvinced by my analysis of *The Four Loves*, that even Lewis's *eros* aims at happiness. We will also address the question of whether this pursuit is essentially flawed and morally culpable. Later, we will be able to return to, and conclude with, Nygren and what I take is the heart of Lewis's real dispute with him.

In his essay Lewis refutes the claim that people have a 'right to happiness'. This, to him, sounds as odd as a right to good luck.[28] As the back-

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or it is the independence of the self, its exaltation above the vicissitudes of fortune; and so forth.'

[27] Quoted in NYGREN, *Agape and Eros* (see above, n. 2), 502.

[28] LEWIS, 'We Have No "Right to Happiness"', in *God in the Dock*, ed. by Walter HOOPER (London: HarperCollins, 1998, 1st ed. 1971), 96: 'For I believe – whatever one school of moralists may say – that we depend for a very great deal of our happiness or misery on circumstances outside all human control. A right to happiness doesn't, for me, make much more sense than a right to be six feet tall, or to have a millionaire for your father, or to get good weather whenever you want to have a picnic.' Hereafter all in-text citations of this essay are from this edition of *God in the Dock*, using *GiD* for its abbreviation.

drop for his analysis of a 'right to happiness' Lewis shares a story of a certain marital drama 'that once happened in [my] own neighbourhood' (*GiD*, 95).

> 'Mr A. had deserted Mrs A. and got his divorce in order to marry Mrs B., who had likewise got her divorce in order to marry Mr A. And there was certainly no doubt that Mr A. and Mrs B. were very much in love with one another. If they continued to be in love, and if nothing went wrong with their health or their income, they might reasonable expect to be very happy.' (*GiD*, 95)

The details of this drama are illuminating, whether truly historical or crafted to meet Lewis's purposes. Lewis says that Mr A. and Mrs B. were 'very much in love'. This is Lewis's exact definition of *eros* in *The Four Loves*.[29] *Eros* is present. In this case the couple could 'expect to be very happy'. This implies, but does not necessarily prove, that happiness was sought for. However, the rationale that Mr A. later offers as a moral alibi for deserting his wife is telling: 'But what could I do?' he said. 'A man has the right to happiness. I had to take my one chance when it came' (*GiD*, 96). Mr A. did what he did, because he wanted to be happy.

Not only this. It was clear that Mr A. and Mrs B. had not been happy with their old partners.

> 'Mrs B. had adored her husband at the outset. But then he got smashed up in the war. It was thought that he had lost his virility, and it was known that he had lost his job. Life with him was no longer what Mrs B. had bargained for. Poor Mrs A., too. She had lost her looks – and all her liveliness. It might be true, as some said, that she consumed herself by bearing his children and nursing him through the long illness that overshadowed their earlier married life.' (95)

Loss of health, income, beauty, virility – we are reminded of the grim list of want mentioned above. The first couple, the couple in *The Four Loves*, would risk all just to be together. Lewis denied that they were seeking happiness. Mr A. and Mrs B., however, cannot bear their current state of affairs – quite literally their affairs. They are unhappy. If the first couple would 'rather share unhappiness with the Beloved than be happy on any other terms', we might be well justified in saying that Mr A. and Mrs B. would 'rather share happiness with each other than remain unhappy on the prevailing terms'.

Lewis laments the fact that, in the pursuit of happiness, especially sexual happiness, 'every unkindness and breach of faith seems to be condoned' (*GiD*, 99). Although he sees no good reason for giving erotic passion this privilege, he does see a strong cause.

> 'It is part of the nature of a strong erotic passion – as distinct from a transient fit of appetite – that it makes *more towering promises* than any other emotion. No doubt all our desires make promises, but not so impressively. To be in love involves the almost irresistible conviction that one will go on being in love until one dies, and that possession of the beloved will

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[29] Lewis, *Four Loves* (see above, n. 19), 87.

confer, not merely frequent ecstasies, but *settled*, *fruitful*, *deep-rooted*, *lifelong happiness*. Hence *all* seems to be at stake. If we miss this chance we shall have lived in vain. At the very thought of such doom we sink into fathomless depths of self-pity.' (100, italics mine, except *all*)

Later Lewis acknowledges the obvious. The so-called 'towering promises' of happiness are often found to be untrue. Disillusion awaits further down the road.[30] But this is irrelevant to our discussion. What concerns us here is Lewis's candid acceptance of happiness, not only as a driving force of *eros*, but as a dramatically powerful one.

Does Lewis here flatly contradict what he claimed in *The Four Loves*? Certainly something odd is going on. We could defend Lewis against the charge of contradiction if we could establish the two cases as incomparable. They could be incomparable for two reasons: the two stories might involve either different ideas of happiness, or different ideas of love.

What kind of happiness is at stake, conventional happiness or meaningful happiness? Elements of conventional happiness are not difficult to spot. We remember that the unhappiness with their previous spouses was largely due to such misfortunes. Mrs B.'s husband had lost his job, perhaps his virility, and Mr A.'s wife her looks and liveliness. To say 'if nothing went wrong with their health or their income' (*GiD*, 95) implies that loss of health and income would probably also dent the new happiness. Their new-found happiness is fragile, but ironically phenomenologically experienced as enduring. Indeed, side by side with the conventional streak a deeper undercurrent is also detectable. In fact the two are hardly separable. The lover believes that the possession of the beloved will confer 'not merely frequent ecstasies', but also 'settled, fruitful, deep-rooted, life-long happiness' (100) – clearly a meaningful kind of happiness.

This must be why 'all' seems to be at stake. Both conventional and meaningful happiness are at stake. To miss *this* is to have lived 'in vain' (100). Thus, the two cases are dissimilar only insofar as the first cares less for conventional happiness, a dissimilarity that is not enough to constitute any significant contradiction. The weightier common denominator shared by both is the fact that 'meaningful happiness' is sought for.

What, then, of love? We might, for instance, note the dissimilarities between the descriptions of what 'love' in each case looks like. Is not the second couple's love closer to *lust*, mere sexual appetite, than to *eros*? Lewis speaks of 'a strong erotic passion' (*GiD*, 100), and what is aimed at is a certain kind of happiness, 'four bare legs in a bed' (99). This kind of lust, so goes the argument, can be directed to happiness, whereas true *eros* cannot. I find this explanation doubtful on several grounds. Although the centre of gravity admittedly falls on the Venus element of *eros*,[31] the love in

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[30] See Lewis, *God in the Dock* (see above, n. 28), 100–101.

[31] 'The carnal and animally sexual element in Eros, I intend (following an old usage) to call Venus' (Lewis, *Four Loves* [see above, n. 19], 87). Lewis is referring to a medieval allegorical

question is still closer to *eros* than to mere lust. Firstly, as noted above, the couple was 'very much in love' (95), which is Lewis's precise definition of *eros* in *The Four Loves*.[32] Secondly, the narrative flows organically from 'being in love', to 'a strong erotic passion', to 'emotion', to 'desire', and finally back to 'being in love' (100) – implying no division of or radical impurity in love.[33] Thirdly, the strong erotic passion carries an 'almost irresistible conviction' of permanence (100) – exactly what in *The Four Loves* Lewis argues *eros* does, although what 'is baffling is the combination of fickleness with his protestations of permanence' (*FL*, 108). Lastly, the passion is self-sacrificial. This last observation merits special attention.

V. *Eros's Agapistic Opening*

The passion's self-sacrificing nature rules out another possible attempt at classifying the loves as different in quality. I mean the suggestion that whereas the first couple's love leads to sacrifice, the second egocentrically does not. I do not think this is true. Both involve sacrifice. Even *what* is sacrificed is nearly identical in both. In the first case, love trumps the sacrifice of health, wealth, home, and honour – everything except the sacrifice of the Beloved. In the second case, love trumps the sacrifice of the previous marriage, perhaps parental relationships, and social reputation – everything except the sacrifice of the *new* Beloved. In both cases to be with the Beloved is 'better' than to be without her on any other terms. Indeed, this is exactly what according to Lewis *eros* is apt to do if given free reign. *Eros* is 'ready for every sacrifice except renunciation' (*FL*, 103). By renunciation is meant the sacrifice of *eros* itself.

Mr A. left his wife in order to marry Mrs B., because he had the right to happiness. Lewis argues that the doubtful maxim 'Everyone has the right to happiness' is really a misconstrual of the more correct 'Everyone has the right to *pursue* happiness *by all lawful means*' (*GiD*, 97). The additions *pursue* and *by all lawful means* are crucial. Lewis is not arguing that Mr A.'s action is wrong because he pursued happiness. There is nothing morally culpable in pursuing happiness, no matter what Nygren thinks. If Mr A.'s action was condemnable, as Lewis thinks it was, it was so for other reasons. He addresses the heart of the problem: 'Mr A.'s action is an offence against good faith (to solemn promises), against gratitude (towards

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distinction between Venus (sexual appetite) and Cupid (love), mentioned in his *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (London: Oxford, 1958), 142.

[32] Lewis, *Four Loves* (see above, n. 19), 87.

[33] Besides, Lewis objects strongly to the 'popular idea that it is the absence or presence of Eros which makes the sexual act "impure" or "pure", degraded or fine, unlawful or lawful' (Lewis, *Four Loves* [see above, n. 19], 88), or alternatively that 'Eros is "noblest" or "purest" when Venus is reduced to the minimum' (92).

one to whom he was deeply indebted) and against common humanity' (99).

The first couple is in love, apparently free to marry, and thus their love is innocent. The second couple is also in love, married but not to each other, and hence their love involves injustice – offence against good faith, gratitude, and common humanity. I think this difference is insightful. It provides the key to understanding the difference between the two couples that brings clarity to the apparent confusion.

Here Lewis disagrees with yet another of Nygren's claims, theologically perhaps the most important of all. *Eros*, contrary to what Nygren thought, can be *agapistic*, can be self-sacrificing. The love of the first couple shows this admirably. Their love is willing to make towering sacrifices to be together. And here lies, I believe, Lewis's main concern in his reply to Nygren in the *The Four Loves*. The love of the first couple shows *eros*'s agapistic potential admirably – *and is meant to show it*. What Lewis found revoltingly untrue is the concept of a 'calculating' *eros* that demotes the Beloved simply to a *means* by which happiness is sought.[34] To calculate thus is to step outside the world of *eros*. 'To Eros all these calculations are irrelevant – just as the coolly brutal judgment of Lucretius is irrelevant to Venus' (*FL*, 102). Readers of Lewis must stress this irrelevancy of *calculations* of happiness, not the irrelevancy of happiness. While getting his points across (to Sweden, perhaps), Lewis was driven to exaggeration in denying *eros*'s happiness-seeking character altogether. As we have seen, only 'conventional happiness' is irrelevant to his *eros*, not 'meaningful happiness'.

By 'the coolly brutal judgment of Lucretius' Lewis is alluding to his earlier account of *eros*'s relationship to pleasure. It is worth reproducing here, because its logic applies well to happiness as well.

> 'In some mysterious but quite indisputable fashion the lover desires the Beloved herself, not the pleasure [*or happiness*] she can give. No lover in the world ever sought the embraces of the woman he loved [*or happiness*] as a result of calculation, however unconscious, that they would be more pleasurable than those of any other woman. If he raised the question he would, no doubt, expect that this would be so. But to raise it would be to step outside the world of Eros altogether. The only man I know of who ever did raise it was Lucretius, and he was certainly not in love when he did.' (*FL*, 90)

Eros does not instrumentalize the Beloved. That is part of what makes it the most god-like of all the natural loves. 'In one high bound it has overleaped the massive wall of our selfhood; it has made appetite itself altruistic, tossed personal happiness aside as a triviality and planted the interests of another in the centre of our being' (108). 'If you asked [a man in love]

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[34] According to John Burnaby, such suspicion of *eros*, so strong in Nygren, is a result of 'a complete misunderstanding of Augustine's definition of *frui*'. See John BURNABY, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (London: The Hulsean Lectures, 1947, 1st ed. 1938), 109.

what he wanted, the true reply would often be, "To go on thinking of her"' (89). That is, he most certainly would not reply, 'I have coolly calculated that, in pursuit of personal happiness, my best bet is to go on thinking about her.' If he did answer thus, we could rightly question whether he was in love at all. In addition to pleasure and happiness, Lewis discusses a third possible ground for loving, namely, security. Of the three, this is the least plausible. In 'Charity', the last chapter of *The Four Loves*, Lewis explains:

> '[W]ho could conceivably begin to love God on such prudential ground – because the security (so to speak) is better? Who could even include it among the grounds for loving? Would you choose a wife or a Friend – if it comes to that, would you choose a dog – in this spirit? One must be outside of the world of love, of all, loves, before one thus calculates. Eros, lawless Eros, preferring the Beloved to happiness, is more like Love Himself than this.' (115)

Lawless *eros*. With this we return to the second couple. *Eros* has an agapistic opening. However, Lewis warns that in this opening lies its danger, too. He writes: 'Of all the loves he is, at his height, most god-like; therefore most prone to demand our worship. Of himself he always tends to turn "being in love" into a sort of religion' (*FL*, 105). 'We must not give unconditional obedience to the voice of Eros when he speaks most like a god' (104). 'Eros, honoured without reservation and obeyed unconditionally, becomes a demon' (105). 'Eros extenuates – almost sanctifies – any actions it leads to' (106), and 'speaking with that very grandeur and displaying that very transcendence of self, may urge to evil as well as to good' (102). The second couple exemplifies this danger – *and is meant to exemplify it*. Eros has become a demon, and in promise of happiness, it has lured Mr A. and Mrs B. into an act of injustice, into sin.[35]

VI. Conclusion

The four claims of Nygren's 'eudæmonistic scheme' were: (1) *Eros* always seeks the happiness of the lover, and (2) this happiness-seeking character is morally culpable, because (3) it entails selfish incapability of *agapistic* sacrifice, and (4) calculatingly demotes the Beloved to a means to this end. C. S. Lewis explicitly disagrees with all of them, although he is finally compelled to refine his objection to the first. In Nygren's mind, these four claims are not only interconnected but also organic: they stand or wither together. Not so for Lewis. The jump from (1) to (2) is precisely

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[35] 'But what could I do?' asked Mr A. (Lewis, *God in the Dock* [see above, n. 28], 96). Zealous for *eros*, lovers sometimes even 'feel like martyrs' (Lewis, *Four Loves* [see above, n. 19], 107), and 'can say to one another in an almost sacrificial spirit, "It is for love's sake that I have neglected my parents – left my children – cheated my partner – failed my friend at his greatest need". […] The votaries may even come to feel a particular merit in such sacrifices; what costlier offering can be laid on love's altar than one's conscience?' (108)

that: a jump. Only a conviction that believed all human inclinations are 'tainted by selfishness' could allow it.[36] Such a conviction (which could be called 'pretheological'[37]) Lewis simply does not share. Thus, by accepting the first claim, he is not committed to the second which in turn has natural affinities with the third and fourth.

Nonetheless, I think we must confess that in arguing against Nygren, Lewis was driven to hyperbole (a habit that in all fairness Nygren was not impervious to either). What remained amiss in *The Four Loves* is luckily corrected by the overall argument in 'We Have No "Right to Happiness"'. Whether this was done intentionally or not, we cannot be sure. Although only three years separate the publication of the two, my reading of the essay reveals no *deliberate* reference to *The Four Loves*. I am inclined to believe that Lewis's corrective was inadvertent. His conscious motives lay entirely elsewhere. The undertone of his essay suggests latent frustration with the 'hijacking' of *eros* as a moral alibi in shirking responsibility.[38] But we must add a caveat: It might be uncharitable to say that something was 'amiss' in *The Four Loves*. 'Happiness' in English is used in so many ways that it almost inevitably raises some of the issues we have taken up. This may be seen less as evidence of confusion, much less of possible contradiction, on Lewis's part than just built into the notion. Nobody, after all, knows how to translate Aristotle's *eudæmonia*.

