Through the Shadowlands
Platonism in the Works of C.S. Lewis

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I examine the influence of Platonism on C.S. Lewis. I argue that this influence is principally reflected in changes to Lewis’s views as to what constitutes morality. Lewis’s conversion to Christianity, in particular, represents a fundamental change in the way he approached a Platonist interpretation of morality. I argue that Platonism was central to Lewis’s conversion.

I will examine work written prior to his conversion to establish that Lewis struggled to come to terms with concepts of theism. I will also explore the ways in which Platonism influenced this struggle to show the extent of Plato’s influence on Lewis’s conversion to Christianity. Through this exploration, I seek to establish that Platonism was central to Lewis’s conversion to Christianity. Furthermore, I will also explore the extent to which this Christian Platonism influences Lewis’s developing views of universal morality in the popular works written after his conversion. I will seek to show that Lewis’s embracing of Platonism, leading on to his conversion to Christianity, influenced his acceptance of the distinction between the empirically observable “sensible” illusion of reality and the true intelligible reality and that one must also manifest this knowledge in practice through engaging in virtuous acts.

In order to illustrate the manner in which Lewis changes his approach to morality after his conversion, I will first examine the poetry he wrote prior to converting to Christianity, which depicts the ability to recognise and accept the intelligible nature of reality as being fundamental to morality. I will also emphasise the idea that indulgence in materialism results in negative consequences in its departure from virtue.

This examination will provide a standard against which Lewis’s post-conversion works can be compared. These post-conversion works reflect the increased significance that Lewis placed on Christian Platonism. This is done by drawing on the experiences of the people and characters depicted in those works in order to show ways in which Lewis suggests that virtue can be resulted in.
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Chapter One – Introductory

Part One: Introduction

In this thesis I seek to show that Platonism is an integral part of C.S. Lewis's concept of universal morality. Furthermore, I will also argue that Platonism influenced Lewis's conversion to Christianity. I will explore the extent of this development through an evaluation of Lewis's ideas as presented in texts written both before his conversion to Christianity and after his conversion. I will also explore Lewis's popular works in order to establish the position that Lewis converted to Christian Platonism and that this remains a strong underlying theme throughout his working career.

The importance of this study can be reflected in the following quotation, which highlights a lack of insight into Lewis's actual conversion. In his review of Colin Duriez's From Narnia to Christianity, as featured in The Sydney Morning Herald on the 28th of September 2013, Robert Wilson wrote that

> In spite of the fact Lewis wrote so much about the Christian faith, he is surprisingly vague about details of his own conversion, first from atheism to belief in God, but later to Christianity. He described himself as the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England. He wrote that he never had the experience of looking for God: “It was the other way around; He was the hunter [or so it seemed to me] and I was the deer. He stalked me like a redskin, took unerring aim and fired”.

I will explore the points raised by Wilson and in doing so I argue that Lewis takes on a Platonist approach to virtue and metaphysics. I argue that Platonism was the vehicle for his conversion to Christianity and the mode by which Lewis understands the ascension of the soul to take place, based on the Platonic concept that true reality can only be comprehended through employing the intelligible mind. What is observable with the senses is taken to be an illusion. Plato’s virtue theory is linked to this, holding that succumbing to the senses rather than employing the intelligible mind to understand reality inhibits the development of virtue. Plato further holds that an individual must always do the right thing, despite any wrongdoing they may have suffered themselves. These Platonic tenets are a strong theme

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1 Wilson, Robert. Review of From Narnia to Christianity by Duirez, Colin. The Sydney Morning Herald, 28.9.13
throughout Lewis’s works. I will explore how Lewis’s works show a developing understanding that it is through acts of virtue, not being deceived by the senses, and seeking an understanding of reality purely through the use of the intelligible mind influenced both his conversion to Christianity, but also to his own sense of moral development.

Comparing Lewis’s ideas with Plato’s concepts of virtue throughout his works, suggests a consistent thread of moral ideas that are central to a more complete understanding of Lewis’s works. This is important to note since I posit that Lewis’s approach to virtues changed from initially being considered oppressive to being essential for the ascension of the soul, or “saving the soul” in a Christian context. I also draw from this the notion that Platonism has a strong influence on Lewis’s approach to metaphysics, which evolved during the years that the pre-conversion narrative poem Dymer was written. The theory of forms, with its recognition of the difference between sensible reality and intelligible reality, was integral to the formation of Lewis’s ideas, both philosophical and Christian.

As mentioned, since Lewis is most commonly known for his literary and Christian standing, references to philosophical influences, such as Platonism, are rarely, if ever, made.² It is important to build on these references in order to more fully understand what motivated Lewis and influenced the type of thinker he became. Lewis was a prolific reader and to assume that his only influences were Christian and literary based is a mistake, given his early days as an atheist. Lewis did much of his reading during these times and the philosophical materials he encountered, as well as the differences of opinion people held regarding them at Oxford opened his mind to potentially endless ideas for works. Since Platonic tenets arise so frequently in his works, it is vital to provide a study of those tenets; in order to reveal the motivation behind a prominent literary figure who has undergone significant life changing events and how other influences impact the development of the person in question, in this case C.S. Lewis.

² Ibid.
In order to present my argument, I have divided this thesis into eight chapters. I begin my study by first examining Lewis’s pre-conversion years, particularly from 1915 to 1930. Lewis’s texts *Spirits in Bondage – A Cycle of Lyrics* and *Dymer* will both be addressed in order to show Lewis’s changing mindset as he responded to events, such as World War 1, that were happening at the time. *Spirits in Bondage – A Cycle of Lyrics* features a collection of poems written largely during Lewis’s time in the trenches in World War 1. This early text, Lewis’s first published one, reflects his rejection of any necessary good that can come of the war. In this way we can see how Lewis at first rejects Platonism and the idea of a higher God-like being. Platonism would have us understand that the virtue can come from war; it produces justice, courage, order and law, and ultimately peace. *Spirits in Bondage* suggests that Lewis, at the time, rejected this. I will examine this further in Chapter Two. Through the experience of writing his next text, a narrative poem titled *Dymer*, however, I argue that Lewis’s mind was then opened his mind to some of Plato’s tenets.

I will show that, during the course of this text, Lewis begins his transition away from atheism during the course of writing the *Dymer* text. I will show that he begins to understand and accept the principles of the theory of forms and the way in which virtuous actions lead to the ascension of the soul, as given in Diotima’s speech in *The Symposium*. I will show that the progression of the central character mirrors Lewis’s own progression. The outcome of *Dymer* displays a reluctant acceptance of the principles in the text; overcoming vice and attaining virtue, for instance, a belief in a higher being and not allowing the senses to cloud reality, in order to allow for the ascension of the soul to occur. I will examine this further in Chapter Three of this thesis.

In Chapter Four of this thesis I will continue to explore Lewis’s conversion, showing his acceptance of Christianity. I will explore the ideas Lewis presents in *Mere Christianity* in order to identify correlations with Platonism. I will also note that Lewis made extensive use of metaphor and analogy in order to convey his ideas. This is important in terms of its

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4 C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy & Dymer*
compatibility with Plato’s own tendency towards “myth-making” and storytelling in order to convey his philosophical ideas. Lewis takes on the same approach and presents many of his own arguments through story or metaphor. For example, *Till We Have Faces, Dymer, The Screwtape Letters, The Great Divorce, The Chronicles of Narnia* and perhaps even *The Space Trilogy*. This correlation will be discussed in part two of Chapter One in order to provide the context within which Lewis presents his arguments.

In Chapter Four, I will provide a characterisation of Lewis’s mind-set during his conversion to Christianity. I will do this by drawing on the conversion experience of Saint Augustine, who also extensively relied on Platonism during his own conversion to Christianity. In addition to this, I will discuss Christian Platonism as it arises in *Mere Christianity* which subsequently appears in varying ways in Lewis’s other works. I will show how these themes together aid understanding of the position that universal morality is defined by knowledge of the true intelligible nature of reality.

Chapter Five, will focus on love. In *Surprised by Joy* we learn that love, particularly Eros is what ultimately convinces Lewis that Plato’s ideas have merit. At first Lewis can be observed to be disdainful of Eros love, but finally concedes that “Plato was right”, believing Eros is a god and therefore can be considered divine.5 Hence this chapter following my discussion on Lewis’s conversion to Christianity will focus on the Platonic influences that can be found in Lewis’s works on love. I will further explore the importance of this knowledge having practical value in referring to *The Four Loves* and *Till We Have Faces*. I will also show how the method employed in *The Four Loves* mirrors that given by Plato in *The Symposium*. I will also utilise the ladder analogy, which features in Diotima’s speech, as relayed by Socrates, in *The Symposium*, in order to reinforce the claim that virtue is derived from knowledge of that the sensible is an illusion and that true reality can only be comprehended with the intelligible mind. I will show the importance of this in terms of enlightenment of the human soul, which is also mirrored in his stance as a Christian Platonist. In addition, I will show that a failure of positive practical value of this knowledge

5 Lewis, C.S. *Surprised by Joy* p.127
will result in immorality and a prevention of enlightenment. This is particularly expounded in *Till We Have Faces*. *Till We Have Faces* is also important in reinforcing both Plato’s theory of Forms and virtue ideology. The text is based on a retelling of the myth of Eros and Psyche, given from the perspective of Psyche's jealous sister. While Psyche's sister falls prey to sensible based desires, Psyche submits to her fate and is able to ascend, reflecting the Socratic position that one must always behave with virtue, even if one has been wronged.