In his book on love, the German Thomist philosopher Josef Pieper offers an instructive account of the relationship of *eros* to both happiness and unhappiness. Reading Nygren's *Agape and Eros* left also Pieper very 'much perplexed'; of all the defamations of *eros* it is 'the most radical'.[39] Pieper calls C. S. Lewis 'the great lay theologian of the present day' (218) and summons him to the arena repeatedly to answer Nygren with his 'magnificent metaphysical common sense' (258).[40] For instance, love's intimate connection to sorrow has been known and expressed, 'of course, in C. S. Lewis's book on love [*The Four Loves*], which we have already

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[36] According to William O'Connor, a strict Kantian deontologism accounts for this conviction in Nygren's thought. See William O'Connor, 'The *uti/frui* Distinction in Augustian Ethics', in *Augustinian Studies* (1983), 49.

[37] According to Josef Pieper, defamators of *eros* bring a 'pretheological conception of man' to the discussion. By this he means that they bring a fixed anthropology to the study of Scripture instead of finding Scripture's anthropology. See Pieper, *Love* (see above, n. 21), 210–211.

[38] What is more, Lewis worries that in a society where conjugal infidelity is tolerated, women will more often be the victims than the culprits: 'I have no sympathy with moralists who frown at the increasing crudity of female provocativeness. These signs of desperate competition fill me with pity' (*GiD*, 101). For a discussion on the problem of 'hijacking' love, see Olli-Pekka Vainio, 'The Aporia of Using "Love" as an Argument: A Meditation on C. S. Lewis's *The Four Loves*', in *The Chronicle of the University of Oxford C. S. Lewis Society*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2007), 21–30.

[39] Pieper, *Love* (see above, n. 21), 214, 211.

[40] As far as the Catholic Pieper is concerned, Lewis belongs to the 'orthodox tradition' with such giants as Augustine and Aquinas (208).

quoted several times' (229). Curiously enough, however, Pieper does not mention Lewis's denial of *eros*'s happiness-seeking character. Pieper takes for granted the 'essential relationship that connects happiness and joy with love', although joy 'is by nature something secondary', because it would be 'of course foolish to ask someone "why" he wants to rejoice' (224). The most truthful answer would be: 'Because we love to love!' (226).

If the indivisibility of love and happiness is not a delusion, neither is the indivisibility of love and unhappiness. In fact, lovers alone can be unhappy, due to the vulnerability of love as expressed by Lewis above. Pieper asks the obvious question: 'Then where do we stand? Do both principles apply simultaneously: love and joy belong together, but love and sorrow likewise – just as Thomas Aquinas says with his cool objectivity: "Ex amore procedit et gaudium et tristitia", "out of loves comes both joy and sadness"?' (229). Pieper's answer to this seeming paradox summarizes our whole discussion rather charmingly: 'Even the unhappy lover is happier than the nonlover, with whom the lover would never change place' (230).[41]

SUMMARY

Anders Nygren's antithetical juxtaposition of *eros* and *agape* became enormously influential in twentieth-century Protestant theology. Among other interconnected tenets, Nygren promulgated the idea that *eros* is eudæmonistic, i.e. always seeking the happiness of the lover. In *The Four Loves* (1960), C. S. Lewis vehemently denies this. Lewis's use of the word 'happiness' in *The Four Loves* is so close to Nygren's *eudæmonism* that Risto Saarinen has called it 'a conscious showdown'. In this article I evaluate this engagement. After presenting and deconstructing it, I challenge Lewis's argument. I argue that *eros* does, as Nygren claims it does, seek happiness – although not only this. Perhaps surprisingly, Lewis, despite all appearances, may actually be compelled to agree with Nygren on this point. But not on every point. The final analysis reveals what I take to be Lewis's true concern. Contrary to what Nygren thought, for Lewis, the pursuit of happiness is not morally culpable and even *eros* has an *agapistic* opening. While getting these points across, Lewis was driven to exaggeration in denying *eros*'s happiness-seeking character altogether. This exaggeration is corrected (probably inadvertently) by the overall argument of his last, posthumously published essay, 'We Have No "Right to Happiness"' (1963).

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Anders Nygren's antithetische Gegenüberstellung von Eros und Agape beeinflusste die protestantische Theologie des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts enorm. Nygren verbreitete, neben weiteren im Zusammenhang stehenden Lehren, den Gedanken, dass Eros eudämonistisch sei, d.h. ständig auf der Suche nach dem Glück des Liebenden. C. S. Lewis bestreitet dies in *The Four Loves* (1960) vehement. Lewis' Verwendung des Wortes "Glück" in *The Four Loves* kommt der Bedeutung von Nygrens *Eudämonismus* so nahe, dass Risto Saarinen dies als "eine bewusste Macht-

[41] I would like to thank Risto Saarinen and Gilbert Meilaender for helpful conversations in working out *eros*'s relation to happiness in Lewis.

probe" bezeichnet. In diesem Artikel werde ich dieses Unterfangen näher untersuchen. Nach Darlegung und Auswertung der Behauptung von Lewis, stelle ich diese in Frage. Ich behaupte, dass Eros, wie Nygren ebenfalls anführt, auf der Suche nach dem Glück ist – und nicht nur das. Es überrascht vielleicht, dass Lewis Trotz allem Anschein gezwungen ist Nygren in diesem Punkt beizupflichten. Aber nicht in jedem Punkt. Erst die endgültige Auswertung zeigt, was ich als das wahre Anliegen von Lewis betrachte. Im Gegensatz zu Nygren, ist für Lewis das Streben nach Glück moralisch nicht sträflich und selbst Eros hat eine agapistische Öffnung. Beim Versuch den Standpunkt klar zu machen wurde Lewis zur Übertreibung angetrieben den Glück suchenden Charakter von Eros zu leugnen. Diese Übertreibung wird (vermutlich versehentlich) durch die gesamte Argumentation seines letzten, nach dem Tod veröffentlichten Aufsatz 'We Have No "Right to Happiness"' (1963) berichtigt.

A Friend's Death: C. S. Lewis' Disagreement with St. Augustine

Jason Lepojärvi

> It is dangerous to press upon man the duty of getting beyond earthly love when his real difficulty lies in getting so far.[1]

The Irish-born author, Christian apologist and literary scholar, C. S. Lewis (1898–1963), spent most of his life in Oxford and (later) Cambridge, and left the British Isles only twice during his entire life. Except for the five years he spent in Italy, Augustine Aurelius (354–430), the Numidian-born Bishop of Hippo and Church Father, never ventured out of North Africa. The relative immobility and deep-rootedness of these two men helped both to form meaningful friendships and embrace a life of study. Lewis paid Augustine the compliment of including in his literary diet a hefty amount of Augustine's work. In his theological and ethical thought, especially in his understanding of love, Lewis is greatly indebted to the Augustinian tradition. In all of Lewis' work, ranging from his scholarly monographs to books for children, "Augustinian themes, in particular, abound."[2]

Lewis did nothing to conceal his admiration of—and theological pedigree to—Augustine: as he wrote, Augustine "is a great saint and a great thinker

[1] C. S. *Lewis, The Four Loves* (London, 1960), 135.

[2] Gilbert Meilaender, *The Taste for the Other: The Social and Ethical Thought of C. S. Lewis*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver, 2003), 6.

to whom my old glad debts are incalculable."[3] This is why the *only* time he explicitly disagrees with Augustine on an important point concerning love, he does so "with trembling."[4] Lewis' sentiments in having to disagree with Augustine may be comparable to Stanley Hauerwas disagreeing with Lewis. It is difficult, Hauerwas wrote, "to criticize a writer who has done so much good as C. S. Lewis."[5] The purpose of the present article is to evaluate the gentlemanly engagement between Lewis and Augustine.

Lewis married late in life and had no children of his own; Augustine did not marry, but fathered a son while still a young man. In one way or another, both men thought much about marriage and fatherhood, love between the sexes, and love between the generations. They also thought much about love between friends, the love of friendship, the virtue of *philia* or *amicita*. Lewis' poem "Scazons" (1933), for example, opens with a contemplative stanza on the painful memory of lost friends:

> Walking to-day by a cottage I shed tears
> When I remembered how once I had walked there
> With my friends who are mortal and dead. Years
> Little had healed the wound that was laid bare.[6]

The remaining four stanzas will later be examined as a part of this work, for (as will become apparent) the poem allows for an implicit—and dramatic—dialogue with Augustine. In effect, the stanzas will serve as a literary backdrop for the more systematic analysis of the engagement. Michael Ward has offered an insightful, albeit succinct, commentary on this poem in

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[3] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 137.

[4] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 137.

[5] Stanley Hauerwas, "On Violence," in Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* (Cambridge, 2010), 189. Hauerwas, as a pacifist, appreciatively critiques Lewis' view on violence. Peter van Inwagen begins his critical evaluation of Lewis' argument against naturalism in a similar vein by quoting Aristotle: "[W]e philosophers are lovers of wisdom, and while both truth and our friends are dear to us, piety demands that we honour truth above our friends." See Peter van Inwagen, "C. S. Lewis' Argument Against Naturalism," in *The Chronicle of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2010, 2.

[6] C. S. Lewis, "Scazons," in *Poems*, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York, 1998), 118. "Scazons" was first published on the penultimate page of C. S. Lewis, The Pilgrim's Regress (London, 1998), 251. In the Preface to *Poems*, Hooper writes that Lewis was "continually revising" (vii) his poems. In the Appendix, he confirms that "Scazons" was one of the poems that had "been revised by the author" (142), since it was first published in *The Pilgrim's Regress*. Whether or not Lewis successfully and consistently improved his poems with revisions, the editor's job is to publish the version Lewis intended to be published "in a volume to be called *Young King Cole and Other Pieces*" (vii). The last-revised edition of "Scazons" is included herein. As for the name "Scazons," it is the title given by the editor, as the poem originally appeared in *The Pilgrim's Regress* untitled. The poem is a metrical experiment in so-called choliambic verse (sometimes called *scazon*) with irregular lines and varying spondaic and trochaic feet.

his work, *Planet Narnia*. In this essay the analysis is taken further, but the sixteen lines Ward devotes to the poem are golden.[7] In *The Problem of Pain* (1940), one of Lewis' earliest works of Christian apologetics, there is also an attempt to make sense of suffering, including the death of loved ones in a world supposedly created by a good and all-powerful God.[8] Much later, in his autobiographical work, *A Grief Observed* (1961), Lewis traces the cataract of emotions he felt when he lost his wife to cancer. As he writes:

> Nothing less will shake a man—or at any rate a man like me—out of his merely verbal thinking and his merely notional beliefs. He has to be knocked silly before he comes to his senses. Only torture will bring out the truth. Only under torture does he discover himself.[9]

Written as a therapeutic form of diary in the aftermath of his wife's death, the book records how a stalwart believer, overcome by grief, almost loses all sense of meaning in the universe, and how he gradually regains his bearings. Nicholas Wolterstorff has insightfully described the difference between *The Problem of Pain* and *A Grief Observed* respectively as the difference between "an *account* of suffering" and "an *expression* of suffering."[10] In Lewis' work, *The Four Loves* (1960), which popularizes the theology of love, an entire chapter (or one fifth of the entire book), is devoted to *philia*, the love of friendship. Lewis exalts this love: friendship "has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival."[11] The Jesuit philosopher Martin D'Arcy described *The Four Loves* as "a minor classic" that "combines a novelist's insight into motives with a profound religious understanding" of our human nature.[12] It is in this work that Lewis, "with trembling," expressed concern about Augustine's reaction to the death of his friend.

Augustine, we see, also experienced tragic loss. In the *Confessions*, he

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[7] Michael Ward, *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C. S. Lewis* (Oxford, 2008), 106.

[8] C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London, 1998), see especially 1–12.

[9] C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (New York, 1996), 38.

[10] The *Problem of Pain* is "a sustained Christian *account* of suffering. For those who want to know how Lewis thought suffering fits into a Christian understanding of reality, this is the basic text . . . *A Grief Observed* is of a different genre; it is not an account of suffering but an *expression* of suffering—a cry of grief over the death of his wife, Joy, from cancer." See Nicholas Wolterstorff, "C. S. Lewis on the Problem of Suffering," in *The Chronicle of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2010, 5.

[11] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 84.

[12] Martin D'Arcy, *New York Times Book Review,* 31 July 1960. Cited in Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Complete Guide to His Life and Works* (San Francisco, 1996), 377, originally published under the title *C. S. Lewis: Companion and Guide*. See also George Sayer, *Jack: A Life of C. S. Lewis* (Wheaton, 1994), 388.

related several stories that involve tears. Even the death of a fictional character moved him to tears: as a young man, he had wept over the death of Dido who, in Vergil's *Aeneid*, killed herself when Aeneas did not return her love. In Book One of the *Confessions* Augustine expressed shame for having shed tears on such an occasion:

> What is more pitiable than a wretch without pity for himself who weeps over the death of Dido dying for love of Aeneas, but not weeping over himself dying for his lack of love for you, my God . . . I had no love for you and 'committed fornication against you' (Psalm 72:27).[13]

Later, in Book Four, Augustine is devastated by the death of an unidentified friend. As Lewis comments, "In words which can still bring tears to the eyes, Augustine describes the desolation in which the death of his friend Nebridius plunged him. . . . Then he draws a moral. This is what comes, he says, of giving one's heart to anything but God."[14] By the time of the death of Augustine's mother, Monica, in Book Nine of the *Confessions*, Augustine is laboring to fight back his tears.

A common reading of these stories often depicts them as signs of Augustine's excessive Platonic spirituality and supposed attraction to Stoic invulnerability. The work of Hannah Arendt exemplifies this critique.[15] Lewis, too, though touched by Augustine's grief, found that Augustine's interpretation of it made him uneasy. The passage describing the desolation he felt over his friend's death is, Lewis suspected, "less a part of St. Augustine's Christendom than a hangover from the high-minded Pagan philosophies in which he grew up. It is closer to Stoic 'apathy' or neo-Platonic mysticism than to charity [*agape*]."[16] Lewis rejected the moral that Augustine drew: as if "this is what comes of giving your heart to anything but God."

The following stanzas of "Scazons" provide dramatic background for understanding Lewis' objection. They record two disillusionments, which is another way of saying that the poet was under the spell of two illusions. The first illusion (and subsequent disillusion) is biographical in nature, the second theological. The first disillusionment is recorded in the second stanza where the poet speaks of the "little spear that stabs":

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[13] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. by Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1991), 15–16 (1.21).

[14] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 137. Lewis mistakenly—and interestingly—referred to Augustine's unnamed friend as "Nebridius," a point taken up later in this article.

[15] See, for instance, Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine* (Chicago, 1996). For a defence of Augustine against Arendt's critique, see Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love* (Chicago, 2008), especially 202–42.

[16] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 138.

> Out little spear that stabs! I, fool, believed
> I had outgrown the local, unique sting,
> I had transmuted wholly (I was deceived)
> Into Love universal the lov'd thing.[17]

The pain accompanied by the memory of the lost friend—the lost individual, local friend—betrays the fact that the poet's love had been imperfect. The love he felt for particular people had not yet developed into universal love, as he thought it should have. The pain shatters the illusion that the transmutation of local love into universal love had been accomplished.