In Chapter Six I will discuss this in context of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In this chapter, I will principally discuss the “The Last Battle” and “The Silver Chair”, though I will additionally discuss some examples given in “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” and “Prince Caspian”. I will show how “The Last Battle” correlates with Plato’s theory of Forms and how, in turn, it supports the claim that morality is constituted of knowledge that the sensible is only an illusion of the true intelligible reality. I will also show how “The Silver Chair” is analogous of Plato’s cave parable in addition to showing how the character Puddleglum represents the importance of this knowledge having practical value, as will also be discussed in Chapter Five.

In Chapter Seven, I will discuss Lewis’s usage of Christian Platonist imagery pertaining to heaven and hell in order to emphasise the influence of Plato’s theory of forms, and his view that true reality is not based in the material and that knowledge of this is necessary for the development of virtue. In so doing, I will discuss *The Great Divorce* and *The Screwtape Letters*, both of which use this imagery extensively. I will also show how Lewis’s texts reinforce the importance of positive practical value being garnered from this knowledge in order to constitute morality. *The Great Divorce*, like *Dymer*, also supports the idea of the ascension of the soul. The spirits that cannot go to heaven are the ones only interested in bringing “things” back to the grey world of hell to “sell”. The ones that do go to heaven cast aside their former life and take the hand of the person waiting to assist them to the other side. Here I note that the Platonic idea of needing a guide or teacher to be able to properly comprehend the forms (Gorgias, for example, is Meno’s mentor) can be clearly identified in this text. Likewise, *The Screwtape Letters* also explores the notions of heaven.
and hell, focusing strongly on the symbolism of virtue and the vice inherent in the sensible that must be overcome in order to be virtuous.

In Chapter Eight, I will discuss the essays “Transposition” and “The Poison of Subjectivism” both of which consolidate arguments given in previous chapters, reinforcing Lewis’s stance as a Christian Platonist. In addition to this, I will also show the contemporary value of the claim in context of politics, materialism and religion.

In summation, I seek to show that after his conversion, Lewis not only dedicated himself to seeking to prove the existence of God, or the Absolute, but also that he was dedicated to establishing that universal morality is necessary for the soul to ascend to Heaven. Platonism holds that this moral reality cannot be achieved, located, experienced, or understood in any way when employing the senses. I will show that Lewis adopted a Christian Platonist approach in maintaining that the senses are unreliable and only serve to be a distraction from truth and virtue.\(^6\) Truth can only be found in contemplation through purely using the intellect, divorcing oneself from using the senses.

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**Part Two: Modes of Written Expression**

Lewis’s works, both fiction and non-fiction, make considerable use of literary devices in order to convey meaning. In this part of the chapter, I examine the Platonic influence on Lewis’s use of these devices in order contextualise him as a philosopher of literature, both deriving ideas from literature and conveying ideas through literature. This will provide the reader with an understanding of the foundation on which Lewis built his life’s works.

One of the essential features that characterises Plato’s written works is the dialogue format and conveying ideas through the creation of myth and analogy.\(^7\) Clyde Kilby writes that “Plato was a great maker of myths”.\(^8\) As I argue in this part of the chapter, Lewis was influenced by this style of communication. Myth, in this context, is defined by Brisson; “myth

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\(^8\) Ibid.
appears as a message by which a given collectivity transmits that which it preserves in memory of its past from generation to generation”. This refers to the idea that myth is a written form intended to give some permanence to a particular social value, which Brisson also supports by saying that “writing permits a storage of messages”.

Further to this, Kilby suggests that “a great myth contains a universal truth. It makes us less interested in the sadness of a given character than in the sadness of all men. Myth is also concerned always with the impossible and preternatural and is always grave. It is also always awe-inspiring and numinous”.

From this we can understand that myths are able to express meanings that are of great cultural importance to people at a particular time in history. This does not necessarily mean that myths are literal. However, Brisson explains that “myths don’t express actual experiences, but rather recollections of memories”. We can interpret this as implying that the use of myth is largely based on allegory, imagery and symbolism in order to express meaning. This also has the benefit of evoking an emotional reaction in the reader, which enhances the reader’s feeling of involvement with what is being communicated.

In addition to creating a permanent medium for the communication and preservation of values, myth also allows for the creation and interpretation of meanings. Lewis, particularly, explains in Reflections on the Psalms that “[meditating]” on Biblical stories (Lewis uses the Passion story as an example) whilst reading Plato’s dialogues influences the meanings that are discernable in what is being “meditated” on. Lewis emphasises that images and sequences of events that are depicted in these myths have the capacity to reveal underlying meanings with respect to other issues and stories that are of social importance. This also suggests Lewis’s leaning toward Christian Platonism and that elements of both schools of thought represented important influences on Lewis’s works.

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10 Ibid. pp.18-19
11 Kilby, The Christian World of C.S. Lewis. pp.80-81
12 Brisson, Plato the Myth Maker. p.17
Metaphor is also a technique frequently used by both Plato and Lewis, with much of Lewis's written expression being metaphorical in nature. Metaphorical phraseology is adopted by both thinkers to illustrate meaning. In “Bluspels and Flalansfere’s” Lewis advises the reader to “open your account of Plato, and you will find yourself among the great creators of metaphor, and therefore among the masters of meaning”. Just as Lewis recognises Plato for his mastery in terms of use of metaphor, Don King also recognises this same quality in Lewis’s work; “one of the most outstanding characteristics of C.S. Lewis’s non-fiction prose is his use of metaphor”. An example of this that King notes is Lewis’s use of imagery pertaining to doors. For instance, in A Grief Observed Lewis explains the crisis of faith that he experienced upon the death of his wife by associating it with “a door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that silence”. In The Problem of Pain, Lewis expresses the purpose of pain as being akin to being God’s “megaphone to rouse a deaf world”. Similarly, in Mere Christianity Lewis utilises the example of a map to illustrate the distinction between what is real and what is an imitation.

Lewis’s use of allegory is also relevant. He explains that "by an allegory I mean a composition... in [which] immaterial realities are represented by feigned physical objects”. Lewis suggests that such writing techniques are a way to “mix the real and the unreal” using the unreal (such as “the giant, the castle, and the dungeon”) in order to communicate a real idea (in Lewis’s case the idea that "despair can capture and imprison a human soul"). Through this, then, we can observe that such Platonic techniques are utilised in order to convey meaning.

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21 Ibid.
Brisson, citing Plato’s depiction of Socrates, explains the importance that such writing techniques have with respect to conveying meaning. Using poetry as an example, he cites Socrates in saying that if the rhythm and melody are removed from poetry then “it will become mere speech”. In other words, this signifies that without such literary devices, the message being conveyed could potentially suffer a lack of meaning and definition. It should also be noted that Lewis spent some time in exploring the Homeric style that he believed had pervaded Plato’s writing.

It is possible that Lewis’s choice of writing style reflected similar reasons that Havelock identifies for Plato. The era in which Lewis embarked on his academic career was dominated by the academic standard that was common to universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. Lewis’s use of essay titles such as “Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What’s to be Said” suggests that Lewis’s primary choice of target audience was the general public rather than academia. In keeping with this, many of his published works refer to being accessible to the “layman”, which Lewis also considers himself to be, and he shows no pretence about his own perceived ability to contribute to academia.

Mere Christianity is a good example of this, considering it was originally comprised of radio talks broadcasted during World War Two in order to offer people faith and comfort. It can be seen, then, that a motive for Lewis’s publishing career is that of conveying truths to the public, by using a format that would be within the grasp of most intellects.

Penner describes the manner in which Plato presents Socrates. “Socrates asked only, and did not reply; for he confessed that he knew nothing”. This technique of questioning, Socratic Dialogue, was important in enhancing the capacity of Plato’s work to educate all readers. Socrates’s questioning prompts one to consider an issue which, in turn, allows that person to develop a greater understanding of it. This can be seen particularly in

22 Brisson, Plato the Myth Maker.p.43
23 Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms.p.135
24 Havelock, Preface to Plato.p.38
The Symposium when Socrates questions Phaedrus upon the culmination of the latter’s speech.\textsuperscript{28} We can see that it is primarily through the inclusion of characters such as Socrates that Plato employs this technique in order to prompt a similar understanding in his readers.