This disillusionment is immediately followed by a second, more profound disillusionment, recorded in the third stanza:

> But Thou, Lord, surely knewest thine own plan
> When the angelic indifferencies [*sic.*] with no bar
> Universally loved, but Thou gav'st man
> The tether and pang of the particular . . .[18]

If the first illusion consisted of thinking that the transmutation from local to universal love was already complete, the second illusion consists of thinking that this transmutation was the ideal in the first place. That transmutation is what we should strive for; that perfected love must leave behind ("transmute") our local loves and be replaced by a supposedly more authentic love ("Love universal").

The tears—the stab—have given the poet a new understanding of love. Humans are not angels, who (according to the poet) have no favorites ("angelic indifferences"), so to speak. Angels love universally with "no bar." "But Thou gav'st man the tether and pang of the particular." What is this "pang of the particular"? It can either be understood as a single instance of particular loss, tears, a stab, or as the general human ability and disposition to sense particular loss, tears, stabs, and the deeper understanding and perhaps embracing of this ability. ("Embracing" because, after all, the poet calls it a gift—"Thou gav'st".) In *The Problem of Pain* Lewis has written of the "intolerable compliment" paid by God, which means God loves us too much, not too little.[19] In a well-known passage, he explains his meaning:

> We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a

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[17] Lewis, *Poems*, 118.

[18] Lewis, *Poems*, 118. As originally written by Lewis, the fourth word in the second line of the stanza should be "indifferences." The misspelling of the word is found in the work cited herein. *In The Pilgrim's Regress*, the line reads "indifferences." See Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, 251.

[19] Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 27–8, 38.

> grandfather in heaven—a senile benevolence who, as they say, 'liked to see young people enjoying themselves' and whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of the day, 'a good time was had by all.'[20]

In anticipation of the final line of the poem, readers may find the gift intolerable because "we pay for it dearly." But, as the poet explains, "Thou, Lord, surely knewest thine own plan." Particularistic love is part of God's plan, his good plan, for humanity. It is not a sign of imperfect love.[21] Is not, however, true Christian love universal? Is not universal love still the ultimate goal? Surely it is. But universal and particular loves are not contradictory, not mutually exclusive. Here it is important to understand the distinction between *transmutation* and *transposition* in Lewis' thought. Transmutation indicates the changing of one substance into another; or, to emphasize the point, the annihilation of one substance into another. Transposition, on the other hand, indicates perfecting without annihilation: the raising of a lower medium to a new significance by incorporation into a higher medium.[22] This is how the German philosopher Josef Pieper (who described Lewis as "the great lay theologian of the present day")[23] expressed it in his aretological study of love. Perfecting, he writes, means abandonment "precisely for the sake of preserving identity in change."[24]

Human loves also follow this logic. As Lewis explained: "Divine Love does not *substitute* itself for the natural—as if we had to throw away our silver to make room for the gold. The natural loves are summoned to become modes of Charity while also remaining the natural loves they were."[25] God transposes our various human loves into Divine love without annihilating them in the process. (Lewis is talking about "good" local loves; of course there are such things as unlawful loves that may require total abandonment.) "We do not disparage silver by distinguishing it from gold," as one of Lewis'

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[20] Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 26.

[21] What is more, in *The Last Battle* we are told that it is *right* for Lucy to weep for the death of Narnia. The author would like to thank Louis Markos for pointing this out.

[22] See C. S. Lewis, "Transposition," in *C. S. Lewis: Essay Collection and Other Short Pieces*, ed. by Lesley Walmsley (London, 2000), 267–78. See also Ward, *Planet Narnia*, 105. For a more systematic analysis, see P. H. Brazier, "C. S. Lewis: A Doctrine of Transposition," in *The Heythrop Journal*, vol. 50, July 2009, 669–88. Line seven of "Scazons" underwent an interesting change from the original to the collected edition. The revised version has: "I had transmuted wholly (I was deceived)." The 1933 version had: "I had transmuted away (I was deceived)." The choice of *away* (instead of *wholly*) accentuates the "illusion" of presuming that grace abolishes nature instead of perfecting it.

[23] Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love* (San Francisco, 1997), 218.

[24] Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, 280.

[25] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 151–2.

favorite metallurgic similes has it.[26] Another of his favorite maxims was, "The highest does not stand without the lowest."[27] Local loves need not be destroyed as universal love takes hold. In fact, universal love "does not stand" without particular love. It might be called particularity in universality. Lewis targets Augustine when he writes, "We follow One who wept over Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus, and, loving all, yet had one disciple whom, in a special sense, he 'loved'."[28]

In the fourth stanza, the poet calls the wounding gift of particular love "a chemic drop." The pang of the particular:

> Which, like a chemic drop, infinitesimal,
> Plashed into pure water, changing the whole,
> Embodies and embitters and turns all
> Spirit's sweet water into astringent soul . . . [29]

A mere drop, but enough to constitute a dramatic difference between angelic and human nature, spirit and soul. What could potentially be discarnate spirituality is transformed into another kind of being, an embodied human soul. "Spirit's sweet water" is turned into "*astringent* soul."

Again, there are different ways to interpret this stanza. One is to take it as a poetic dramatization of God's original creative act. Alternatively, it can be understood as describing the process of our realization of what it means to be a human person, our deepened understanding of love. In this case, the process is set in motion by the stab, the pang of the particular, and a closer meditation on the message it conveys. The general definition of *astringent* is "harsh" or, with liquids, "bitter." Soul, one might say, is the bitter (or bittersweet) intensification of spirit. Insofar as it is bitter, it is intolerable; and insofar as it is sweet, it is a compliment. Emotions, even passions, are a rightful expression of our nature.

This brings the argument back to the earlier dispute with Augustine. As previously noted, Lewis' reference to Augustine's high-minded "hangover" and "neo-Platonic mysticism" is especially relevant here. In *The Allegory of Love*, Lewis referred to the "diffused Platonism, or Neoplatonism—if there is

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[26] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 77.

[27] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 12. This is a line from Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* (2.10) and Lewis quotes it throughout *The Four Loves*.

[28] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 138. See, however, Augustine in *Confessions* (3.19): "You [God] are all-powerful, caring for each one of us as though the only one in your care, and yet for all as for each individual." This exemplifies Augustine's ambivalence. The matter is not clear-cut, as will become apparent when considering revisionist readings of Augustine later in this article.

[29] Lewis, *Poems*, 118.

a difference—of Augustine . . ."[30] Augustine has often been called the father of the "order of loves" (*ordo caritatis*) tradition, in which the objects of reality are to be loved in hierarchical sequence, based on their goodness.[31] Without tracing its pedigree in detail, it can be noted that this tradition heavily "Christianizes" the conception of love found in the *Symposium*. Lewis explained that, in the *Symposium*, we find the idea of "a ladder whereby the soul may ascend from human love to divine," human love being material and particular and divine love being spiritual and universal.[32] "But," as he adds, "this is a ladder in the strictest sense; you reach the higher rings by leaving the lower ones behind."[33] Lewis distanced himself from such a worldview, however. "I am inclined," he wrote, "to distrust that species of respect for the spiritual order which bases itself on contempt for the natural."[34] It thus seems reasonable to assume that Lewis believed that (at least in this respect and at this stage of Augustine's life) Augustine's Platonic Christianity had not shaken off some of its non-Christian dust. While Lewis would concur with Augustine that the real problem of love is inordinate love, he rejected Augustine's *solution* to inordinate love (as expressed in the *Confessions*).

On one level, the moral Lewis believed that Augustine drew—"All human beings pass away [so] do not let your happiness depend on something you may lose"—made excellent sense. Do not put your goods in a leaky vessel. Conservative by nature, this advice appealed to Lewis' temperament, but not his conscience. "When I respond to that appeal," he wrote, "I seem to myself to be a thousand miles away from Christ. If I am sure of anything I am sure that His teaching was never meant to confirm my congenital preference for safe investments and limited liabilities."[35] Lewis was not impressed by what might be called "Pascalian calculation": "[W]ho could conceivably begin to love God on such a prudential ground—because the security (so to speak) is better? . . . Would you choose a wife or a Friend—it if comes to that, would you choose a dog—in this spirit?" Lewis made his point clear: "One must be outside the world of love, of all loves, before one thus calculates.

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[30] C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1986), 46.

[31] According to Risto Saarinen, Lewis is not an advocate of what Anders Nygren called "the Augustinian caritas-synthesis," because Lewis "seems to lack an *ordo caritatis*" and "the natural affinities between the loves are weaker than in Thomas." See Risto Saarinen, "Eros, Playfulness and Norms: Towards a Fundamental Theology of Love," in *The Finnish Theological Journal*, vol. 2, 2006, 6. For a short overview of main themes in Augustine's theology of love, see Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (New York, 1991), 234–6.

[32] Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 5.

[33] Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 5. See also the references to "the Platonic ascent" in C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford, 1954), 159, 386, 532.

[34] Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 267.

[35] Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 137.

Eros, lawless Eros, preferring the Beloved to happiness, is more like Love Himself than this."[36]

Our loves, it is true, are inordinate—out of order. The need for a correct order of loves stands out in Lewis' thought. By it he does not mean simply a need to "control your loves," but, supposedly, quite literally, *keep them in order*. However, the quality that constitutes the inordinacy is not excessive love, but rather *defective* love. "We may love [our friend] too much *in proportion to* our love for God; but it is the smallness of our love for God, not the greatness of our love for man, that constitutes the inordinacy."[37] Our flaw is not excess love for our children over our spouse, but defective love for our spouse; not excess love for our friend over God, but defective love for God. We do not love our spouse more by loving our children less, nor do we love God more by loving our friend less.[38] According to Lewis, *inordinate* "does not mean 'insufficiently cautious'. Nor does it mean 'too big'."[39] It is not a quantitative term at all. In fact, Lewis doubts whether it is even possible to love a human being "too much." In this sense, the dynamics of virtue know no positive limit. The question whether we are loving our earthly beloved or God more is not, "so far as concerns our Christian duty, a question about the comparative intensity of two feelings. The real question is, which (when the alternative comes) do you serve, or choose, or put first? To which claim does your will, in the last resort, yield?"[40]

Accompanying this new understanding of human love is a new reality, or the acceptance of the reality that has always been present. As for "Scazons," it comes to a close with this fifth stanza:

> That we, though small, might quiver with Fire's same
> Substantial form as Thou—not reflect merely
> Like lunar angels back to Thee cold flame.
> Gods are we, Thou hast said; and we pay dearly.[41]

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[36] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 137–8. On Lewis' disagreement with Anders Nygren on the question of love's relation to happiness, see Jason Lepojärvi, "Does Eros Seek Happiness? A Critical Analysis of C. S. Lewis's Reply to Anders Nygren," in *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, vol. 53, 2011, 208– 24.

[37] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 139–40.

[38] In *The Great Divorce*, Lewis has his mentor, George MacDonald, explain that the real tragedy of the tearful ghost of the mother raging over the loss of her son, Michael, is that "[s]he loved her son too little, not too much." See C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (London, 2002), 87–8.

[39] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 139.

[40] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 140. In the last resort, as Lewis wrote, "we must turn down or disqualify our nearest and dearest when they come between us and our obedience to God. Heaven knows, it will seem to them sufficiently like hatred... This is why it is of such extreme importance so to *order our loves* that it [an occasion for such 'hatred'] is unlikely to arrive at all" (141, 142, emphasis added).

[41] Lewis, *Poems*, 118.

Since man is created in the image of God, embracing our full nature implies embracing our divine calling as well. "Gods we are, Thou hast said." The distinction between Creator and creature is not eclipsed. The tone of the poem has been humbling, referring to God as the creator and source of life. But we, "though small," nonetheless participate in God's love. Human love shares, essentially, God's love. Lewis situated himself (probably consciously), in direct opposition to his contemporary, Anders Nygren, the Swedish Lutheran theologian and bishop, who taught that human beings are mere "conduits" or "channels" of divine love.[42]

The poet compares angelic existence to the moon ("lunar angels"). The moon gives light, but that is borrowed light, reflected from the sun, and by the time it reaches our faces it has lost all warmth. Of course, human existence is also derivative. This applies to human love as well. The poet is not satisfied with this, however, or so it seems. Humans are called to "quiver" with fire itself, that is, vibrate inwardly, and not merely to reflect "cold flame." Human nature is blessed—if men and women can take it—with "native luminosity." This luminosity is a gift, and yet, somehow, it is truly "ours."[43]

If men and women can take it. For this gift includes a compliment that (as noted above) may prove intolerable for some. To love is to be vulnerable. There is, however, as Lewis insisted, "no escape along the lines St. Augustine suggests."[44] In fact, there is no escape along any lines whatsoever. Love is followed by hurt; and hurt, it may be said, is a subtle double invitation: either to love again, or not. Hurt may be likened to smoke from a dying fire. The smoke is intolerably suffocating. One must either clear the air and rekindle the flame, or extinguish it for good. As Lewis wrote:

> If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully

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[42] Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (New York, 1969). The Christian, according to Nygren, "can be likened to a tube . . . He is merely the tube, the channel, through which God's love flows" (735). Nygren's conception of love is almost predestinarian, as "all choice on man's part is excluded. Man loves good . . . because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him and taken control of him, so that he cannot do other than love God" (213–14). For an outline of Lewis' position in "the Nygren debate," see Jason Lepojärvi, "C. S. Lewis and 'the Nygren Debate'," in *The Chronicle of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society*, vol. 7, 2, 2010, 25–42. See also Meilaender, *The Taste for the Other*, 56–7, 122–3; and Caroline Simon, "On Love," in MacSwain and Ward, *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis*, 154–5.

[43] In *The Four Loves*, Lewis wrote of man's "native luminosity," but rejected it. In that context, however, it carries a specific meaning: "the pretence that we have anything of our own or could for one hour retain by our own strength any goodness that God may pour into us . . ." And yet, "The consequences of parting with our last claim to intrinsic freedom, power, or worth, are real freedom, power and worth, really ours just because God gives them and because we know them to be (in another sense) not 'ours'." See Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 149.

[44] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 138.

> round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.[45]

This is one of the most memorable lines in *The Four Loves*. But what about Lewis' own memory? After all, he mistakenly referred to Augustine's unnamed friend as "Nebridius."[46] What can explain this error? We know that in his popular writing, Lewis may sometimes have "taken little pains to trace ideas or quotations to their sources when they were not easily recoverable."[47] But that cannot be the case here, for Augustine's *Confessions* was certainly easily recoverable.[48] Lewis' mistake is undoubtedly a human error, due to Augustine's mention of his "dearest friend Nebridius" in Book Four just two pages before the account of the unnamed friend.[49] Nebridius, too, suffered a premature death, but it was recorded much later, in Book Nine.[50]

Eric Gregory, who is sympathetic towards Lewis, is at least as sympathetic towards Augustine. He defends the story of Dido against critics such as Arendt and, in the case of the unnamed friend, implicitly against Lewis. But could Lewis have misunderstood Augustine?

As for Dido, Vergil's heroine, Gregory points out that the backdrop for the story is a contrast that Augustine drew throughout Book One between reality and illusion, or between the need to attend to reality and his own "love of games [and] passion for frivolous spectacles, and . . . restless urge to imitate comic scenes."[51] According to this reading, Augustine regretted weeping, not because he regretted loving, but because his love had been unreal, a form of escapism. Gregory provides a modern analogy (with his apologies to Vergil):

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[45] Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 138–9.

[46] As Lewis wrote: "In words that can still bring tears to the eyes, Augustine describes the desolation in which the death of his friend Nebridius plunged him." Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 137. This point was identified by Eric Gregory in *Politics and the Order of Love*, 280. Gregory is a former president of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society.

[47] Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, x.

[48] The collection of books owned by C. S. Lewis found in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill includes two works by Augustine, the *Confessions* in English and *De Civitate Dei* in Latin, both annotated.