Lewis also seems to employ Socratic dialogue techniques in his writing. Typically, Plato’s dialogues feature a protagonist, often Socrates, who features as a narrator presenting a lengthy explanation of an experience or series of events. For example, in The Symposium Socrates relates to his listeners the lessons that Diotima imparted to him.\textsuperscript{29} Other characters in the dialogue who receive this narration typically answer in brief responses which indicate the level of their agreement or understanding. Brisson explains that this is a result of the nature of the usage of myth that Plato uses in his dialogues.\textsuperscript{30} Explaining that “the information transmitted by myth is unfalsifiable” Brisson infers that “when a myth is related in a Platonic dialogue, the discussion comes to an end and the only character who expresses himself is he who recounts a myth, to which he adheres”.\textsuperscript{31} An example of this technique appears in the cave parable, in which Socrates explains the theory of Forms to Glaucon, who responds in agreement to that which Socrates relates to him.\textsuperscript{32} Brisson explains that Plato distinguishes myth from philosophical discourse, which The Symposium shows.\textsuperscript{33} Here, Plato uses a format in which all of the characters present are permitted to express an opinion of a given topic (in this case love), which allows for wider philosophical discussion of the meanings or understandings that can be developed on the topic in question.

In terms of target audience, as I mentioned, Lewis intended his work to be relevant to people of all ages and walks of life, despite the “fairy tale” Form of writing that he adopts. In arguing that the “fairy tale” Form is the most conducive form of story writing for the portrayal of concepts and ideas to the reader, Lewis writes that

\textsuperscript{28} Plato, \textit{The Symposium}, p.41
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., pp.45-63
\textsuperscript{30} Brisson, \textit{Plato the Myth Maker}, p.9
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Brisson, \textit{Plato the Myth Maker}, p.11
If it is well used by the author and meets the right reader, it has the same power: to generalise while remaining concrete, to present in palpable form not concepts or even experiences but whole classes of experience, and to throw off irrelevancies. But at best it can do more; it can give us experiences we have never had and thus, instead of 'commenting on life', can add to it.\textsuperscript{34}

This shows another reason behind Lewis’s usage of literary devices in his written expression of ideas and concepts, in addition to its effectiveness in communicating such ideas in comparison with written techniques that Havelock believes reflect “prosaic intellects”.\textsuperscript{35} Therefore, for Lewis, this is an appropriate format of written expression for his philosophical ideas. Lewis implies that this literary form enables readers to acknowledge illusions and recognise the truth inherent in what is depicted. “By casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass... one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency”.\textsuperscript{36} Here Lewis evidences recognition of the distinction between appearance and reality and the importance of not subscribing to the false appearance, holding that his writing style allows readers to also recognise that distinction. This is central to Plato’s cave parable, in which the “illusions” Lewis speaks of are depicted as shadows which the prisoners believe are solely indicative of reality rather than recognising that they are only shadows of the objects, not the objects themselves.\textsuperscript{37}

Thus, we can see that Plato's shadows are symbolic of the illusions that Lewis speaks of, and both refer to the need to turn away from this and toward what is really real.

In “Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to be Said”, as mentioned previously, Lewis explains that the story form he chose to express his views was not initially intended for this purpose.\textsuperscript{38} Lewis explains that his stories began with a single image and that it was from this image that the form developed.\textsuperscript{39} In Reflections on the Psalms Lewis relates this discovery to Plato. “One can, without any absurdity, imagine Plato or the myth-makers if they learned the truth, saying 'I see... so that was what I was really talking about.
Of course. That is what my words really meant, and I never knew it”\(^{40}\). This statement suggests that, despite what is intended to be expressed, meanings can arise independently from the use of such forms and supports Lewis’s view that literary conventions and ‘fairy stories’ have the capacity to express meaning that other forms cannot.\(^{41}\) King also notes this spontaneity. In the context of meaning, he states “if he tried to seek it or find it or produce it, he never had success; it had to occur spontaneously”.\(^{42}\) The reason for this, King says, can be attributed to experiences of “spiritual regeneration”.\(^{43}\) A question that Plato’s cave parable raises in this context is with respect to how the prisoners can remove chains in order to venture out of the cave. Both King’s and Lewis’s thoughts reflect that this is not always a planned or intentional endeavour. King explains “I believe that a second reason the entries appear to be an accident parallels the process by which some people experience spiritual regeneration. That is, some people have come into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in an unplanned way”.\(^{44}\) Lewis also makes a similar statement in "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" (of The Chronicles of Narnia series) in which the Professor explains to the Pevensie children “of course you’ll get back to Narnia again some day... but don’t go trying to use the same route twice. Indeed, don’t try to get there at all. It’ll happen when you’re not looking for it”.\(^{45}\) We can interpret this as referring to one of the ways in which it can be discovered that reality does not solely consist of the empirically observable.

Lewis makes a thought-provoking comment in saying “there is a real connection between what Plato and the myth-makers most deeply were and meant and what I believe to be the truth. I know that connection and they do not. But it is really there”.\(^{46}\) Lewis’s meaning, here, can be garnered from the concept of spontaneous discovery of the Forms, particularly as Lewis continues on to describe this thought pattern: “one can, without any

\(^{40}\) Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms. p.91  
^{41}\) Lewis, ‘Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What’s to Be Said’. p.120  
^{42}\) King, ‘The Wardrobe as Christian Metaphor’, p.26  
^{43}\) Ibid. p.27  
^{44}\) Ibid. p.27  
^{46}\) Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms. p.90
absurdity, imagine Plato or the myth-makers if they learned the truth, saying, 'I see... so that was what I was really talking about. Of course. That is what my words really meant, and I never knew it'. This did not refer to Lewis literally knowing a truth that Plato did not. Rather, it refers to the ability to recognise the distinction between subjective opinion and objective truth.

In summation, it can be observed that Lewis’s use of literary devices reflects Platonic influence. This is important to note owing to Lewis’s extensive use of such conventions in conveying meaning. These techniques position Lewis’s work within literary philosophy and provide a context within which the themes of the remaining chapters of this thesis can be understood.

47 Ibid. p.91
Chapter Two – Pre-Conversion Lewis and *Spirits in Bondage*

Although C.S. Lewis is known principally for the works he produced after his conversion to Christianity, Lewis produced two texts that are of interest for characterising Lewis’s mindset prior to his conversion to Christianity: *Spirits in Bondage – A Cycle of Lyrics* and *Dymer*. These texts are examples of Lewis’s attempts at lyrical and narrative poetry respectively. Since the texts for which Lewis gained the most fame were almost exclusively published after his conversion to Christianity, these poetry-based works are little-known to the general public and are significantly different from the works for which Lewis is known. As these texts were written prior to Lewis’s conversion to Christianity, they have a unique capacity to provide insight into Lewis’s development during his years spent as an atheist.

In this chapter of the thesis, I will explore Lewis’s thoughts on Platonism from his pre-conversion perspective. I will show Lewis’s struggle with socio-political concepts depicted in *The Republic*, including Plato’s belief in a just war and in the possibility of maintaining a virtuous status quo. I will also explore *Spirits in Bondage* in line with this. This will allow me to discuss Lewis’s initial rejection of Platonic and Theist principles. In Chapter Three, I will discuss *Dymer* in order to show how Lewis began to accept Platonism and how this led to his acceptance of theism. In Chapter Four, I will show how this conversion is consolidated by means of using Christianity as a vehicle for his beliefs.

Of significance here, is Lewis’s response to tenets drawn from Plato’s *Republic*. Above all, Plato holds that a war can and should be a just war. For Plato, the aim of war is to re-establish justice and order within a society. War, for him, is necessary for the development of virtues, including courage, that are necessary to maintain law, order and justice. The overarching purpose of war, then, is the attainment of peace in a virtuous society, which is overseen by Philosopher Kings who would ensure correct thinking and behaviour within the society. Philosopher Kings, otherwise known as Sophists, are

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48 Plato, *The Republic*
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid. *Laws & The Republic*
described as being lovers of wisdom and are considered by Plato to be the only people who can be trusted to maintain the political order of the society.\textsuperscript{52} The eventual aim of this process is to remove political laws, as they are rendered useless by the now inherent virtue within the society. Hence, virtue would act as an unwritten guide to right actions on the parts of the people within that society.

Lewis, however, detests the war and cannot see beyond the material cruelties of the battleground. At this stage he does not see the capacity for the development of virtues that Plato sees.\textsuperscript{53} Lewis outlines these feelings in \textit{Spirits in Bondage – A Cycle of Lyrics}. \textit{Spirits in Bondage} explores the conflict Lewis felt between the negative experiences he had in World War One and his longing for beauty. The poems collected in this text are based on Lewis’s trench experience on the front lines in France.

\textit{Spirits in Bondage} was written principally as a means for coming to terms with his experiences during the war. It portrays the cruelty Lewis experienced during the war and the fantasy he loses himself in to protect his emotional well-being from the cruelties of war. In his struggle to come to terms with Platonism through this experience, we are able to observe Lewis’s difficulty in accepting the Platonic concept that true reality is not able to be observed with the senses alone.\textsuperscript{54} Instead, Lewis behaves contrary to this in indulging in wishful-thinking. In the later publication, \textit{Dymer}, he faces this same struggle and is able to overcome it. Here, the younger Lewis is not yet able to overcome this struggle. In \textit{Surprised by Joy}, Lewis states that “cruelty is surely more evil than lust and the world at least as dangerous as the flesh”.\textsuperscript{55} This highlights Lewis’s viewing of the intelligible being at least as cruel as the sensible reality.\textsuperscript{56} Further, Lewis holds the view that war “will only lead you to Hell”.\textsuperscript{57}

I was at this time living, like so many Atheists or Antitheists, in a whirl of contradictions. I maintained that God did not exist. I was also very angry

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{52} Ibid. \textit{The Sophists \& The Republic}
\bibitem{54} Plato, \textit{Phaedo}
\bibitem{55} Lewis, \textit{Surprised by Joy}, p.126
\bibitem{56} Plato, \textit{Phaedo.}
\bibitem{57} Lewis, \textit{Surprised by Joy}, p.126
\end{thebibliography}
with God for not existing. I was equally angry with Him for creating a
world.\textsuperscript{58}

This statement returns us to Lewis's struggle with coming to terms with the existence of
God and the Platonic principles that the intelligible is superior to the sensible and that war
is a necessity in establishing and maintaining justice within society.\textsuperscript{59}

As has been suggested, Lewis strongly protests Plato's notions of a just war and its
capacity to contribute toward the maintaining of a just society in \textit{Spirits in Bondage}.
Importantly, Lewis stated in \textit{Surprised by Joy} that he did not wish to go war and would not
go until the minute he was legally required to. "I said to my country, in effect, 'You shall have
me on a certain date, not before. I will die in your wars if need be, but till then I shall live my
own life. You may have my body, but not my mind'\textsuperscript{60}. Also noteworthy, here, is the loss of
his close friend Paddy Moore in the war. These things undoubtedly mar Lewis's perspective.
Reading \textit{Spirits in Bondage} alongside \textit{Surprised by Joy} shows evidence of a reluctant change
in the way Lewis responded to thinkers who influenced him, and challenged him to change
his views. This change is made clearer in \textit{Dymer}, which shows Lewis's first change of mind-
set.

\textit{Spirits in Bondage} is somewhat paradoxical in places; appearing to mourn the
cruelty of nature in one instance, and almost applauding it in another. This paradox can be
understand in terms of Lewis indulging in a fantasy reality of which he is dreaming: A
perfect ideal of an imperfect material example. This is held to be an illusion, though, and we
can see again Lewis's struggle to accept Plato's notion that war is necessary for justice.
Lewis is still an atheist at this stage and doesn't believe this ideal is real. This is also converse
to Platonism, which holds the perfect or ideal to be true reality, as opposed to the imperfect
sensible reality. It is a fantasy that sustains him during a time of despair.

Lewis's difficulty in accepting Plato's thinking in his youth, and prior to conversion
to Christianity, can be clearly seen. This struggle is valuable in that it forces him to evaluate

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{footnotes}
\item[58] Ibid. p.133
\item[59] Plato, \textit{Phaedo} & \textit{The Republic}
\item[60] Lewis, C.S. \textit{Surprised by Joy}, pp. 183-184
\end{footnotes}
\end{flushleft}
his core beliefs. The more he delved into mythology, and the more he was exposed to like-minded people, ideas such as those of Plato (a philosopher who upholds a concept of the Absolute) began to chip away at him, eventually leading to his conversion. As we can see, Platonic notions had a profound influence on Lewis's conversion. In this first dealing with Platonism, Lewis's struggles with coming to terms with the concept of an Absolute Being who is not malevolent. This struggle, even if unsuccessful at this stage of Lewis's life, opens him to further influence both toward converting to Christianity and developing his own sense of universal morality as represented by the Absolute but cognisable through human reason.

*Spirits in Bondage*, as stated, reflects Lewis's sentiments concerning the state of reality and his views on theism, as influenced by his experiences on the war front during World War One. His bitter reflections on the cruelty he observed are clear throughout the text. At the outset, he uses negative imagery to create the impression that the reality of war is not only cruel and painful, but evil. We can observe this in the first poem, in which 'Satan Speaks'. That Lewis views nature and war as evil can be seen in his use of the Satan figure to represent these things. "I am Nature, the Mighty Mother, I am the law: ye have none other" and "I am the battle's filth and strain, I am the widow's empty pain. I am the sea to smother your breath, I am the bomb, the falling death". These statements openly paint a negative picture of the effects of war, for example death and its impact on people associated with the dead. This immediately puts Lewis in opposition to the idea that war can lead to justice, as Plato holds.

In 'French Nocturne', Lewis further constructs the image of what he sees as a result of the war efforts.

> Long leagues on either hand the trenches spread... the jaws of a sacked village, stark and grim, out on the ridge have swallowed up the sun, And in one angry streak his blood has run... There comes a buzzing plane: and now it seems flies straight into the moon. Lo! where he steers across the pallid globe and surely nears in that white land some harbour of dear dreams. False, mocking fancy! Once, I too could dream, who now can only

61 Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, p.249
The image is of a village that has been devastated by gun fire and air raids. Lewis laments that he is trapped in this reality and his hopes seem to have been extinguished. "False mocking fancy! Once I too could dream" expresses this despair. Also suggested by this quotation is the idea that Lewis enjoyed moments of wishful thinking, or dreaming as a mechanism of escapism, but that this was often impeded by the reality of his surroundings.

'French Nocturne' is followed by an 'Apology' in which Lewis tells of his reasons for depicting so many negative images in his poems. "If men should ask, Despoina, why I tell of nothing glad nor noble in my verse... go you to them and speak among them thus: ‘There were no greater grief than to recall, down in the rotting grave where the lithe worms crawl, green fields above that smiled so sweet to us’". Lewis grapples with how to come to terms with the apparent glory at the end of the war when he views so much negativity in the acts that the war has required people to commit (the air raids, for example, as previously mentioned). "How should I sing of them? Can it be good to think of glory now, when all is done, and all our labour underneath the sun has brought us this – and not the thing we would?... No hope is in the dawn, and no delight". Lewis cannot accept glory after witnessing the atrocities of war, as these experiences directly impact his view of god, or the Absolute. He views any positive moments as deceptions, or simulations of what is real.

'Victory' offers a satirical perspective on the result of the war. The idea of “victory” suggests some kind of positive result, however Lewis notes that “the battered war-gear wastes and turns to rust” and that “the faerie people from our woods are gone, no Dryads have I found in all our trees”, repeating his negative perspective of war. ‘Spooks’ offers a poignant view of the impact war has on both the soldiers and their loved ones. This poem tells the tale of a man who comes to realise that he is dead. He is the ghost of a soldier and exudes discord and darkness.
...I was come again unto the house where my beloved dwell after long years of wandering and pain. And I stood out beneath the drenching rain and all the street was bare, and black with night, but in my true love's house was warm and light. Yet I could not draw near nor enter in, and long I wondered if some secret sin or old unhappy anger held me fast; Till suddenly it came into my head that I was killed long since and lying dead – only a homeless wraith that way had passed. It is a stark representation of Lewis's feelings, having been a soldier himself. It also represents the harsh effects of loss as a result of a war that Lewis looks on with obvious bitterness. He views the war as a potentially destructive force in terms of extinguishing life with swift brutality.

Lewis's loss of hope and positivity is reflected in 'In Prison'. "I cried out for the pain of man, I cried out for my bitter wrath". Any hope that might have been retained is extinguished and reality is taken to be cruel and evil. "And if some tears be shed, some evil God have power, some crown of sorrows sit upon a little world for a little hour – who shall remember? Who shall care for it?" This suggests that Lewis is caught up in the ugliness of war and cannot conceive of any positive outcomes it could have for virtue and justice. Furthermore, because of the ugliness of war, he struggles to believe that any existing God is good and can only comprehend a malevolent ugliness in such a being.

Lewis's belief that a God-figure is malevolent, given the horrors of war, is evident in the second poem in which 'Satan Speaks'. The use of satanic imagery does not refer to a literal devil. Rather it reaffirms Lewis's view that the existence of war means that an existing God cannot be considered 'good'. It is also symbolic of the 'inner demons' Lewis was facing in his struggle to come to terms with the existence of an Absolute Being.

I am the Lord your God: even he that made material things, and all these signs arrayed above you and have set beneath the race of mankind, who forget their Father's face... For which cause, dreams dreamed in vain, a never-filled desire and in close flesh a spiritual fire, a thirst for good their kind cannot attain, a backward cleaving to the beast again. A loathing for the life that I have given, a haunted, twisted soul for ever riven between their will and mine – such lot I give while still in my despite the vermin live...

66 Ibid. p.11
67 Ibid. p.19
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid. p.22
70 Ibid.
Lewis presents an image of God but uses negative imagery to argue that God cannot be good as a result of what he has experienced. Utilising the name “Satan” in itself implies the presence of evil. Additionally, the reference to a good that cannot be attained supports the view that Lewis does not believe good, or virtue, can be attained through war. He does not see the potential for justice, as does Plato. He sees a cruel reality presided over by a malevolent being.