[49] Augustine, *Confessions*, 56 (4.6) and 58 (4.10).

[50] Augustine, *Confessions*, 158–9 (9.6).

[51] Augustine, *Confessions*, 22 (1.30). Cited in Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love*, 280.

"[C]rying over reality TV or the infotainment packaging of death for media consumption just before we go off to 'bowl alone' in Robert Putnam's America. They allow you to enjoy weeping without demanding compassion."[52] As Augustine asked in Book Three, "But what quality of mercy is it in fictitious and theatrical inventions? A member of the audience is not excited to offer help, but invited only to grieve."[53]

As to the unnamed friend, Gregory offers in essence the same alternative reading. Augustine's grief is not that he loved too much, but that he did not really love his friend at all.[54] Whereas Jesus wept for Lazarus, Augustine wept for weeping's sake. As he confesses: "I was so wretched that I felt a greater attachment to my life of misery than to my dead friend. Although I wanted it to be otherwise, I was more unwilling to lose my misery than him." This led Augustine to want to escape: "I found myself heavily weighed down by a sense of being tired of living and scared of dying."[55] Gerald Schlabach, another Augustinian scholar, thinks that at this stage of his life, Augustine valued the ideal of friendship more than the friend itself.[56]

Eric Gregory agrees, but takes his vindication of Augustine even further. He argues that Augustine used the story as an allegorical opportunity to confess and mourn his forgetfulness of God:

> So I boiled with anger, sighed, wept, and was at my wits' end. I found no calmness, no capacity for deliberation. I carried my lacerated and bloody soul when it was unwilling to be carried by me. I found no place where I could put it down. There was no rest in pleasant groves, nor in games or songs, nor in sweet-scented places, nor in exquisite feasts, nor in the pleasures of the bedroom and bed, nor, finally, in books and poetry. Everything was an object of horror, even light itself; all that was not *he* made me feel sick and was repulsive—except for groaning and tears. In them alone was there some relief.[57]

All that was not *he*: who is this "he"? If it was not written with a minuscule, lower case "h," readers might be misled to think Augustine is speaking of

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[52] Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love*, 282.

[53] Augustine, *Confessions*, 36 (3.2). For an account of fictitious emotions in Augustine, see Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford, 2004), 164–6.

[54] Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love*, 283–7.

[55] Augustine, *Confessions*, 58–9 (4.11).

[56] Gerald Schlabach, *For the Joy Set Before Us: Augustine and Self-Denying Love* (South Bend, 2001), 58.

[57] Augustine, *Confessions*, 59 (4.12), emphasis added.

God. This is perhaps not surprising, for immediately following is Augustine's confession of having had a false image of God:

> But when my weeping stopped, my soul felt burdened by a vast load of misery. I should have lifted myself to you, Lord, to find a cure. I knew that but did not wish it or have the strength for it. When I thought of you, my mental image was not of anything solid and firm; it was not you but a vain phantom. My error was my god.[58]

Not only had Augustine's love for his friend been illusory, he could find no solace in his illusory image of God. He concluded the chapter of his pilgrimage story with these words: "And [so] I fled from my home town, for my eyes sought for him less in a place where they were not accustomed to see him. And so from the town of Thagaste I came to Carthage."[59]

Overall, the revisionist defense of Augustine is attractive, but is it plausible? And if it is plausible, does it pull the rug out from under Lewis' critique? Does he miss his mark? To consider this from the perspective of Lewis' scholarly acumen, it would be most accurate to conclude that, if Lewis misunderstood Augustine, it was simply a misunderstanding and not a fundamental disagreement. The burden of having to disagree with this "great saint and great thinker" would thus be lifted from Lewis' shoulders. This does not mean, of course, that a celestial apology will not be offered—or perhaps even an exchange of apologies. For, despite the wisdom given to him, in Augustine (as in Paul) "there are some things that are hard to understand."[60]

There are, however, reasons to suppose that Lewis did not misunderstand Augustine. Theological reconstruction of the "Augustinian tradition" is one thing; historical patristic analysis, another. And historical scholarship generally sides with Lewis' interpretation of the *Confessions*. In his *Amor Dei*, John Burnaby has concluded that Augustine's earlier works do "betray something very like hostility" to instinctive affection, suggesting even that "the ties of kinship are no more than consequences of the Fall,"[61] albeit that in later life (in *Retractions*) Augustine "peremptorily condemns such a view."[62] Simo Knuuttila, too, notes that "negative characterizations are common in Augustine's remarks on the emotions," even if in the *City of God*, which includes a more extensive discussion of emotions than does the *Confessions*, Augustine admits

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[58] Augustine, *Confessions*, 59–60 (4.12).
[59] Augustine, *Confessions*, 60 (4.12).
[60] 2 Peter 3:16.
[61] John Burnaby, *Amor Dei. A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (Eugene, 2007), 128, 129.
[62] Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 129.

to the valuable functions of emotions and rejects Stoic suspicion of them.[63]

We need not, however, definitely settle the matter here. What seems evident is that Augustine provides a wealth of material, some of it ambivalent, for *both* the revisionist reading *and* critics such as Arendt and Lewis. A telling case in point is the death of Augustine's mother. Recall that Augustine labored hard to fight back his tears; eventually, he succumbed to the grief welling up inside him. "Now I let flow the tears which I had held back so that they ran as freely as they wished," he wrote, and then offered his confession:

> My heart rested upon them [the tears], and it reclined upon them because it was your ears that were there, not those of some human critic who would put a proud interpretation on my weeping. And now, Lord, I make my confession to you in writing. Let anyone who wishes read and interpret as he pleases. If he finds fault that I wept for my mother for a fraction of an hour, the mother who had died before my eyes who had wept for me that I might live before your eyes, let him not mock me but rather, if a person of much charity, let him weep himself before you for my sins.[64]

One can almost feel the tension in Augustine between what, on the one hand, he had learned from Plotinus about the ignobility of weeping, and, on the other, the human frailties that, as a Christian, he came to understand "are a necessary part of the order we have to endure and are the lot of the human condition."[65] •

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[63] Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 152–6. What is more, scholars have paid attention to the parenetic factors at play: it is difficult to extract Augustine's theology from the Confessions in particular, because this work seeks to influence, exhort, and even convert readers (Manicheans included), sometimes instead of—or at the expense of—theological consistency. See Annemaré Kotzé, Augustine's *Confessions. Communicative Purpose and Audience* (Leiden, 2004), and "Protreptic, Paraenetic and Augustine's Confessions," in J. A. van den Berg et al., eds., "In Search of Truth": *Augustine, Manichaeism and Other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty* (Leiden, 2011), 3–23. See also Josef Lössl's "Augustine's Confessions as a Consolation of Philosophy," in the same *festschrift* for Johannes van Oort, 47–73.

[64] Augustine, *Confessions*, 176 (9.33).

[65] Augustine, *Confessions*, 175 (9.31). The stem of this article was first presented as a lecture before the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society on 1 March 2011. The author would like to thank Walter Hooper for sharing his personal experiences of Lewis in relation to his poem "Scazons," and Simon Howard, Timo Nisula, Pauli Annala, Simo Knuuttila, Grayson Carter, Louis Markos, and an anonymous reader for helpful comments to an earlier draft of this article.

Praeparatio Evangelica—or Daemonica?

C. S. Lewis and Anders Nygren on *Sehnsucht* [*]

Jason Lepojärvi

Abstract: C. S. Lewis has serious disagreements with Anders Nygren's theology of love. Several scholars have noticed the similarities between Nygren's *eros-love* and Lewis's concept of *need-love*. This article suggests, however, that need-love is not necessarily the closest equivalent in Lewis's taxonomy to Nygren's eros. The author argues that Lewis's concept of *Joy* (or *Sehnsucht*) is a largely overlooked contribution to "the Nygren debate," and contrasts it with the three main features of Nygren's eros. While encompassing many signature traits of eros, Joy manages to avoid many of its negative and excessive qualities. In Lewis's theological vision, spiritual longing, far from jeopardizing the Gospel, is a God-given desire that prepares the way for it.

"I wonder if he [Anders Nygren] is not trying to force on the conception of love an antithesis which it is the precise nature of love, in all its forms, to overcome."
—C. S. Lewis, letter on January 8, 1935

Introduction: After Eros

C. S. Lewis read Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros* in his mid-thirties, probably during the Christmas holiday of 1934. His first recorded thoughts, including the statement above, are from a letter dated "Jan 8th 1935" to his Oxford colleague Janet Spens.[1] Despite his decisive criticism of what he calls

[*] For longsuffering help in the form of written and oral feedback on earlier drafts of this article, the author would like to thank Judith Wolfe, Aku Visala, Michael Ward, Bruce R. Johnson, Rope Kojonen, Iisa Lepojärvi, Jussi Ruokomäki, Richard Lyne, and Werner Jeanrond.

[1] C. S. Lewis, *Collected Letters* (ed. Walter Hooper; 3 vols.; London: HarperCollins, 2000–2006) 2:153. The Swedish original was published in two parts in 1930 and 1936, and the English translation in three volumes: in 1932 (Part 1), 1938 (Part 2, vol. 1), and 1939 (Part 2, vol. 2), and finally as a revised one-volume edition in 1953. Lewis was referring to Part 1, since Part 2 had not been published, and it remains unclear whether he ever read Part 2. Hereafter all citations are from the one-

Nygren's "central contrast"—that agape is selfless and eros self-regarding—Lewis ends this letter with a declaration of uncertainty: "However, I must tackle him again. He has shaken me up extremely." It is remarkable, then, that Nygren is not mentioned by name in Lewis's *The Four Loves* (1960). Lewis's opening remarks on his theology of love, which do not directly refer to Nygren, "are critical of Nygren's main thesis in *Agape and Eros*."[2]

Walter Hooper explains that Lewis went on considering the relation of agape and eros for years. In *The Four Loves* (*FL*), he "discusses them under the names 'gift-love' and 'need-love' (using 'Eros' to mean sexual love)."[3] Lewis introduces these key concepts on the very first page, and it is their *non*-antithetical nature that pits him firmly against Nygren. This is another remarkable fact about *The Four Loves*: Lewis's refutation of Nygren's central contrast, the denigration of eros and in its separation from agape, is executed without using the words 'eros' or 'agape' in the Nygrenian sense at all.

These opening remarks define his two key concepts that, in turn, encompass the "four" types of love.

> "God is love," says St. John. When I first tried to write this book I thought that his maxim would provide me with a very plain highroad through the whole subject. I thought I should be able to say that human loves deserved to be called loves at all just in so far as they resembled that Love which is God. The first distinction I made was therefore between what I called Gift-love and Need-love. The typical example of Gift-love would be that love which moves a man to work and plan and save for the future well-being of his family which he will die without sharing or seeing; of the second, that which sends a lonely or frightened child to its mother's arms.[4]

Lewis posits that there was no doubt about which love most resembled God's own: "Divine Love is Gift-love" (*FL*, 9). And so, Lewis tells us, he was looking forward to writing "fairly easy panegyrics" on the first sort of love and "disparagements" of the second.

However, every time he tried to deny the name *love* for need-love he "ended in puzzles and contradictions." The reality was more complicated than he had supposed. First, he felt he was doing violence to the rich lexicons for

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volume Harper & Row edition (1969), a reprint of the 1953 edition and abbreviated *AE*.

[2] Caroline Simon, "On Love," in *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis* (ed. Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 146–59, at 154.

[3] Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 2:154 n. 3.

[4] C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960) 9. Hereafter *FL*.

types of love found in other languages, which contain "stored insight and experience" (9). Secondly, needfulness belongs to *given* human nature. There is an "innocent Need" (149) inherent in our creaturely condition. Why should we call it selfish? Sometimes there may be a need to subdue it, but not to feel it is "the mark of the cold egoist.... a bad spiritual symptom" (11). Thirdly, needfulness, Lewis believed, belongs to *elevated* human nature as well. Our spiritual health is proportional to our love for God, which must always be predominantly a need-love, and so need-love "either coincides with or at least makes a main ingredient in man's highest, healthiest, and most realistic spiritual condition" (12). In fact, it would be "a bold and silly creature that came before its Creator with the boast 'I'm no beggar. I love you disinterestedly'" (12). We are quite far from Nygren's suspicion of needfulness as a corruptive human impulse.

This proximity to, but rejection of, Nygren's "central contrast" has not gone unnoticed among scholars. Perhaps the first to home in on it was the English theologian V. A. Demant who reviewed *The Four Loves* immediately in 1960.

> Professor C. S. Lewis has evidently been dissatisfied with some too simple classifications of the expressions of love, which have become current in recent discussion. There has been, for example, the theological contrast ... made popular by a second-hand acquaintance with Nygren's thesis that *eros* is human and *agape* the divine love. A greater falsity has become common among moralists who would put down every motive short of supernatural charity as a form of egoism.... He [Lewis] makes his own terminology, and very useful it is. Especially could it help those who found themselves lost in the more ponderous treatments of love by Nygren, de Rougemont and Father D'Arcy.[5]

Much later, in 1974, a German philosopher also connects the dots. Commenting on Lewis's aborted idea of disparaging need-love, Josef Pieper writes: "That such an attitude is assumed, before reflection, reveals to what extent the reflective consciousness and the atmosphere of thought, especially of Christian thought concerning love, has already been molded by a particular

[5] V. A. Demant, "Four Loves," (review of C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*) *Frontier*, Spring 1960, 207–209, at 207. Another theologically astute reviewer that same year found it "interesting to compare Anders Nygren's concept of agape with Lewis' view of charity," and notes that "Nygren does not consider, as does Lewis, that God might create within himself a need for our love so that we can enter more fully into communion with him" (Donald G. Bloesch, "Love Illuminated," [review of C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*] *Christian Century*, December 14, 1960, 1470).

conception.... the antithesis of *eros* and *agape*."[6] A few years after Pieper, the American theologian Gilbert Meilaender (1978) also connects Lewis's gift-love and need-love with Nygren's agape and eros respectively[7], but not without an essential caveat, as we shall presently see. *The Four Loves*, which opens with "some sly remarks" on how easy the author thought his task would be, has been recognized by London-born theologian Oliver O'Donovan (1991) as "one of the most popular contributions" to the Nygren debate.[8] More recently, the Finnish theologian Risto Saarinen (2006) has also noted how Lewis's model "obviously clashes" with Nygren's, and how "the showdown is probably conscious."[9]

None of these scholars explicitly claims that Lewis's need-love is an *exhaustive* translation of Nygren's eros. One occasionally gets the feeling, however, that it is implicitly assumed. This would be unwise. Insofar as need encapsulates *one* element in eros, the pairing of them is insightful. Lewis's letters are quite forthcoming in this respect. For instance, twenty years after first reading Nygren's book, he explains:

> The great merit of Nygren, so far as I'm concerned, was that he gave one a new *tool of thought*: it is so v. [very] convenient and illuminating to be able to talk (and therefore to think) about the two elements of love as *Eros & Agape*. You notice that I say "elements". That is because I think he drives his contrast too hard and even talks as if the one cd. [could] not exist where the other was. But surely in any good friendship or good marriage ... the two are always mixed.... I doubt whether even fallen man is *totally* incapable of Agape. It is prefigured even on the instinctive level. Maternal affection, even among animals, has the dawn of Agape. So, in a queer way, has even the sexual appetite, for each sex wants to give pleasure as well as to get it. So there is a soil even in nature for [Agape] to strike roots in, or a trellis up [which] it can grow.[10]

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[6] Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love* (trans. Richard and Clara Winston; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997) 210. Pieper calls Nygren most influential "representative" of this prevailing atmosphere of thought instead of its "augurer," because several theologians in the 1920's and 1930's were juxtaposing "eros" and "Christian love" (variously understood): e.g., Heinrich Scholz in *Eros und Caritas* (1929) and Emil Brunner in *Eros und Liebe* (1937). Nygren's book has had "almost incalculable influence, although it itself may well spring from an idea that has always been present in Christendom" (Pieper, *Love*, 211).