'Ode to New Year’s Day' reiterates this position as can be seen in the quotations “the sky above is sickening, the clouds of God’s hate cover it”, “for nature will not pity, nor the red God lend an ear. Yet I too have been mad in the hour of bitter paining and lifted up my voice to God, thinking that he could hear the curse wherewith I cursed Him because the Good was dead” and “He cares not for our virtues, our little hopes and fears... Ah, sweet, if a man could cheat him! If you could flee away... and be forever at rest from the rankling hate of God and outworn world’s decay!” This reflects Lewis’s desire to escape the cruelties he blames on God and his need to create dreams which can be used for the purposes of escaping from the reality he detests.

Lewis is now also falling into the trap of desiring sensible things; that is, things that can be observed with the senses that satisfy certain material needs and comforts. "For thou art Lord and hast the keys to Hell. Yet I will not bow down to thee nor love thee", as declared in 'De Profundis', powerfully repeats Lewis’s position that God cannot be good under the circumstances of the war. It also reinforces Lewis’s rejection of theism. Consequently, he often spends his time dreaming of better days. 'Oxford' reflects this sentiment, in that Lewis offers a view of the city in the spirit of celebration after the war. In his wishful thinking, he dreams of Oxford being a sanctuary for peace, untouched by the horrors of war. “She was not builded out of common stone but out of all men’s yearning and all prayer that she might live, eternally our own, the Spirit’s stronghold – barred against despair". Platonism holds

71 Ibid. pp.13-15
73 Lewis, Spirits in Bondage, p.57
that this dreaming is an illusion, not true reality, and that knowledge and virtue can only come from introspection via the intellect.

This is reiterated in the second ‘Night’, in which another daydream scene is presented. “I know a little Druid wood where I would slumber if I could and have the murmuring of the stream to mingle with a midnight dream”.\textsuperscript{74} The story is also told of the "kings of old" who also indulged in this wishful thinking and who subsequently suffered death at the kiss of his faerie lover. “Kings of old, I’ve heard them say, here have found them faerie lovers that charmed them out of life and kissed their lips with cold lips unafraid... Kings of old, whom none could save!”\textsuperscript{75} This suggests a degree of movement from the safety of the illusion he has created to protecting himself from his experiences during the war to acknowledging the reality of the consequences of indulging in a dream world. This move is made again in \textit{Dymer} and will be examined in Chapter Three.

‘Death in Battle’ represents Lewis’s fantasising about a better place where the present cruelties do not exist. The protagonist's speech implies that he is speaking of death and reaching the solace of heaven. “Open the gates for me, open the gates of the peaceful castle, rosy in the West... Open the gates for me! Sorely pressed have I been and driven and hurt beyond bearing this summer day... but a moment agone, among men cursing in fight and toiling, blinded I fought, but the labour passed on sudden even as a passing thought, and now – agone!”\textsuperscript{76} This reflects the torment and despair Lewis feels he has suffered during the war and his craving to be in a place of safety away the cruelty. "O Country of Dreams! Beyond the tide of the ocean, hidden and sunk away, out of the sounds of battles, near to the end of day, full of dim woods and streams".\textsuperscript{77} This repeats Lewis’s descent into dreaming as a means of escapism from the reality of the war.

As mentioned previously, the struggles and consequences of this are expounded in \textit{Dymer} and the next stage of Lewis’s journey toward overcoming these struggles are

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. p.55  \\
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid. pp.55-56  \\
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid. p.74  \\
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid. p.75
\end{flushright}
discussed. In Chapter Three I will examine this text in line with Plato's virtue theory and theory of forms in order to show Lewis's overcoming of these struggles and acceptance of Platonic principles. This acceptance, as I will show, allowed Lewis to come to an acceptance of theism. This leads to his later conversion to Christianity, which will be discussed in Chapter Four.
Chapter Three – Dymer

In this chapter, I will show Lewis’s movement from hard rejection of the notion of the existence of an Absolute being, to his slow acceptance of the idea as influenced by Platonism. Through an examination of the narrative poem Dymer, which first appeared in 1926, we can observe movement from the rejection previously shown in Spirits in Bondage which, as previously stated in Chapter Two, was the product of his negative war experiences. Lewis’s struggle with coming to terms with Plato’s justice theory are also detailed in Surprised by Joy in which Lewis admits “Plato was right”.78 Here he comes to acknowledge the good in things, even if they seem terrible at face value. Lewis tells of his new friendship with a member of the “bloods”; a person who was both adventurous and “romantic”. The enlightenment from this friendship is clear in Lewis’s emphatic claim that “Plato was right after all. Eros, turned upside down, blackened, distorted and filthy still bore traces of his divinity”.79 For Lewis at this stage, Eros had represented base desires and needs that are contrary to concepts of divinity. This represents a vital moment for Lewis, highlighting one of the very first acceptances of the good inherent in an Absolute Being. This is acknowledged in Dymer in which the reader is shown movement through this struggle toward a consideration that an Absolute Being is necessary to guide us in virtuous actions and thoughts. A reading of Dymer in line with Platonic virtue ethics is essential, and I will also demonstrate how these virtues are linked with Platonic metaphysics.

Platonic virtue aims at achieving eudaimonia which refers to living with a standard of excellence, rather than what serves self-happiness.80 In The Problem of Pain, good is described by Lewis as what is necessary for personal human growth rather than what makes us happy, even if we must endure some kind of suffering to acquire the tools for that

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78 Lewis, C.S. Surprised by Joy, p.127 & Plato, The Republic
79 Lewis, C.S. Surprised by Joy, p.127
80 Plato, Gorgias
growth.81 "What seems to us good may therefore not be good in His eyes, and what seems to us evil may not be evil".82 In Dymer we are presented with the same principle.83

In the text, we see a character of the same name undergo the struggles associated with accepting this concept. Dymer is a man who is forced to move away from living in accordance with a destructive self-serving illusion of reality.84 Plato’s consideration that sensory reality is merely an illusion of true reality is featured prominently throughout Dymer.85 In accordance with this, I will explore the consequences of vice when the senses are used to determine reality. Through an examination of Dymer I will also show the growing importance of direct reflection on true reality by the intelligible mind rather than giving in to the subjective “fanciful” reality created by the human senses.86 This also supports Plato’s concept that a person must always behave virtuously, with excellence, even if wronged by others.87 This is seen in Plato’s dialogue Crito when Socrates is begged to attempt an escape from his prison cell and he (Socrates) responds by refusing, stating that despite he has been wronged in being sentenced to death, he must still do the right thing and accept the fate that the law of the city has passed down on him.88 Therefore, I will show that Plato’s virtue theory was central to the development of Lewis’s own sense of universal morality.

Plato’s metaphysical theory of forms is also connected to Lewis’s personal growth, as we will see through a discussion of the ascent of the soul, which is presented in Plato’s Symposium through the character Diotima, who explains to Socrates the manner in which the forms might be attained.89 An exploration of the ascent of the soul in line with Dymer here will corroborate Lewis’s acceptance of the necessity of moving away from bodily needs.

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81 Lewis, C.S. The Problem of Pain, p.28
82 Ibid.
83 Plato, Gorgias
84 Plato, Phaedo
85 Ibid.
86 Lewis, C.S. “Preface by the author to the 1950 edition” Narrative Poems p.4 & Plato, Phaedo
87 Plato. Crito
88 Ibid.
89 Plato. The Symposium pp.59-62
and wants in order to allow for moral and spiritual development, as was the focus in Lewis's works written after his conversion in 1930.

In addition to *The Symposium* and *Crito*, I will also draw on implications made in Plato's dialogues *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *The Republic*, which all draw on virtue theory (and political ideas in the case of *The Republic*), in order to further explore these notions. This examination will allow me to highlight key influences on Lewis's conversion to Christianity which are often overlooked, namely Platonic metaphysics and virtue. Subsequently, valuable insight will be provided into the nature of Lewis's conversion.

This examination also has contemporary importance in that it reflects an initiative for people to live by a standard of morals that come from striving to intelligibly understand virtues and behaving accordingly. In a Platonic context, this is geared toward achieving a sense of well-being and satisfaction; or *eudaimonia*. Lewis's use of these ideas shows concern for the state of the human condition, its capacity for improvement, and the reward that follows when this is attained. This is further emphasised by showing the consequences that ensue when behaviour and thinking is contrary to true virtue.

As discussed in Chapter Two, *Spirits in Bondage – A Cycle of Lyrics*, which was written previously during World War I, shows Lewis's hard rejection of Plato's conception of war as leading to justice and the maintenance of virtue, and his retaining his position as rejecting theism. The rejection of the Platonic idea of war presented in *The Republic*, that war produces courage, justice, and ultimately virtue that is featured in *Spirits in Bondage* can also be seen at the outset of *Dymer*. This can be observed through Lewis's negative portrayal of Plato's Ideal City, ruled by "Philosopher Kings." These are Sophists who are otherwise known as lovers of wisdom, as seen in *The Republic*. Lewis initially views this kind of order as cruel and oppressive, mockingly calling it "the perfect city" at the beginning of the text. In cantos two to four Lewis offers this description;

> Who could have foretold that in the city which men call in scorn The Perfect City, Dymer could be born?