[7] Gilbert Meilaender, *The Taste for the Other: The Social and Ethical Thought of C. S. Lewis* (2nd ed.; Vancouver: Regent College, 2003) 56–57.

[8] Oliver O'Donovan, "Foreword to the 1991 Edition," in John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2007, 1st ed. 1938) v–vii, at v.

[9] Risto Saarinen, "Eros, leikki ja normi: Rakkauden fundamentaaliteologiaa," *Teologinen aikakauskirja* (Finnish Theological Journal) vol. 2 (2006) 167–77, at 172 n. 15.

[10] Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 3:538 [italics in original].

Lewis gives another inquirer the same account: "Nygren's *Eros & Agape* gave me a good 'load of thought', a useful classification instrument, tho' I don't think his own use of that instrument v. [very] profitable."[11]

It seems relatively uncontroversial to assume that by the "new tool of thought" and the "useful classification instrument," Lewis means eros and agape *in terms of what he called Nygren's "central contrast"*—selfless versus self-regarding love. 'Need-love' and 'gift-love' are indeed the terms he later adopted to more systematically discuss what is already anticipated in these letters. The pairing of Lewis's need-love with Nygren's eros by later scholars is not wholly inaccurate, but it is part of the purpose of this article to show that it has not been precise enough.

Meilaender's caveat offers the first important qualification. He notes that to draw a parallel between Nygren's eros/agape distinction and Lewis's need-love/gift-love distinction is not entirely satisfactory because, unlike Nygren, Lewis "is not making a simple contrast between human love and divine love." For Lewis, both need-love and gift-love "are natural components of human love."[12] This proviso is actually a double qualification: it is another way of saying that Lewis regarded both need-love and gift-love as non-sinful, natural components of human love. To describe the contrast of eros and agape as "victory for Eros" (*AE*, 231) or "betrayal of Agape" (232) (as Nygren does) is thus doubly misleading.

But even further corrections are necessary. In addition to need-love as a naturally good thing, God can bestow "two other gifts": a "supernatural" need-love for one another and for Himself (*FL*, 147). In other words God can grace us with an intensified need of one another and a firmer awareness of our unshakable need of Himself. Such elevated need-love forever ousts what G. K. Chesterton had called "a self-sufficiency that is the very opposite of sanctity."[13] What is more, in *The Problem of Pain* (1940) Lewis argues that we are even justified in talking about *God*'s need-love. In some sense we are "the needed and desired of God."[14] With this, too, Lewis glaringly distances himself

[11] ibid., 3:980.
[12] Meilaender, *Taste for the Other*, 57.
[13] G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Doubleday, 2001, 1st ed. 1933) 109.
[14] C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: HarperCollins, 1998, 1st ed. 1940) 35. After strongly

from Nygren.

The previous paragraphs' caveats and qualifications may sound like "a dizzying variety of formulations,"[15] but they are certainly not trivial hair-splitting, and hopefully have not put off any reader. The reason for including them here has been to show that need-love is *not* synonymous with eros. They are indeed in many ways quite *unlike* each other. The need for such laborious qualifications (I mentioned but the most obvious) raises interesting questions. If need-love does not holistically capture the meaning of eros, do other concepts in Lewis's taxonomy of love catch the leftovers? Or is there perhaps a more comprehensive translation available that apprehends more of eros than does need-love alone? Where does Nygren's eros land in Lewis's theology of love?

I believe it rests not far from Lewis's understanding of *spiritual longing*, coupled with what he calls 'appreciative love'. The German-speaking world knows this longing as *Sehnsucht*, but readers of Lewis simply call it 'Joy'.

Nygren's distrust of *Sehnsucht* runs deep. Burnaby has put his finger on it: "Where others see a *praeparatio evangelica*, he [Nygren] is more disposed to find a *praeparatio daemonica*."[16] Nygren believed that all longing and desire falls under egocentric and self-deifying eros, even "that 'love for God' which means yearning desire for God, *Gottessehnsucht*, is essentially an expression of *man's* longing and pining" (*AE*, 141). The distinctive features of his eros he sums up under three headings: "(1) Eros is the 'love of desire', or acquisitive love; (2) Eros is man's way to the Divine; (3) Eros is egocentric love" (175). The eros Nygren distrusted and the Joy that fascinated Lewis all his life, preparing him for conversion, surprisingly have much in common. It is the

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affirming the doctrine of God's impassibility, Lewis suddenly "backs off" (Nicholas Wolterstorff, "C. S. Lewis on the Problem of Suffering," *The Chronicle of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society* vol. 7 [2010] 3–20, at 5). Lewis then almost qualifies this doctrine: "Hence, if God sometimes speaks as though the Impassible could suffer passion and eternal fullness could be in want, and in want of those beings on whom it bestows all from their bare existence upwards, this can only mean, if it means anything intelligible by us, that God of mere miracle has made himself able so to hunger and created in Himself that which *we can satisfy*.… Before and behind all the relations of God to man, as we now learn them from Christianity, yawns the abyss of a Divine act of pure giving—the election of man, from nonentity, to be the beloved of God, and therefore (in some sense) the needed and desired of God, who *but for that act* needs and desires nothing" (*The Problem of Pain*, 35–36 [italics added]).

[15] Meilaender, *Taste for the Other*, 59: "When we begin to ask what Lewis means by divine gift-love we encounter a dizzying variety of formulations."

[16] Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 16.

overall task of this article to analyze their relation in more detail.

My argument will continue to unfold as follows. In the next section, I will briefly introduce Lewis's concept of Joy, which he calls "a kind of love." This will lay the foundation for a systematic comparative analysis of eros and Joy, executed in the three following sections according to the three main features of Nygren's eros. I will conclude by drawing together the relevant affinities between the two concepts, and acknowledging the remaining differences. Much of the argument is based on internal evidence. Lewis's writings do, however, include at least ten[17] explicit references to Nygren. Many of these (I will argue) support my conviction that Lewis himself never intended his need-love as an exhaustive interpretation of Nygren's eros—but of which the concept of Joy, together with appreciative love, captures a significant portion.

A Kind of Love

The "Joy" in the title of *Surprised by Joy* (*SJ*) 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. Lewis himself called it "a dialectic of desire"[18] and a "lived dialectic,"[19] as both it and its mysterious object felt ever elusive. Joy is the bittersweet pursuit of the intangible appearing in the guise of the tangible.

Early aesthetic experiences, Lewis says, "taught me longing—*Sehnsucht*; made me for good or ill, and before I was six years old, a votary of the Blue Flower" (*SJ*, 14).[20] The theme of his early poem *Dymer* (1926), written prior to his conversion, was "romantic longing—*Sehnsucht*."[21] *The Pilgrim's*

[17] Seven of these ten references are found in Lewis's letters: see *Collected Letters*, 2:147, 153–54, 158, 165; and 3:538, 555, 980. The remaining three are found in his literary magnum opus *The Oxford History of English Literature in the Sixteenth Century: Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954) 383; his autobiography *Surprised by Joy* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955) 198; and in his review (1938) of Leone Ebreo's *The Philosophy of Love*, reprinted in *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews* (ed. Walter Hooper; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 277–80, at 279.
[18] Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 207.
[19] C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress* (London: HarperCollins, 1998, 1st ed. 1933) xv.
[20] A reference to the German poet Novalis's "Blue Flower of Longing."
[21] This is acknowledged in the preface Lewis wrote for the 1950 reprint of the book, cited in Corbin

Regress (*PR*), his allegorical spiritual autobiography, also speaks of paradoxical immortal longings that are "acute and even painful, yet the mere wanting is felt to be somehow a delight" (*PR*, xii). And in his Cosmic Trilogy, we read of "the inconsolable wound with which man is born," the aches and yearnings which enigmatically are "the fore-runners of [a] goddess."[22] She happens to be Venus (Aphrodite), the goddess of love herself.

A turning point in Lewis's understanding of Joy was reading George MacDonald's fairytale *Phantastes* as a young boy.[23] In his anthology of MacDonald, Lewis explains: "I had crossed a great frontier. I had already been waist-deep in Romanticism.... but there was a difference."[24] What was the difference, the new quality he found? "I should have been shocked in my teens if anyone had told me that what I learned to love in *Phantastes* was goodness"[25]or simply "Holiness" (*SJ*, 169). This Joy related to the living God he did not know till years later. What this book did, he remembers, was "to convert, even to baptize ... my imagination. It did nothing to my intellect nor (at the time) to my conscience. Their turn came far later and with the help of many other books and men."[26]

One of these other books was *The Idea of the Holy* (1923) by Rudolf Otto, which Lewis read in his late twenties. In 1958, responding to Corbin Carnell's queries on the matter (in the very same letter that mentions *Agape and Eros* having given him "a load of thought"), Lewis says that he has been "deeply influenced" by Otto's *Das Heilige*. Otto's historical and psychological analysis of "religious awe" and its relation to the holy (which he calls the *numinous*) made a profound impression on Lewis, and its impact only "seemed to increase with time."[27] Lewis drew upon it sometimes explicitly, as in the theory of religion set forth in *The Problem of Pain* (4–12), and sometimes

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S. Carnell, *Bright Shadow: Spiritual Longing in C. S. Lewis* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999, 1st ed. 1974) 56 n. 17.

[22] C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* (London: HarperCollins, 2005, 1st ed. 1945) 448.

[23] David C. Downing has described it as "an emotional and spiritual watershed" for Lewis (*Into the Region of Awe: Mysticism in C. S. Lewis* [Downers Grove, Ills.: InterVarsity, 2005] 38).

[24] C. S. Lewis, *George MacDonald: An Anthology* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001, 1st ed. 1946) xxxvii.

[25] Lewis, *George MacDonald*, xxxviii–xxxix.

[26] ibid., xxxviii. See also *SJ*, 171.

[27] Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, 69, 57.

implicitly, as in his Cosmic Trilogy.[28] The accounts of Joy in *The Pilgrim's Regress* and *Surprised by Joy* echo—sometimes almost verbatim—Otto's account of numinous awe.

Lewis was of course not the first or only Christian to have been acutely sensitive to beauty and troubled by an unsatisfied longing. Augustine, to whom Lewis's "own glad debts are incalculable," (*FL*, 137) was, too. As Burnaby writes, for Augustine "the beauty of nature is 'numinous', overwhelming: it is an 'almost unspeakable' beauty that must 'fill with awe everyone who contemplates it'." [29] The dominant characteristic of his understanding of Christian love "is *desiderium*—the unsatisfied longing of the homesick heart."[30] In fact, the whole life of the Christian, Augustine had said, is "a holy longing."[31] In the *Confessions* he describes a piercing and transient encounter with God: "So in a flash of a trembling glance [I] attained to that which is. At that moment I saw your 'invisible nature understood through the things which are made' (Rom. 1: 20)' "—and then the moment was gone, leaving "only a loving memory and a desire for that of which I had the aroma but which I had not yet the capacity to eat."[32] Despite the similarity between Augustine and Lewis's experiences of this desire, their understanding of its relation to (for example) the sensible world somewhat differs, as we will see later.

Having introduced the concept of Joy, we can now begin to contrast it with Nygren's eros-love. The first obvious question is *whether Joy is a love at all*. Admittedly, Lewis rarely speaks of it as a love. But we can infer quite a bit from one occasion where he does. A helpful (albeit brief) passage from *Surprised by Joy* may serve as our starting point. "There was no doubt that Joy was a desire (and, in so far as it was also simultaneously a good, it was also a kind of love)" (*SJ*, 208). This remark, made almost in passing, is full of

[28] A short analysis of the idea of the numinous in the Cosmic Trilogy can be found in Carnell, *Bright Shadow*, 96–97. For a recent discussion of *Das Heilige*'s influence on *Till We Have Faces* see Risto Saarinen, "Natural Moral Law in *Mere Christianity* and *Till We Have Faces*: Does Lewis Change His View?" (forthcoming).
[29] Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 157. The citations are from Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, cxliv. 15.
[30] Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 96.
[31] ibid., 97. The citation is from Augustine's *In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus*, 4.6.
[32] Augustine, *Confessions* (trans. Henry Chadwick; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 7.23 (127–8).

possible implications. What does Lewis mean by "good"? And what "kind" of love is at stake? Does "insofar as Joy is a good" imply that it is not always a good? What does "bad" Joy look like, then, and how is it purified?

According to Nygren, since the Greek words *ἔρως* and *ἀγάπη* have for centuries been represented in many languages by one word, 'love', it has been only natural to assume that they stand for "one and the same reality, or at any rate for closely related realities" (*AE*, 32). "But the double spell," as he calls it, "cast upon us by tradition and language" must be broken (32). Nygren's historical and analytical study tries to dispel this mirage from blurring the clear-cut outlines of authentic Christian love. Eros is exposed as acquisitive, possessive, and self-deifying—in all ways antithetical to Christian love. Not surprisingly, but I think misleadingly, Nygren's model is sometimes referred to as *di*partite, since it speaks of "two" loves. Based on the actual content (if not form) of his overall argument, however, I would call it monistic. If love is a good, then Nygren's eros is not love at all, but a kind of anti-love. Only his agape is love.

In any case, Lewis thinks that to merit the name *love*, the phenomenon (here, Joy-as-desire) must be a good. Hence, because Nygren's eros is derogatory, Lewis would probably not number it among loves proper. We remember that he could not deny need-love the name *love*, because it was not an evil. Loves can, of course, degenerate into "complicated forms of hatred" or even "demons" (*FL*, 17).[33] Such dangers notwithstanding, unlike Nygren's eros, Joy is potentially a kind of love. What kind of love, then, is it?

Is it a virtue like the "four" loves?[34] Virtues are good traits or dispositions that, together with vices, form one's character, and can be acquired or

[33] The word 'demon' or 'demoniac' appears twenty times in *The Four Loves*. Rather than a literal evil spirit, in Lewis's thinking love-as-a-demon is often a form of *idolatry*. Especially erotic love may usurp the allegiance that belongs to God only. See Olli-Pekka Vainio, "The Aporia of Using 'Love' as an Argument: A Meditation on C. S. Lewis' *The Four Loves*," *The Chronicle of the Oxford University C. S. Lewis Society*, vol. 4 no. 2 (2007) 21–30. Vainio slightly miscalculates ("eighteen times").

[34] Caroline Simon warns that the title of *The Four Loves* is misleading. Lewis's model includes "at least four different parameters: (1) Love for the Sub-personal versus Love for Finite Persons versus Love for God; (2) Natural Love versus Supernatural Love; (3) Need-love versus Gift-love versus Appreciative Love; (4) Affection versus Friendship versus Eros versus Charity" ("On Love," 148). These taxonomies should all be taken lightly. Lewis says we "[m]urder to dissect" (*Four Loves*, 26): in real life the elements of love mix. Elsewhere Lewis salutes Thomas Usk for "his attempt at integration: he is not content with [a] water-tight division of human desires" (*The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 1st ed. 1936] 227).

bolstered by training. But Joy, Lewis believed, "is never in our power" (*SJ*, 24). It is wholly spontaneous. For years he thought that by returning to the context (poems, music, or nature) that had originally evoked Joy, he could help reawaken it. Desires, however, are always *for* an object. Having been preoccupied with his inner states, he had erected obstacles for real occasions of Joy or smothered them upon arrival. After realizing the blunder, he could redirect his attention from this "self-defeating predicament"[35] of summoning Joy.