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90 Ibid. *Crito, Gorgias, Phaedo* and *The Republic*.
91 Ibid. *The Republic*
92 Ibid.
There you’d have thought the gods were smothered down forever, and the keys were turned on fate. No hour was left unchartered in that town, and love was in a schedule and the State chose for eugenic reasons who should mate with whom, and when. Each idle song and dance was fixed by law and nothing left to chance.
For some of the last Platonists had founded that city of old. And masterly they made an island of what ought to be, surrounded by this gross world of easier light and shade. All answering to the master's dream they laid strong foundations, torturing into stone each bubble that the Academy had blown.93

As the Dymer narrative progresses, we see the consequences of this point of view. These include such as the destruction of “the perfect city” during a riot, as the central character experiences a process of shedding his fanciful illusions and achieving an understanding of true reality. This alludes to Lewis's arriving at the understanding that the ascension of the soul can only truly be completed with the death of the physical body and the removal of all associated material vice.

To avoid negative consequences, which negate or prevent, eudaimonia, practical action must reflect virtue. In Plato’s Symposium we can see that this is a reflection of the ascension process presented by Diotima through Socrates’s speech.94 In this speech we are told that practicing good deeds is one of the steps that lead to a true understanding of the form of virtue.95 It is with this newly gained insight into the importance of virtuous acts that Dymer is spurred on.

In The Symposium Plato describes, through Diotima, a process that must be undertaken in order to “reach the final mysteries”.96 This process is presented as an ascension ritual, through which an individual “goes through stages”.97 According to the theory, one must move their attention away from seeing beauty only in the individual instance that they desire.98 This beauty, and the desires referred to at this stage, are considered materialistic in nature. For example, Plato refers directly to moving from seeing

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93 Lewis, Dymer, pp.7-8
94 Plato, The Symposium, pp.59-62
95 Ibid, pp.60-62
96 Ibid, p.59
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid. p.59-60
beauty in one particular body to seeing beauty in all bodies.\textsuperscript{99} From this one, if one wants to ascend, one must engage in virtuous practices that lead on to seeing the beauty in learning. Seeing the beauty in learning aims at producing intellect-based introspection focused directly on one "special" type of knowledge.\textsuperscript{100} The following analogy is given to clarify this:

"Like someone using a staircase, he should go from one to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, and from beautiful bodies to beautiful practices, and from practices to beautiful forms of learning. From forms of learning, he should end up at that form of learning which is of nothing other than that beauty itself, so that he can complete the process of learning what beauty really is".\textsuperscript{101}

It is observable that the themes in the story marry up to experiences and feelings Lewis wrote about in his early journal and letters during the time of writing Dymer. Lewis views himself as being represented by the Dymer character, which allows insight into the Platonic influences that lead toward his conversion to Christianity. The metaphysical ideology of Plato's theory of forms, which is referenced in the analogy given from The Symposium, in addition to other dialogues such as Phaedo and Timaeus, are likened by Richard Tarnas to the archetypes, or essence, of things.\textsuperscript{102} For instance, the essence of beauty as opposed to a beautiful body, as is the example given by Diotima in The Symposium.\textsuperscript{103}

The Dymer narrative was written between 1922 and 1926, although the inception for the text goes further back to 1916. In the preface to the text, Lewis – at 50 years old – reflects back on his young days allowing us to see that the story idea for the text came to Lewis during 1916, when when he was 17 years of age. He attempted a prose version at this time which was unsuccessful and was interrupted by his deployment to the trenches in France in World War I. Work began on the narrative version when Lewis arrived home after having been injured in the war. The first reference that is made to this is in 1922, provided by Lewis in his diary All My Road Before Me.\textsuperscript{104} Given that Lewis did not convert to

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, pp.60-61
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, p.61
\textsuperscript{102} Plato, Phaedo & Timaeus & Tarnas, Richard. The Passion of the Western Mind p.
\textsuperscript{103} Plato, The Symposium, p.
\textsuperscript{104} Lewis, C.S. All My Road Before Me – The Diary of C.S. Lewis, p.
Christianity until the 1930s, and from his own writings in *Surprised by Joy*, we see that the period of personal enlightenment that Lewis underwent at this time was not yet strictly a Christian one. Lewis’s diary *All My Road Before Me* which was written between the years 1922 and 1926, *Surprised by Joy*, biographies and Lewis’s own autobiography, all support the claim that Lewis had at least embraced Platonism by 1926, which was also the year of *Dymer*’s first public appearance. He had not yet converted to Christianity, but it is clear from the *Dymer* text that he had accepted the idea that a divine Absolute being exists. As his conversion to Christianity itself didn’t take place until at least some years after *Dymer*’s appearance had passed, I argue that at this stage in Lewis’s life, it is this Platonic guided enlightenment that he underwent during the time of writing the text.

As previously stated, Lewis begins the narrative with the same attitude that is derived from *Spirits in Bondage*, as previously discussed in Chapter Two. That is, with a strong rejection of Plato’s *Republic* which details the socio-political means of running the ideal city (which Lewis referred as "the city which men call in scorn The Perfect City"). When confronted with Plato’s ideal city in *The Republic*, he rejects it, associating it with his own life. In *Dymer* he recreates the socio-political culture that is offered by Plato and firmly establishes his opposition to this culture by satirically renaming Plato’s “ideal city” as “the perfect city”. This is made clear at the outset of Canto I, confirming Lewis’s rejection of Plato’s virtues.

The lecturer’s voice he heard still droning from the dais. The narrow room was drowsy, over-solemn, filled with gloom.

He yawned, and a voluptuous laziness tingled down all his spine and loosed his knees, slow-drawn, like an invisible caress. He laughed – the lecturer stopped like one that sees a Ghost, then frowned and murmured, ‘Silence, please.’ That moment saw the soul of Dymer hang in the balance – louder then his laughter rang.

The whole room watched with unbelieving awe. He rose and staggered rising. From his lips broke yet again the idiot-like guffaw. He felt the spirit in his finger-tips, then swinging his right arm – a wide ellipse yet lazily – he struck the lecturer’s head. The old man tittered, lurched and dropt down dead.

105 Lewis, *Dymer*, p.7 & Plato, *The Republic*
Out of the silent room, out of the dark into the sun-stream Dymer passed...\textsuperscript{106}

After this contextual construction, we see gradual changes begin to occur in the ‘Dymer’ character’s worldview. Without the social structure of the polis (city), Dymer experiences feelings of freedom and self-entitlement, which we see when Dymer runs away from the polis, most prominently showing a sense of freedom that immediately inspires fanciful notions of grandeur and superiority.

Unguarded, for the claiming, like a great patch of flowers upon the wall hung every kind of clothes: silk, feathers flaming, leopard skin, furry mantles like the fall of deep mid-winter snows. Upon them all hung the faint smell of cedar, and the dyes were bright as blood and clear as morning skies...

"I ask no licence where I need"... he made mad work among them as he dressed ... and he wondered that he had not known before how fair a man he was\textsuperscript{107}

As we will see, these feelings are illusory, presenting Dymer with the conundrum of giving in to the lure of the illusion, or standing his ground and behaving virtuously in an attempt to see true reality. Plato’s Phaedo suggests this is possible through turning away from individual instance and reflecting with pure intellect\textsuperscript{108}

Plato’s virtues are significant here, since it is at this point that Dymer is first faced with making autonomous decisions. Dymer announces “I’ll go back and drive them all to freedom on this track”.\textsuperscript{109} As said, what greatly influences the character’s mind is a sense of self-entitlement. Plato’s virtue ethics aim toward behaving with excellence and virtue, which then leads to the attainment of eudaimonia (satisfaction and well-being).\textsuperscript{110} Dymer chooses not to behave in this way, misusing his new-found freedom. This is shown to us through the debauchery of Platonic imagery by shirking virtuous behaviour in favour of selfish wants. For example, Dymer sees wealth and power in material things and seizes them, or attempts to, as his own, and believes he is victorious in overthrowing the status

\textsuperscript{106} Lewis, Dymer, p.9
\textsuperscript{107} Lewis, Dymer, pp.17-18
\textsuperscript{108} Plato, Phaedo,
\textsuperscript{109} Lewis, Dymer, p.18
\textsuperscript{110} Plato, Gorgias
quo of the ‘perfect city’.\textsuperscript{111} Here we see a clear rejection of the socio-political principles in \textit{The Republic}.\textsuperscript{112}

Dymer must undergo the ascension process that will take his focus away from material illusions of what is good lest he fails in the search to attain knowledge of the intelligible reality of virtue and consequences ensue.\textsuperscript{113} We can see evidence of the consequences of indulging in material excess when Dymer later meets one of the rioters from the city who had followed Dymer’s example. We learn from this rioter that the city had been subjected to death and destruction and for the first time Dymer feels horror at having indulged in vice rather than acting with virtue.\textsuperscript{114}

‘Listen: I’ve bled too deep to last out till morning. I’ll be dead within the hour – sleep then. I’ve heard it said they don’t mind at the last, but this is Hell. If I’d the strength – I have such things to tell’.