Consequently, it follows that in *this* sense Joy was in his power after all. Paradoxically, by not yearning after it Lewis could hinder less, if not exactly excite, the arrival of Joy, as "it arrived unexpectedly when he was preoccupied with other matters."[36] Walter Hooper has called this the "Law of Inattention."[37] There is a peculiar kind of proactive passivity in Lewis's mature understanding of Joy. Perhaps it would be correct to say that as an uncalled-for feeling or experience, Joy *in itself* is not a virtue proper; uncontrollable reawakening is different from cultivation by intentional habituation. But it can reverberate into a more consistent and enduring relation to the world, a relation which can be either virtuous our vicious (more of this below).

What about Lewis's tripartite division of need-love, gift-love and appreciative love? Where does Joy stand in this taxonomy? Whether Joy is need-love or gift-love depends on the subject. In Joy, our being is responding to some fundamental need. Joy is *human* longing for something, whether lost or never endowed. We will discuss agency more thoroughly in the penultimate section, but in anticipation we may say that in some sense *God* can also be regarded as both the efficient and final cause of Joy. After all, the human person is the *object* of God's "arrows of Joy" (*SJ*, 217). The emerging picture will look paradoxical. Insofar as God is its cause, Joy as *our need-love* is *his gift-love* to us. Joy is what Lewis experienced when God's love touched him and gave him an anticipatory, transient taste of bliss.

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[35] John Beversluis, *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion* (2nd ed.; Amherst, N. York: Prometheus Books, 2007) 38.

[36] Mona Dunckel and Karen Rowe, "Understanding C. S. Lewis's *Surprised by Joy:* 'A Most Reluctant' Autobiography," in *C. S. Lewis: Life, Work, and Legacy* (ed. Bruce L. Edwards; 4 vols.; Westport, Conn.: Praegan, 2007) 3:257–78, at 267.

[37] Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Complete Guide to His Life and Works* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996) 577–8.

Joy as a Value-based Love of Desire

What exactly does Lewis mean by "appreciative love"? It is an element in love that can gradually grow into "full appreciation of all beauty," and which we can "hardly help calling *disinterested*, toward the object itself" (*FL*, 25 [italics in original]). Lewis explains: "It is the feeling which makes a man unwilling to deface a great picture even if he was the last man left alive and himself about to die; which makes us glad of unspoiled forests that we shall never see; which makes us anxious that the garden or bean-field should continue to exist" (25–26). In short, "we pronounce them, in a momentary God-like sense, 'very good'" (26). This affirmation or "almost homage" is "a kind of debt," and it can be offered "not only to things but to persons" (26) and also to God Himself (159).

Joy is markedly appreciative and value-based in this respect. It does not bestow or create the value of its objects (as Nygren's agape does), but acknowledges and appreciates the value that already *is*. Its objects or catalysts have one aspect in common: beauty. Lewis later narrowed this quality down to goodness, later still to holiness, and finally to the holiness of a Divine Person. Joy taught Lewis to love disinterestedly. He learned that "it is more important that Heaven should exist than that any of us should reach it" (*SJ*, 199) and that "a thing can be revered not for what it can do to us but for what it is in itself" (218).

Joy and Nygren's eros are both value-based, but not precisely in the same way. The difference is a nuanced but important one. Joy, as we have seen, can appreciate the object *for its own sake* (insofar as the object is God or the experience of Joy itself). In Nygrenian terms, to appreciate the goodness of an object is *erotic*, but to appreciate the object "disinterestedly" is *agapic*. In this way, Joy *overcomes the antithesis* of Nygren's "central contrast" between erotic and agapic love.[38] Nygren does not, of course, believe any such overcoming is possible.

[38] "For the essence of religion," in Lewis's view, "is the thirst for an end higher than natural ends; the finite self's desire for, and acquiescence in, and self-rejection in favour of, an object wholly good and wholly good for it" ("Religion Without Dogma?" in *C. S. Lewis: Essay Collection and Other Short Pieces* [ed. Lesley Walmsley; London: HarperCollins, 2000] 163–78, at 167).

What about Joy's relation to the tangible world? Nygren distinguished between three kinds of erotic relations. The first two he called "Hellenistic" eros: "vulgar" eros glorifies and idolizes the sensible, whereas "heavenly" eros is ascetic and holds the sensible in contempt (*AE*, 49–52). Gnostic "love feasts" (orgies) exemplify the first (*AE*, 308) and the *Symposium* the second.[39] Lewis would agree with Nygren that these could hardly be squared with the Christian approach, which forbids idolatry and contempt alike. For instance, of desire in the sublimated "heavenly" sense Lewis writes:

> The thought of the *Symposium*, like all Plato's thoughts, is ruthless, and the more fervid, the more ruthless. The lowest rung of his ladder is perversion; the intermediate rungs are increasing degrees of asceticism and scientific clarity; the topmost rung is mystical contemplation. A man who reaches it has, by hypothesis, left behind for ever the original human object of desire and affection.... There is no possibility of adapting this scheme in its full rigour to a [Christian] heterosexual love.[40]

Joy does not find its ultimate fulfillment in the material, or even in the aesthetic, but it is disdainful of neither. We may of course be tempted to contempt. Lewis explains how disillusionment from his repeated failures to uncover the source of Joy, eventually led him to "a retreat, almost a panic-stricken flight" (*SJ*, 191) from the pursuit of Joy. Yet instead of repenting his idolatry, he "vilified the unoffending images" (193).[41] Joy itself, however, neither idolizes nor vilifies nature, even if sometimes we do.

Does Joy arrange the goods in nature in an *ascending hierarchy of their value*, like Nygren's eros does? There is little evidence that it does. Nature walks, books, poetry, and sex are all equally valuable as reminders of and pointers toward the transcendental. Instead of an ascending hierarchy of value, there is simply a giant ontological leap from beings to Being itself.[42]

With this, we arrive at the third kind of erotic relation, which Nygren calls

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[39] Both types are explained in the *Symposium* (180D) but only one is promulgated.
[40] Lewis, *English Literature*, 10; see also *Allegory of Love*, 5 and 97.
[41] In *Allegory of Love*, Lewis quotes Spenser's Nature, who "grudg'd to see the counterfet should shame the thing it selfe" (328).
[42] When Lewis discovered "that pleasure (whether that pleasure or any other) was not what you had been looking for," his "frustration did not consist in finding a 'lower' pleasure instead of a 'higher.' It was the irrelevance of the conclusion that marred it" (*SJ*, 161). Lewis clearly believed in a hierarchical order of value present in the universe, even if Joy's relation to it is not hierarchical. See the ch. "Hierarchy" in his *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: Oxford University Press, 2010, 1st ed. 1942) 72–81, esp. 72.

"Augustinian" or "Catholic". Although Joy's relation to creation is not hierarchical, it is nearer to the Augustinian relation than to any other. Nygren admits that Augustine's (and following him, Catholicism's) conception of longing *seems* from the outset very different than the Hellenistic conception. Both the starting point and goal are different: We are not "disguised divinit[ies]" (*AE*, 517), and the distinction between God and us "is never abolished; even at the highest point of spiritual life the distance is preserved" (518). For Augustine and for Lewis, the material world is not the problem. Nygren knows that Augustine actually "attacks the common idea of Eros theory that evil is to be traced to corporeality" (537). The problem, then, is egocentricity. Selfish pride is "the deepest root of sin" (538) and can only be uprooted by graced humility. But even this leaves Nygren dissatisfied, for humility, he suspects, is only pride disguised.

The reason Nygren is so adamantly hard to please in this case is simple. For him, there is *no such thing* as a desire that is "simultaneously a good." Desire itself is evil. It contaminates all possible relations. The anthropological foundation for his understanding of desire is his understanding of *needfulness*. "The sense of need is an essential constituent of Eros; for without a sense of need acquisitive love would never be aroused.... Only that which is regarded as valuable can become an object of desire and love" (176). There is simply "no room" for "any spontaneous and unmotivated love" (176). It follows that "all desire, or appetite, and longing is more or less egocentric" (180).

Lewis's understanding of the needfulness at the heart of desire stands in diametrical opposition to this, as noted above. For him, need is a natural and non-sinful constituent of all human love, including both its highest forms and spiritual longing. Lewis would probably nod in approval of Augustine's position faithfully paraphrased by Nygren: "*Desire is the mark of the creature;* it is grounded in God's own will and plan.... So, far from being evil and reprehensible, desire ... is in the highest degree good and praiseworthy, inasmuch as it gives expression to man's actual position as a created being" (*AE*, 479–80). In fact, "God has created man such that he *must* desire, *must* love and long for something" (482 [italics in original]). Nygren might agree

that desire is "the mark of the creature," but only in the dimension of *fallen creature*. Desire may be natural, but there is certainly nothing neutral about it, let alone good or praiseworthy.

Philip Watson, in his translator's preface to the revised reprint of *Agape and Eros* (1953), defends the author against critics who argue "that Eros is 'neutral' to man in the sense that it is an essential characteristic of human nature" and that "God is the author of Eros" (*AE*, xxi). This is "an odd" argument, he says, because we "might as well say that God is the author of sin—which in one sense is only too 'natural' to man" (xxi).[43] Watson's remark is highly revealing. In no place is it more evident that certain important disagreements in "the Nygren debate," including the character of needfulness, result from diverging anthropological and theological *presuppositions*. Nygren himself, I believe, saw this clearly. In passing and without further comment, he explained that the reason why John Burnaby (1938) and Martin D'Arcy's (1945) responses come to different conclusions from his own is essentially that "they start from different premisses" (*AE*, xiii).[44] This is, of course, just another way of saying that Nygren himself starts from different premises.

All of this is highly relevant to the important question of *praeparatio evangelica*. Nygren says that "there are elements of truth" (*AE*, 161) in the view that, at least historically, religious longing has prepared ground for the Gospel as a "forerunner of Christianity" (162). However, since religious longing is intimately linked with eros, it could also be described as Christianity's "most dangerous rival" (162). Which one are we to emphasize? Nygren's answer is most telling. "From a purely historical point of view, therefore, it is scarcely possible to reach a definite decision.... In our present discussion, where we are concerned to show the essential difference between the Agape motif and the Eros motif, the main emphasis will naturally have to be placed on the rivalry between them" (162). That is to say, Nygren emphasizes their rivalry because he is concerned with emphasizing their rivalry! For the first

[43] Lewis himself has traced the multifarious meanings of 'nature' and 'natural' in his *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2008, 1st ed. 1960) 24–73.
[44] Burnaby's *Amor Dei* and D'Arcy's *The Mind and Heart of Love* were the first full-length rebuttals of Nygren's theses.

time, it seems, Nygren hints at the real possibility of spiritual longing (eros) developing into faith (agape), but the line of thought is cut abruptly.[45] Instead of affirming the link between the sense of smell and fragrance (the divine) he cuts it in fear of stench (self-divination).

Shifting the metaphor from scent to sight, Lewis asks, "How if there is a man to whom [the spilled] bright drops on the floor are the beginning of a trail which, duly followed, will lead him in the end to taste the cup itself? How if no other trail, humanly speaking, were possible?" (*PR*, xvi). Desire points the way, but only grace can make the journey possible. The longings stirred by nature and other catalysts helped Lewis to understand what is meant by "the 'love' of God" (*FL*, 30). "Nature cannot satisfy the desires she arouses nor answer theological questions nor sanctify us," but at least for Lewis, the love of nature was "a valuable and, for some people, an indispensable initiation" (*FL*, 31).[46]

In *The Pilgrim's Regress*, Lewis symbolized by "North" and "South" things that he calls "equal and opposite evils" (*PR*, xvi). The Northerners are "the men of rigid systems whether sceptical or dogmatic, Aristocrats, Stoics, Pharisees, Rigorists." The Southerners are by their nature less definable: "boneless souls whose doors stand open … with readiest welcome for those … who offer some sort of intoxication.... Every feeling is justified by the mere fact that it is felt; for a Northerner, every feeling on the same ground is suspect" (xvii). North and South are allegorical images of theological extremes:

> The one exaggerates the distinctness between Grace and Nature to sheer opposition and by vilifying the higher levels of Nature (the real *praeparatio evangelica* inherent in certain immediately sub-Christian experiences) makes the way hard for those who are at the point of coming in. The other blurs the distinction altogether, flatters mere kindliness into thinking it is charity [agape] and vague optimisms and pantheisms into thinking that they are Faith, and makes the way

[45] Conflating faith and love is not my doing but Nygren's (see e.g., *AE*, 117–9, 125–7). As Watson explains, although "the love of man for God of which the New Testament speaks" can be called agape, "its character as response is more clearly marked when it is described (by St. Paul especially) as 'faith'" (*AE*, xvi–xvii). Gene Outka also notes how "Nygren proposes that in place of 'love for God' one substitute 'faith'" (*Agape: An Ethical Analysis* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972] 47).

[46] In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis says that the lower life of imagination is "not necessarily and by its own nature" the beginning of, nor a step toward, the higher life of the spirit, but "God can cause it to be such a beginning" (159 n. 1).

> out fatally easy and imperceptible for the budding apostate. (xvii)

Lewis clarifies that these extremes "do not coincide with Romanism (to the North) and Protestantism (to the South)" (xvii).[47] It seems obvious that Lewis would count *Sehnsucht* among the sub-Christian experiences, and Nygren among the men of rigid systems. In no ambiguous terms: Nygren's belief (that all desire is evil) is itself evil.

The American philosopher John Beversluis, however, is not impressed by Lewis's understanding of Joy. He thinks that it suggests that Lewis "understands neither the Socratic-Platonic theory of desire nor the Judeo-Christian doctrine of sin."

> The Socratic-Platonic view knows nothing of the radical evil in human beings insisted on by Christianity and accounts for their pursuit of false objects by saying that they are ignorant and pursue false objects inadvertently and involuntarily. The Judeo-Christian doctrine, on the other hand, knows nothing of the Socratic-Platonic notion of an innocent and good-oriented desire and claims that human beings pursue false objects deliberately and knowingly.[48]

To think, as Lewis does, that we long for God as *object of desire* but shrink from him as *just judge* is to contrive "a conceptual hybrid that lacks the authentic pedigree of both parents" (58). Beversluis is, of course, right. Lewis's understanding of Joy lacks the *unfiltered* pedigree both to the Socratic-Platonic theory of desire and to a *certain* Christian doctrine of sin. As it so happens, Beversluis is consciously operating under the tutelage of Nygren's doctrine of desire and sin! *Surprised by Joy*, he declares, "documents Lewis's unsuccessful attempt at (what Anders Nygren calls) 'the Hellenisation of Christianity'" (59).

Beversluis notes correctly that on the question of spiritual longing as potential *praeparatio evangelica* Nygren and Lewis disagree. Lewis believed

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[47] If we are surprised by the *direction* of this clarification, it is only because we happen to be reading in the post-Lubacian era something that was written in pre-Lubacian times. Ever since the Second Vatican Council, theological landscapes have, if not been turned topsy turvy, been greatly shuffled. While it does not surprise *us*, it may have surprised Lewis's immediate audience to learn that "Barth might well have been placed among my Pale Men, and Erasmus might have found himself at home with Mr Broad" (*PR*, xvii).

[48] Beversluis, *Rational Religion*, 57. The preface to the second edition of his book (see footnote 36 above) is no exaggeration: it is still "the first [and only] full-length critical study of C. S. Lewis's apologetic writings" (9). The following page numbers refer to this book.

in the possibility of "forgivable honest ignorance." Beversluis thinks that this is a humane idea, but one that "cannot be taken seriously" (62). Why not? Because sin "is not honest error, but open rebellion" (64). There are "undeniable tensions" between the two claims, and this "irresolvable discrepancy … is the result of Lewis's unsuccessful attempt to synthesize two incompatible—or, at least, incongruous—philosophical traditions" (59). Whether or not Lewis's attempt is unsuccessful, Beversluis is surely right about the tensions. However, following Nygren, he translates tension into antithesis. Either sin is ignorance and desire innocent, *or* sin is rebellion and desire megalomania. Lewis believed it was not a question of either–or but of both–and.[49] According to Nygren, wanting it both–and was, here and elsewhere, Augustine's "fatal flaw" (*AE*, 470) as well. He had tried to unite things which "by their nature cannot be united" (561).[50]

Joy as the Pursuit of Happiness

The second main characteristic of Nygren's eros is that it is "egocentric love" (*AE*, 175). This overlaps with much of what has already been discussed regarding need-love, so we may instead focus on desire as the *pursuit of happiness*.

All desire and longing, Nygren had said, is more or less egocentric. "But the clearest proof of the egocentric nature of Eros is its intimate connection with *eudæmonia*" (*AE*, 180). Christian love, on the other hand, "is *spontane-*

[49] For Lewis, the non- or pre-Christian life is not determined primarily or exclusively by sin, but also by ignorance, misinformedness etc.—not so much that sin is ignorance as that sin is not all defining. I am thankful to Judith Wolfe for insight on Lewis's hamartiology. In Augustine's summary of Christian doctrine (*Encheiridion*, 22), "the two causes of sin" are ignorance (failure of intellect) and infirmity (failure of will).

[50] Beversluis is one of the first to mention Nygren in connection with Lewis *viz*. the link between eros and Joy. For this perceptiveness he deserves credit. (Another scholar who has contrasted the two is Gilbert Meilaender in his *The Way that Leads There: Augustinian Reflections on the Christian Life* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006] ch. "Desire".) Unfortunately, he seems unaware of Lewis's familiarity with, and rejection of, Nygren and his theses. He chides Lewis for his understanding of Joy because it cannot be squared with a certain doctrine of sin—the one Lewis happened to reject. Beversluis concludes his deconstruction of Joy rather unflatteringly: Joy is "a preoccupation … we ought to ignore," "of no importance," "a narcissistic project," "a childish thing," and the "self-important claim that reality [physical nature] is just not up to one's lofty standards is not profundity; it is adolescent disenchantment elevated to cosmic status" (*Rational Religion*, 67–69).

ous in contrast to all activity with a eudæmonistic motive." In layman's terms, it "is free from all selfish calculation" (*AE*, 726). Eros is soaked in "a eudæmonistic scheme" (*AE*, 530) that, for our purposes, can be broken into four interconnected claims: 1) Eros pursues individual happiness, and 2) this pursuit is morally tainted, because 3) it is possessive and selfish (incapable of agapic sacrifice) 4) and "uses" objects of love as its means to happiness. How does Joy fare against this four-fold eudaemonistic charge?[51]

The differences are fundamental. Except for the first claim, it is difficult to square them in any respect. Lewis likens spiritual desire in the soul to the chair in King Arthur's castle in which only one could sit: "And if nature makes nothing in vain, the One who can sit in this chair must exist" (*PR*, xv). Beversluis[52] notes that in endorsing that nature makes nothing "in vain," Lewis commits himself to a teleological anthropology and positions himself in the natural law tradition among Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and Hooker. (It was the sixteenth-century English theologian Richard Hooker who called it "is an axiom of nature that natural desire cannot utterly be frustrate."[53]) Teleology further solidifies Lewis's distance from Nygren, who saw it as another reprehensible mark of eros (*AE*, 94). The natural law tradition to which Lewis belonged holds that the human *telos*, the goal towards which we by nature are oriented, is human flourishing or happiness.

Lewis explains that Joy "must be sharply distinguished" from happiness and pleasure.

> Joy (in my sense) has indeed one characteristic, and one only, in common with them; the fact that anyone who has experienced it will want it again. Apart from that … it might almost equally well be called a particular kind of unhappiness or grief. But then it is a kind we want. I doubt whether anyone who has tasted it would ever … exchange it for all the pleasures in the world. (*SJ*, 24)

Joy is distinct from all pleasure, "even from aesthetic pleasure. It must have the stab, the pang, the inconsolable longing" (*SJ*, 74). Beversluis offers a

[51] I have elsewhere contrasted this four-fold exposition with Lewis's *eros* (i.e., romantic love). See Jason Lepojärvi, "Does Eros Seek Happiness? A Critical Analysis of C. S. Lewis's Reply to Anders Nygren," in *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* vol. 53 (2011) 208–24.
[52] Beversluis, *Rational Religion*, 42.
[53] Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: A Critical Edition with Modern Spelling* (ed. Arthur S. McGrade; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 83.

synopsis of the distinction between Joy and pleasure that is helpful here, since its logic, I think, applies admirably to happiness as well: "Joy is pleasurable, but it is not the same as pleasure; and its pleasurable aspect is not the whole story. Insofar as it is bittersweet, it is also painful."[54] Lewis not only distinguished Joy from happiness, he actually said it might be called a particular kind of "unhappiness," but paradoxically a kind we *want*. What should we make of this? Joy is not pure happiness, but does it not pursue it?

It must be noticed that *longing itself* is described as a kind of unhappiness, not the object of longing. Since Joy itself can be one of the objects (we can long *for* Joy), one could argue that unhappiness is sought for *insofar* as the experience of Joy demands it. But surely this cannot be taken rigorously. The words "an unhappiness we want" are rhetorical. What they underscore is the bitter-sweetness. Insofar as Joy is bitter, it is a kind of unhappiness, but it is still happiness insofar as it is sweet. If it lacked sweetness we would not find it "more desirable than any *other satisfaction*" (*SJ*, 24, [italics added]). In one sense happiness and pleasure are its *by-product*, but in another sense, I think, we cannot deny that Joy is the longing for fulfillment in a very intense and meaningful way, since it is our inborn desire for God who, Lewis believes, gives "the [only] happiness that there is" (*PP*, 38) and "union with [His divine] Nature is bliss and separation from it horror" (*SJ*, 219). The pursuit of Joy and the pursuit of eudaemonia are kindred drives, if not one and the same thing.

Nygren well knows that *eudaemonia* is understood in many ways. "To this question different philosophical schools had given different answers: … pleasure of the senses … spiritualised enjoyment … independence of the self … and so forth" (*AE*, 501; see also 44). Augustine, Nygren says, looked to the transcendent for something more dependable, and he found it in God: "He is the source of our happiness, He is the end of all desire."[55] What this really means, Nygren explains, is that Augustine merely substituted a heavenly "bribe" for an earthly one, because solution "implies no condemnation of

[54] Beversluis, *Rational Religion*, 37–38.
[55] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 10.3 (cited in *AE*, 502).

[the] egocentric and eudæmonistic question" (503).[56] Authentic agape "has nothing in common with individualistic and eudæmonistic ethics"; instead of the egocentric quest for one's "highest good," what is sought is "the Good-in-itself" (44–45). Nygren is consequently uninterested in what *kind* of happiness is pursued. The problem for him is the *pursuit* of happiness itself, which (like all desire) is possessive and selfish.

In *caritas*, which Nygren calls Augustine's botched "synthesis" of eros and agape (which eventually "Luther shatters" [*AE*, 692]), God is supposedly loved

> for His own sake, as the highest good, the object which gives final blessedness. But the blessedness does not consist in *loving*—that is, desiring and longing for the highest good—but in *possessing* it.... But that means that Caritas is made relative and ranked as a means—inevitably, since all love, as Augustine thinks, is desire" (510–11 [italics in original]).[57]

Where does Joy stand in relation to this? Is the sweetness in the desiring or in the possessing? Lewis says Joy eclipses the distinction. Joy "makes nonsense of our common distinction between having and wanting. There, to have is to want and to want is to have" (*SJ*, 158). The desire itself is desirable, and experiencing it is "the fullest possession we can know on earth" (158). This may sound complicated, but "it is simple when we live it" (*PR*, xii).[58] Many "anti-Romantic" debunkers of this emotion seemed to Lewis to be "condemning what they did not understand" (xv). What is more, Joy is not necessarily incapable of sacrifice. Lewis had hoped that the "heart of reality" could be symbolized "as a place; instead, I found it to be a Person. For all I knew, the total rejection of what I called Joy might be one of the demands, might be the very first demand, He would make upon me" (*SJ*, 217). Having found the

[56] Compare this to Lewis's sermon "The Weight of Glory": "Those who have attained everlasting life in the vision of God doubtless know very well that it is no mere bribe, but the very consummation of their earthly discipleship" (*Essay Collection* [ed. Walmsley] 96–106, at 97).

[57] Nygren's main worry here, that we "use" God, may be a misunderstanding. According to Burnaby, Nygren's strong suspicion of Augustine's *caritas* results from miscomprehending *uti* ("to use") and *frui* ("to enjoy"). The legitimate uti-love of creation is *real* love, not instrumental love. God alone is to be enjoyed, but "God alone is *not* to be loved.… A means which can be loved is not *only* a means. The keyword is *referre ad Deum*, 'relation to God', and the distinction of *uti* and *frui* is merged in the 'order of love'" (Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 106). Creation is "wrongly loved if it is preferred to God" (ibid., 107). Outka says, "Burnaby takes book-length pains to treat [Augustine] sympathetically" (Outka, *Agape*, 177).

[58] Dunckel and Rowe, "Understanding C. S. Lewis," 267: "The satisfaction is the desire, not the possession."

heart of reality and (without fully understanding it) having in a way completed its task, Joy was ready for renunciation. This demand, however, God never made.[59]

We noted above Nygren's suspicion of Augustine's idea of humility as the antidote to egocentricism. Nygren thought that humility, too, may be calculatingly "offered" to God as a price for a prize, as means to one's fulfillment. Obviously in such a reading the distinction between humility and pride evaporates, making the words redundant. Lewis is less pessimistic. He is aware of pride's snares ("how magnificently we have repented!"[60]), as is Augustine, though Nygren fails to mention it. But Lewis might say that snares imply a reality that can be manipulated; a mirage of an oasis presupposes real oases. Only by understanding and experiencing the real is the counterfeit exposed.

Nygren's suspicion of humility may rest on a superficial notion of its implications. At least for Lewis, humility is not some nonchalant and half-forced admittance that "one is not God." Rather, in its full-blown vigor, humility implies the acceptance of unmerited grace accompanied by the awareness of the reality of personal sin. Lewis's own quest for Joy ended in such graced introspection: "For the first time I examined myself with a seriously practical purpose. And there I found what appalled me; a zoo of lusts, a bedlam of ambitions, a nursery of fears, a harem of fondled hatreds" (*SJ*, 213). The quest for Joy, longing for fulfillment in God, is not necessarily pridefully blind to one's ignorance and infirmity, but may contribute to exposing them.

Nygren's four-fold "eudaemonistic scheme" was: 1) Eros pursues individual happiness, and 2) this pursuit is morally tainted, because 3) it is possessive and selfish (incapable of agapic sacrifice) 4) and uses objects of love as means to happiness. Joy has intimate commerce with personal happiness. That is where the similarities end. As for the jump from "1)" onward, Lewis simply

[59] After his conversion Lewis largely lost interest in Joy, but for a different reason. Joy "was valuable only as a pointer to something outer and other. While that other was in doubt, the pointer naturally loomed large in my thoughts" (*SJ*, 224).

[60] *FL*, 148. He continues: "As Bunyan says, describing his first and illusory conversion, 'I thought there was no man in England that pleased God better than I.' Beaten out of this, we next offer our own humility to God's admiration. Surely He'll like *that*? Or of not that, our clear-sighted and humble recognition that we still lack humility." See also Simon, "On Love," 156.

refuses to make it. His theological anthropology does not allow it. The accusation that "desire for one's fulfillment or happiness" is "wrong," is in his view "an accretion which has crept into Christian thinking from Kant and the Stoics."[61] In other words, Nygren's suspicion is an un-Christian accretion.

Joy as Human Endeavor Towards God

The third and final feature of Nygren's three-fold eros, somewhat overlapping with the first two, was that it is "man's way toward God." For this, we return to Lewis's first recorded thoughts on Nygren in that early January letter in 1935 to his colleague Janet Spens. The letter's first two paragraphs discuss Nygren's theses.

> You will have begun to wonder if your *Agape & Eros* was lost forever! It is an intensely interesting book. I am inclined to think I disagree with him. His central contrast—that Agape is selfless and Eros self-regarding—seems at first unanswerable: but I wonder if he is not trying to force on the conception of love an antithesis which it is the precise nature of love, in all its forms, to overcome.
>
> Then again, is the contrast between Agape (God active coming to man passive) and Eros (man by desire ascending to God quâ passive object of desire) really so sharp? He might accuse me of a mere play upon words if I pointed out that in Aristotle's "He moves as the beloved" (κινεῖ ὡς ερωμενον [*sic*]) there is, after all, an active verb, *κινεῖ*. But is this merely a grammatical accident—is it not perhaps the real answer? Can the thing really be conceived in one way *or* the other? In real life it feels like both, and both, I suspect, are the same. Even on our human level does any one feel that the passive voice of the word *beloved* is really exclusive—that *to attract* is a—what do you call it—the opposite of a deponent?

As we remember, Lewis ended with the resolute decision to "tackle him again. He has shaken me up extremely."[62]

The first important thing to notice is that each paragraph presents a *different* contrast within Nygren's overall juxtaposition of *agape* and *eros* with which Lewis is "inclined to disagree." Lewis begins by stating what he thinks is Nygren's "central contrast": that agape is selfless and eros is self-

[61] Lewis, "Weight of Glory," in *Essay Collection* (ed. Walmsley) 96. Defamators of eros, Josef Pieper thinks, bring what he calls "a pretheological conception of man" to the discussion: a fixed anthropology is brought to the study of Scripture instead of finding Scriptures anthropology (*Love*, 210–11). For a concatenation of Scripture passages that encourage pursuit of happiness and promise reward for godly behavior see Meilaender, *The Way*, 3–4.

[62] Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 2:153–4. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b ("κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον").

regarding. Although he believes this antithesis is forced upon the proper nature of love, he does not elaborate on this further here. Of course, he would later pick up the point in *The Four Loves* with his non-antithetical concepts of gift-love and need-love.

But the second paragraph introduces a *second* contrast between agape and eros. This has nothing to do with the "central contrast," the purported selfless (gratuitous) and self-regarding (needful) nature of agape and eros. I press the point because it supports my conviction that Lewis was, from the very outset, conscious of the multidimensionality of Nygren's eros, and probably never intended need-love as an exhaustive translation. Even to the words "Then again" at the beginning of the second paragraph I would attach a more than rhetorical meaning. They should be read as "Leaving the central contrast aside." The second contrast is between "God active coming to man passive" (agape) and "[active] man by desire ascending to God quâ passive object of desire" (eros). Lewis has misgivings about this as well. In fact, implicit in Lewis's remarks is a tentative accusation of *three* different but interconnected mistakes.

The first mistake is *hermeneutical*: Nygren may have misrepresented Greek thought. His portrayal of the "Platonic ladders," the human hero actively climbing the stairs towards a passive Deity, is a caricature. Lewis does not believe Aristotle's choice of the active verb *κινεῖ* ("moves") is accidental. Thirty years later, Lewis picks up this theme in *The Discarded Image* (1964) when discussing Aristotle's teaching of God as the Prime (Unmoved) Mover.