‘There is a City which men call in scorn The Perfect City – eastward of this wood – you’ve heard about the place... All in one day, one man and at one blow brought ruin on us all... Then – how or why it was, I cannot say – this Dymer, this fool baby pink-and-white, went mad beneath his quiet face. One day, with nothing said, he rose and laughed outright before his master: then, in all our sight, even where we sat to watch, he struck him dead and screamed with laughter once again and fled...

And then came a clamour from the street, came nearer, nearer – stamping feet and screaming song and curses and a shout of “who’s for Dymer, Dymer? – Up and out!” ...A thousand of our people, girls and men, raved and reviled and shouted by the glare of torches and of bonfire blaze...

‘Then charge and cheer and bubbling sobs of death, we hovered on their front. Like swarming bees their spraying bullets came – no time for breath. I saw men’s stomachs fall out on their knees; and shouting faces, while they shouted, freeze into black, bony masks. Before we knew we’re into them... “Swinel!” – “Die, then!” – “That’s for you!”...’

They’re past the reach of prayer. The eternal laws hate them. Their eyes will not come clean again, but doom and strong delusion drive them...\textsuperscript{115}

His response to the account of the riot provides evidence that the consequences of Dymer’s thinking were beginning to influence him. The placement of his discovery of the riot in the timeline of the narrative, and that it is introduced to the reader through means of Dymer’s encounter with the dying rioter, is particularly important. The dying man, who

\textsuperscript{111} Lewis, C.S. p.17-18
\textsuperscript{112} Plato, \textit{The Republic}
\textsuperscript{113} Plato, \textit{Phaedo}
\textsuperscript{114} Plato, \textit{Crito & Gorgias}
\textsuperscript{115} Lewis, \textit{Dymer}, pp.39-44
does not know he is speaking to Dymer himself, regales a story of the death and destruction that has been wrought in the city and that it has been done in Dymer’s name. Dymer’s mortified response is one of the first instances in which he realises that his actions in departing from virtue has resulted in significant consequences. This realisation puts him into a depression marked by illusion in hoping to find his ideal reality.\textsuperscript{116} That Dymer realises the consequences to his actions later in the narrative suggests that Lewis is portraying a journey of discovery; an enlightenment process, as I will explain further later in this chapter. Dymer’s fantasy based desires are punctured by his slow and reluctant realisation and acceptance of reality.\textsuperscript{117} He is presented with the opportunity, possibly even the requirement, of facing the consequences of his actions.\textsuperscript{118}

In the narrative, this is presented in the form of Dymer having to come face to face with the monster he fathered. A heavenly sentry explains the situation to Dymer.

There is a lady in that primal place... who with her ancient smile made glad the sons of men... 'till in prodigious hour, one swollen with youth, blind from new-broken prison, knowing not himself nor her, nor how to mate with truth, lay with her in a strange and secret spot, mortal with her immortal, and begot this walker-in-the-night.\textsuperscript{119}

The reference to “knowing not himself... nor how to mate with truth” is suggestive of the conundrum Dymer has attempted to overcome when he is blinded with fantasy-based illusions of what reality really is.\textsuperscript{120} The struggle between knowing true reality using only the intelligible mind and the illusions produced by the human senses is also reiterated through the line “blind from new-broken prison”.\textsuperscript{121} Dymer responds by declaring his intention to kill the “beast” he begat;

I must deal with this as in my right. For either I must slay this beast or else be slain before the day.\textsuperscript{122}

The reference to a "monster" or a "beast" could perhaps be taken as a metaphor for the material greed and the destruction its birth has caused. The requirement for Dymer to

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} Plato, \textit{Phaedo}
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ibid. \textit{Crito} & \textit{Gorgias}
\item \textsuperscript{119} Lewis, \textit{Dymer}. p.86
\item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid. p.86
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid. p.86
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid. p.86
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
face this "monster" in battle, then, suggests that material greed and base desires need to be overcome.\textsuperscript{123} That is, they ought not to control or influence one's actions.

Again, Plato's influence can be identified. We see a move in the enlightenment process here, from Dymer fleeing the city and revelling in excess with the woman he calls his "beloved", toward slaying the "monster" of self-centred needs in order to truly comprehend and practice virtue in order to allow for the ascension of his soul.\textsuperscript{124} This also suggests that Lewis was beginning to consider the existence of an Absolute being. As we can see from the change of position that steadily takes place in the narrative, Lewis appears to be attempting to decide whether this being, if it existed, was malicious or not.

As seen in Chapter Two of this thesis, Lewis's views tended toward seeing the Absolute as being malicious due to his rejection of the just war principles conveyed in \textit{The Republic}.\textsuperscript{125} In \textit{Dymer}, however, we can begin to identify the moments that lead towards his conversion to Christianity. A key indicator of this is the usage of imagery that pertains to the Christian idea of Heaven. In addition to the meeting with the angelic sentry that takes place after the death of Dymer's physical body, we can also identify the beginnings of Christian thinking after Dymer's meeting with the fatally wounded rioter. In Canto V Lewis describes a dream that depicts the "gates of heaven" in addition to the following description\textsuperscript{126};

\begin{quote}
It seemed to be the murmur and the voice of beings beyond number, each and all singing \textit{I AM}. Each of itself made choice and was: whence flows the justice that men call Divine.\textsuperscript{127}
\end{quote}

The reference to "I AM" is a theological reference, referring directly to God [Exodus 3:13-14]. Lewis's suggestion that "each of itself made choice and was" also refers to the concept of free will that is central to Christian theology and the "justice that men call Divine". In this we are able to observe that the Dymer character is beginning to recognise the positive outcome of behaving with virtue; ascent of the soul to the "divine" forms.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{123} Plato, \textit{Phaedo} & \textit{The Symposium}  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid. \textit{The Republic}  
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid. p.53  
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{128} Plato, \textit{Crito, Gorgias, Phaedo} & \textit{The Symposium}
Platonism, and warming to Christianity after once rejecting these ideals so strongly was a significant stepping stone in Lewis’s conversion process.

The struggle between acting with vice and virtue that Dymer experiences, however, remains a difficult journey for the character throughout the narrative. One significant confrontation with the struggle between vice and virtue occurs in canto II when Dymer comes across a rack of magnificent clothing.

Beside the glass, unguarded, for the claiming, like a great patch of flowers upon the wall hung every kind of clothes: silk, feathers flaming, leopard skin, furry mantles like the fall of deep mid-winter snows. Upon them all hung the faint smell of cedar, and the dyes were bright as blood and clear as morning skies.\(^{129}\)

He immediately casts aside the rags he is wearing and assumes that the new clothes have been provided directly for his benefit by someone unknown to him who had possibly heard of his deeds in the *polis*. Dymer views his breaking of the status quo in “the perfect city” as both good and a success, which can be interpreted as a display of human beings’ susceptibility to vice when there are no virtues or laws to create order in society. We can also see that he has succumbed to the pleasures connected to the sensible reality.\(^{130}\)

Dymer’s focus on the self and material wealth seems to strongly override any sense of virtue, for instance he takes the clothes as his own without first checking to see if they belong to someone else.

He laughed in scorn
And cried, ‘Here there is no law, nor eye to see,
Nor leave of entry given. Why should there be?’

‘Have done with that – you threw it all behind.
Henceforce I ask no licence where I need.
It’s on, on, on, though I go mad and blind,
Though knees ache and lungs labour and feet bleed,
Or else – it’s home again: to sleep and feed,
And work, and hate them always and obey
And loathe the punctual rise of each new day.’

He made mad work among them as he dressed,
With motley choice and litter on the floor,
And each thing as he found it seemed the best.
He wondered that he had not known before
How fair a man he was. I’ll creep no more
In secret,’\(^{131}\)

\(^{129}\) Lewis. *Dymer*, p.17
\(^{130}\) Plato, *Phaedo*
\(^{131}\) Lewis. *Dymer*, p.18
This example shows one of many incidents in which Dymer deviates from thinking virtuously. The clothing is symbolic of his feelings of self-importance, showing a distinct rebellion against attempting to understand virtues intelligibly, i.e. without the use of the senses. Dymer does not attempt to achieve this understanding when presented with the clothes and his thinking causes him to lapse toward behaving wrongly. This goes against the ideals that are conveyed in Plato’s virtue theories, that even if wronged, one must still do the right thing.

That Lewis has the Dymer character behave in direct contrast to this sense of virtue makes a statement that Platonic ideals are also being challenged; challenged in the context that Lewis seems to be challenging himself to accept ideals he once rejected. Through the narrative, we are able to see Dymer’s progression toward understanding true virtue. We can see how Dymer’s progression toward changing his ways mirrors Lewis’s own progression towards a conversion to Christianity, particularly with his beginning to entertain the idea of the existence of an Absolute Being.