> [W]e must not imagine Him moving things by any positive action, for that would be to attribute some kind of motion to Himself and we should then not have reached an utterly unmoving Mover. How then does He move things? Aristotle answers, κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον, "He moves as beloved" [*Metaphysics*, 1072b]. He moves other things, that is, as an object of desire moves those who desire it.[63]

The hermeneutical question of interpreting Aristotle correctly, however, is less important than the *ontological* question. What interests Lewis is "the real

[63] C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 1st ed. 1964) 113. See also the reference to Aristotle's *κινεῖ* in Owen Barfield, *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry* (2nd ed.; Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988, 1st ed. 1957) 101. Lewis read this book carefully at draft stage and gave Barfield detailed comments in his long letter dated March 27, 1956, found in *Collected Letters* 3:724–30.

answer." This is Nygren's second mistake: a failure to correctly analyze desire itself. In the relation of desire and its object, is one wholly active and the other entirely passive? Nygren believes so. But Lewis is hesitant and appeals to ordinary human experience. "Even on our human level does any one feel that the passive voice of the word *beloved* is really exclusive—that *to attract* is a—what do you call it—the opposite of a deponent?" To say that something is "exclusive" is to say that it repels all explanations but one, in this case the passive voice smothering the active one. But what, exactly, is the opposite of a deponent? A deponent is passive in form but active in meaning; the opposite of a deponent, then, is active in form but passive in meaning. The object of desire (*beloved*) and its pull (*to attract*) are neither. In real life, Lewis thinks, activity and passivity mingle.

Nygren's third and most important mistake, noted almost latently in Lewis's hermeneutical and ontological correctives, is to transpose his grammatical and ontological errors into *theology*. Lewis appealed to interpersonal human relations ("Even on our human level") to underscore a truth that he thinks applies to the interpersonal God-human relation too. According to Nygren, pre- and non-Christian theologies depict God as wholly passive and us as wholly active, whereas true Christian theology admits us no role. Any attempt to adopt a positive account of human desire amounts to "a betrayal of Agape" (*AE*, 232). Nygren has shaken him up extremely, but Lewis is inclined to disagree.

Lewis is not unaware of the tension between the two kinds of theologies. "Both [theologies] can speak about the 'love of God'. But in the one this means the thirsty and aspiring love of creatures for Him; in the other, His provident and descending love for them."[64] Nygren's influence is clearly detectable. Aspiring love is *eros*, and descending love is *agape*. Lewis believes that the antithesis, however, is not a contradiction. Why not? Because a "real universe could accommodate the 'love of God' in both senses."

> Aristotle describes the *natural order*, which is perpetually exhibited in the uncorrupted and translunary world. St John ('herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us') describes the *order of Grace* which comes into play here on earth because men have fallen. It will be noticed that when Dante ends

[64] Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 113–4.

> the *Comedy* with 'the love that moves the Sun and the other stars', he is speaking of love in the Aristotelian sense.[65]

The natural order and the order of Grace are evenly valid. "A real universe" can accommodate both, and we inhabit a real universe. We are created and fallen, not one or the other.[66]

It would be a mistake to think that Lewis himself discarded all the medieval images discussed in *The Discarded Image*. He held no belief in "a concept of Grace which simply abolishes nature,"[67] and he distrusted "that species of respect for the spiritual order which bases itself on the contempt for the natural."[68] Lewis's creation-embracing outlook, including his affirmation of human loves, can be expressed by the age-old theological-metaphysical maxim *Gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*. Perfecting without abolishing is what Lewis called "transposition."[69] Basically, it is "the flooding of a lower medium and the raising of it to a new significance by incorporation into a higher medium."[70] Human loves, too, of all kinds—including Joy—are subject to this logic.

Lewis's own view of love is certainly closer to the medieval conception than to Nygren's *predestinarianism*. For that is what is really at stake here: human agency. According to Nygren, when it comes to authentic love, "all choice on man's part is excluded. Man loves God … because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him and taken control of him, so that he cannot do other than love God. Therein lies the profound significance of the idea of predestination: man has not selected God, but God has elected man" (*AE*, 213–4). The point is underscored repeatedly: "He [the Christian] is merely the tube, the channel, through which God's love flows" (735).[71]

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[65] ibid., 114 [italics added, except *Comedy*].
[66] Lewis explains that while there is no contradiction, the antithesis explains why many spiritual writers (unlike Dante) show little interest in the natural order. "Spiritual books are wholly practical in purpose, addressed to those who ask direction. Only the order of Grace is relevant" (*Discarded Image*, 114).
[67] Charles Williams, *Arthurian Torso*, with a commentary by C. S. Lewis (London: Oxford University Press, 1948) 175.
[68] Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 267.
[69] Lewis, "Transposition," in *Essay Collection* (ed. Walmsley) 267–78.
[70] Michael Ward, *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C. S. Lewis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 105.
[71] Not surprisingly, Nygren's model has been consistently criticized for dissolving the human person. Nygren later denied that he wanted to annihilate the agent (*Essence of Christianity* [trans. Philip S.

Allowing the human person any positive role, even a responsive one, smacks of *mysticism*, which Nygren highly distrusts. He refers to mysticism derogatorily throughout *Agape and Eros* as "wholly eros" in which "we raise ourselves" to the level of God.[72] Lewis's approach to mysticism is much more amicable.[73] A rare exception is the passage in *The Four Loves* when he warns: "We must not begin with mysticism, with the creature's love for God" (*FL*, 144). This echoes Nygren's view of mysticism, insofar as it means the creature's love for God.[74] But the point it stresses is that the *initiative* lies on God's side, not that creaturely love is somehow sinful. Not even in *The Four Loves* is our love for, and ascension to, God disparaged. On the contrary: "Only those into which Love Himself has entered will ascend into Love Himself" (*FL*, 155). Nygren would absolutely shun such language.

In all of Lewis's popular publications, it seems he uses *eros* and *agape* in the specifically Nygrenian sense only once. According to Nygren, philosophical idealism is "in continuous line" with the Eros-tradition (*AE*, 221). Philosophical idealism happened to be Lewis's own position in a transitional phase of his spiritual journey. In *Surprised by Joy*, a few pages before his final conversion, Lewis calls philosophical idealism "quasi-religion": "all a one-way street; all *eros* (as Dr. Nygren would say) steaming up, but no *agape* darting down" (*SJ*, 198). There was "nothing to fear, but also nothing to hope" (198). And yet, is not this passage, too, covertly critical of Nygren? Philosophical idealism or "watered Hegelianism" (210), as Lewis also calls it, fits Nygren's model splendidly, but not any particular branch of Christianity.

When this phase was revealed as incomplete quasi-religion, longing itself was *not* abandoned, but only a *unilateral* idea of longing—Nygren's eros, in effect—and the counterfeit purporting to be its satisfaction, an impersonal

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Watson; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1961] 57). But critics have argued that "a love expressly devoid of anything human and personal is, ipso facto, divine" (Outka, *Agape*, 149), and that in the "elimination of Eros man has been eliminated" (D'Arcy, *Mind and Heart*, 82).

[72] See e.g., *AE*, 129 n. 1, 572–4, 584, 588, and 602 n. 11.

[73] For a book-length assessment of mysticism in Lewis see Downing's *Into the Region of Awe* (footnote 23 above).

[74] According to Caroline Simon, "Lewis does at times sound like Nygren" ("On Love," 154)—this, I think, is one of those times. More in sync with Lewis's general view would be Rudolf Otto's definition of mysticism simply as "creature-consciousness" (*The Idea of the Holy* [2nd ed.; trans. John W. Harvey; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978] 20, 22).

Absolute.[75] Lewis found philosophical idealism wanting because it lacked a personal God who, in love, dives and offers us his saving hand. He did not find it wanting because we, in longing and responsive love, look (or steam) up to grasp at this hand. Lewis believed that human persons can aspire and respond to God's love without supposing they can save themselves. People are not passive tubes.

In a qualified sense, then, Joy can be described as a human drive towards God. The endeavor is human, but not self-sufficient. Yet it is not an automaton or conduit either. Of the actual moment of his final conversion, Lewis wrote: "I know very well when, but hardly how, the final step was taken" (*SJ*, 223). Nygren resolves the paradox of desirous free will and God's sovereignty in one direction. For good or ill, Lewis refuses to solve it at all. In fact, he almost embraces it instead by calling it "this beautiful oxymoron."[76] In actual experience of conversion, freedom and compulsion somehow fuse. This experience is beautiful and oxymoronic for the same reason: the paradox is saved.[77]

Eros Purified

It is time to draw together the relevant affinities and point out the remaining differences between Nygren's eros and Lewis's Joy.

In his novel *Out of the Silent Planet*, Lewis imagines intelligent creatures (the *hrossa*) on Mars whose language distinguishes different kinds of longing. "There were two verbs which both ... meant to *long* or *yearn*; but the *hrossa* drew a sharp distinction, even an opposition, between them.... [E]veryone

[75] The final chapters of *Surprised by Joy* narrate how "a philosophical theorem … became a living presence" (214). Commenting on this, Carnell writes: "Philosophical idealism could be talked, even felt, but it seemed impossible to live it.… Idealism was undeniably too fuzzy and abstract to touch life at all the points where he [Lewis] had discovered meaning and significance" (*Bright Shadow*, 58).
[76] Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 236.
[77] "Freedom, or necessity? Or do they differ at their maximum?" (*SJ*, 223). In his *English History* (33, 43) Lewis says salvation may *feel* like "compulsion," but thinks that this is still far from a universal theory of predestination. He may have known that Otto made the very same point (*Idea of the Holy*, 87). For a helpful account of Lewis's view on God's sovereignty and human responsibility see Will Vaus, *Mere Theology: A Guide to the Thought of C. S. Lewis* (Downers Grove, Ills.: InterVarsity, 2004) 49–61. Vaus believes there is "a decided emphasis, in Lewis's last interview, on God's sovereignty in Lewis's own salvation" (61).

would long for it (*wondelone*) but no one in his senses could long for it (*hlutheline*)."[78] Here we meet the difference between "good" and "bad" Joy. *Wondelone* is proper and meaningful longing, while *hlutheline* is somehow "bent." Longing can be corrupted in two interconnected ways. It may seek fulfillment in the *wrong way* or in the *wrong objects*. Both are implicit here. An unfallen race (the *hrossa*) would not stubbornly seek to possess beauty (*wrong way*) or seek ultimate fulfillment in created goods (*wrong objects*) that in reality serve as catalysts or pointers.[79] The purification of longing takes place on these two fronts. Lewis would agree with Augustine, here accurately paraphrased by Nygren: "Desire is not to be rooted out, but *purified* and directed to the right objects" (*AE*, 439 [italics in original]). Caroline Simon agrees that, for Lewis, "Charity [agape/grace] works both to *perfect* and *order* our natural loves."[80]

Human love in all its forms, Lewis believed, is by its very nature the overcoming of Nygren's "central contrast," the antithesis between selfless and self-regarding love. Joy, insofar as it is a good, is a kind of love. By its very nature, then, Joy overcomes this contrast *in relation to God via created nature*. Joy also overcomes Nygren's "second contrast" between a wholly active/passive God versus a wholly active/passive human person. In other words, Joy contains elements of Nygren's eros and agape both, which in Lewis's model are broken down into need-love, gift-love, and appreciative love.

In one sense, *nothing* in Nygren's three-fold eros corresponds to Lewis's Joy without qualifications. Lewis thinks Nygren's eros is a caricature, an abstract idea that does not capture our lived experience (just as Nygren's agape is a caricature of excellent love). It follows that, since Joy represents for Lewis a real good in sync with a real universe, then by definition it *cannot* be a synonymous translation of Nygren's unreal eros. Joy is a qualified and purified version of the derogative exaggeration that is eros. Because it is an exaggeration, it is qualified, and because it derogative, it is purified. This is

[78] C. S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (New York: Macmillan, 1945, 1st ed. 1938) 77.
[79] Meilaender comments that *hlutheline*, the possessive insistence of having a pleasure twice, "will be futile and will inevitably spoil the genuine pleasure which the object might have given" (*Taste for the Other*, 15).
[80] Simon, "On Love," 150 [italics in original].

another way of saying that Joy is Nygren's eros *in all three ways, but with a little twist*. The differences that remain help to highlight what Lewis thought amiss in Nygren's three-fold portrayal of human longing. Looking back, have the refinements not been more or less *agapic*?

Nygren – Eros	Value-based love of desire	Hierarchical nature idolized or vilified	Eudaemonistic teleological	Egocentric possessive	Human drive toward God	Self-sufficient
Lewis – Joy	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO

Joy, like eros, is a value-based (or value-directed) love of desire. Instead of bestowing value on its objects, it perceives and appreciates the value that already is. However, unlike eros, it is not hierarchical in its appreciation. Directed by grace, it may reflect the true nature of created goods, and thus neither idolize nor vilify them.

Joy, like eros, is the pursuit of happiness, but it is neither calculating nor instrumental. The self is necessarily present, but not mere selfishness. Our very being is pierced by a God-given desire for fulfillment, and this desire should not be short-circuited by bad theology. "The deception," Lewis thinks, is "in that prosaic moralism which confines goodness to the region of Law and Duty, which never lets us feel in our face the sweet air blowing from 'the land of righteousness,' never reveals that elusive Form which if once seen must inevitably be desired with all but sensuous desire."[81] Joy also eclipses the distinction between desiring and possessing: to desire God is in one sense to already enjoy him, and to enjoy him is to ever desire him.

Joy, like eros, is a human drive towards the Divine, but it is not delusionally self-sufficient. In relation to God, initiative lies with Him, but the human person is not a wholly passive tube. The responsive role it plays is no illusion. We can rightfully speak of the soul's search for God, though Lewis says that

[81] Lewis, *George MacDonald*, xxxix.

ultimately this is "a mode, or appearance (*Erscheinung*) of His search for her," since the "very possibility of our loving is His gift to us, and since our freedom is only a freedom of better or worse response."[82] Lewis, unlike Nygren, ultimately resists attempting to "solve" the paradox of God's sovereignty and human spiritual longing.

The purification of desire is no simple matter. Although desire is not to be rooted out, the pride that perverts it is. And because we are not simply ignorant and imperfect but also *rebels in arms* seeking autonomy, our self-surrender will be painful, since "to surrender a self-will inflamed and swollen by years of usurpation is a kind of death."[83] Rooting out pride is both death and evolution. It is not simply death, because the desire is purified. Nor is it simply unproblematic evolution either, because pride is broken.[84] Lewis's theological vision may be "best described as, quite simply, Augustinian."[85]

On several issues that still divide Christendom, such as theological anthropology, hamartiology, soteriology, and the relation of nature and grace, he "demonstrates sensitivity to both Catholic and Protestant emphases."[86] For good or ill, Lewis cannot be accused of what Burnaby has called Protestantism's "obtuse insistence [on] Either–Or."[87] We have seen that this applies also to his theology of love, and especially to the God-human relation.[88] In the end, Lewis concludes that we can keep Nygren's idea of eros and agape "after we have let all his exaggerations fade out of our minds."[89] Far from jeopardizing the Gospel, spiritual longing is a God-given desire that prepares the way for it.

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[82] Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 36.
[83] ibid., 72.
[84] "Pride had to be broken in surrender, and in that surrender his longings could be re-directed" (Meilaender, *Taste for the Other*, 93).
[85] ibid., 235.
[86] ibid.
[87] Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 4.
[88] In this relation, Lewis's thought closely resembles what Nygren had criticized as "Augustine's caritas-synthesis" (Meilaender, *Taste for the Other*, 122). Caroline Simon's succinct observation has been verified by our analysis: Lewis's view of longing is "much closer to … Augustine's '*caritas*-motif' " ("On Love," 154).
[89] Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 3:555.