The Absolute Mind – better still, the Absolute – was impersonal, or it knew itself (but not us?) only in us, and it was so absolute that it wasn’t really much more like a mind than anything else. And anyway, the more muddled one got about it and more contradictions one committed, the more this proved that our discursive thought moved only on the level of ‘Appearance’, and ‘Reality’ must be somewhere else. And where else but, of course, in the Absolute?

Lewis follows this by clearly stating “I did believe in the Absolute”. It is this struggle towards acceptance that is made apparent in Dymer. Dymer’s next actions, however, show him falling further into vice before the consequences of this are made apparent to him.

The moments in which Dymer comes across the tower are presented as being indicative of a point of no return. As with the clothing, this is shown to us symbolically, using

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132 Plato, *Phaedo*
133 Ibid.
134 Plato, *Crito*,
135 Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, pp.243-245
136 Ibid. *Surprised by Joy*, pp.243-244
137 Ibid. p.245
imagery that allows insight into the Platonic philosophy driving the text. For instance, focusing on the material instance and indulging in the illusion of what is good can draw attention away from the archetypal essence – the form – of what virtuosity truly is, resulting in the consequences of vice.\textsuperscript{138} Dymer finds the remains of a magnificent feast and mourns that he missed the party that he assumes he would be welcomed at as a guest of honour.\textsuperscript{139}

It seemed a great host had fed in haste and gone: yet left a thousand places more untouched, wherein no guest had sat before. There in lonely splendour Dymer ate, as thieves eat, ever watching, half in fear. He blamed his evil fortune. 'I come late...'\textsuperscript{140}

He indulges in the remains of the feast, consuming a strange liquid in the process.

He fingered the cold neck. He saw within, like a strange sky, some liquor that foamed blue... Standing with pointed chin and head thrown back, he tasted. Rapture flew through every vein.\textsuperscript{141}

The drink clearly has an effect on Dymer. As he is processing this new sense of "rapture", he encounters a woman.\textsuperscript{142} He cannot see her in the darkness, nor does she speak. His only available sense is touch and he indulges in it.

He opened wide his arms. The breathing body of a girl slid into them.

From the world's end, with the stride of seven-league boots came passion to his side.\textsuperscript{143}

Under the influence of the liquor and out of need for company, he makes love to the woman and spends the night asleep in her bed.\textsuperscript{144} This is the point at which Dymer's virtue ultimately fails as his indulgence in the illusion that material excess is good draws him into a state of vice which results in the suffering of destructive consequences that come from attempting to deviate from seeking an intelligible understanding of virtue.\textsuperscript{145} This is evident when Dymer tries to return to his "beloved" but is blocked from accessing the tower by a monster that guards every entrance and a mysterious unmoving old matriarch.\textsuperscript{146}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{138} Plato, \textit{Gorgias & Phaedo} \\
\textsuperscript{139} Lewis, \textit{Dymer}, p.20 \\
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid. pp.20-21 \\
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid. p.24 \\
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid. pp.24-25 \\
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid. p.25 \\
\textsuperscript{145} Plato, \textit{Gorgias & Phaedo} \\
\textsuperscript{146} Lewis, \textit{Dymer}. pp.28-35
\end{flushright}
Shout above them all. Can you not hear? I'll follow at your call.’ From every arch the echo of his cry returned. Then all was silent, and he knew there was no other way. He must pass by that horror.147

We can see the influence of Plato's portrayal of Socrates here, in that being truly virtuous means that one must always behave virtuously.148 Dymer has not behaved virtuously in taking advantage of the material pleasures and hence he is refused re-entry to the tower. Plato quotes, again through Diotima;

"Don’t you realise... that it’s only in that kind of life, when someone sees beauty with the part that can see it, that he’ll be able to give birth not just to images of virtue (since it's not images he’s in touch with), but to true virtue (since it’s true beauty he’s in touch with)."149

Lewis takes on the lesson of being virtuous as a means of ascending to the state in which one can contemplate the true forms. These are referred to in Dymer as the “incorruptible gods” and it is also noted that “the gods themselves know pain, the eternal forms”.150 This confirms that the higher spiritual beings represented in the text are also representative of the forms. Dymer's loss of his newfound “beloved” and his search for her show the base elements of human misery and suffering.

Also strongly reflected is Plato’s concept that reality is clouded by illusions that are produced by the senses and that reality can only be truly observed by relying only on utilising the intellect.151 Dymer experiences dreams and sees images in which he is able to obtain his "beloved" once more.

Half-way to midnight, suddenly, from dreaming he woke wide into present horror, screaming. For he had dreamt of being in the arms of his beloved and in quiet places; but all at once it filled with night alarms and rapping guns: and men with splintered faces.152

This shows him to be tortured by these images and experiences, knowing that they are only dreams, which are not real. Again here we can draw a correlation with Plato’s notion that reality cannot be “seen” with the human senses.153 It can only be comprehended through

147 Ibid. pp.31-32
148 Plato, Crito
149 Ibid. The Symposium, pp.62
150 Lewis, Dymer, p.77 & 79
151 Plato, Phaedo
152 Lewis, Dymer, p.47
153 Plato, Phaedo
introspection which engages the pure intellect.\textsuperscript{154} Lewis suggests this when Dymer meets The Master who insists that he can induce dreams which will allow Dymer to see his "beloved" again.\textsuperscript{155}

‘And she – she was no dream. It would be waste to seek her there, the living in that den of lies.’ The Master smiled. ‘You are in haste! For broken dreams the cure is, dream again and deeper.’\textsuperscript{156} Dymer is reluctant at first but finally accepts a cup that induces another dream. “And you will drink my cup and go your way into the valley of dreams.”\textsuperscript{157} When he realises that what he is experiencing is a dream, however, he reacts strongly. When he awakens he declares “your land... your land of dreams,” he said. ‘All lies! ... I understand more than I did”.\textsuperscript{158} He rejects the illusion and flees the house. “He saw the Master crouch with levelled gun, cackling in maniac voice, ‘Run, Dymer, run!’ He ducked and sprang far out... When next he found himself no house was there...”\textsuperscript{159} These images all point to visual illusion that can be interpreted as the human senses causing a falling away from virtue. True virtue requires one to see a reality that can only be seen with the intellect, according to Plato.\textsuperscript{160} This is reinforced through Dymer’s rejection of his dreams, particularly the one experienced at The Master’s house.\textsuperscript{161}

Following the interaction with The Master, we are presented with a character who has finally come to understand that there are negative consequences to selfish actions and that visual perception is only an illusion.\textsuperscript{162} Truth must be found from internal reflection using the intellect.\textsuperscript{163} The visual imagery of material excess that Dymer is initially so passionate about obtaining is discovered to be an illusion and not reality.
Upon the disappearance of The Masters’ house, Dymer meets a woman. It is established that this is the woman who Dymer has been seeking. She tells of beings called "Incorruptibles", which are shaped by the forms (that is, they are the perfect original of an imperfect copy). "I know them all. The gods themselves know pain, the eternal forms". Reflected in this conversation is the importance of comprehending the forms through the use of the intellect. The gods, who we know are attached to the forms, cannot be comprehended without this intelligible introspection. Ultimately, Dymer resigns himself to physical death that releases him from the trappings and vice of material life.

And groaning in the lane he left his trace of bloodied mire: then halted with his face upwards, towards the gateway, breathing hard – an old lych-gate before a burial yard. He looked within. Between the huddling crosses, over the slanted tombs and sunken slate spread the deep quiet grass and humble mosses, a green and growing darkness, drenched of late, smelling of earth and damp. He reached the gate with failing hand. ‘I will rest here,’ he said, and long grass will cool my burning head.

We can observe here that Dymer is relinquishing his physical life. We can also observe here that the physical reality is not the only reality we are presented with. The “spirit” of Dymer continues to exist in a new place that has no physical limitations.

Even as he heard the wicket clash behind came a great wind beneath that seemed to tear the solid graves apart; and deaf and blind whirled him upright, like smoke, through towering air whose levels were as steps of a sky stair.

In order to ascend further to become one with the “gods”, those beings who emulate the forms of virtue, he must face the “monster” begotten by himself and the divine woman.

There is a lady in that primal place where I was born, who with her ancient smile made glad the sons of heaven. She loved to chase the springtime round the world. To all your race she was a sudden quivering in the wood or a new thought springing in solitude.

'Till, in prodigious hour, one swollen with youth, blind from new-broken prison, knowing not himself nor her, nor how to mate with truth, lay with her in a strange and secret spot, mortal with her immortal, and begot this walker-in-the-night.
In fact, it is only when the narrative reaches this point that Dymer is introduced to the idea that he had actually fathered the creature. The idea revolts him; “Look there where he comes! It shocks the blood”. Upon discovery of his paternity, Dymer makes an attempt to slay the creature.

It was Dymer, little one, Dymer’s the name. This spectre is his son.’ Then after silence, came an answering shout from Dymer... “you are relieved, Sir. I must deal with this as in my right. For either I must slay this beast or else be slain before the day”.

Instead, he himself is slain in the battle. The creature subsequently transforms into a god and ascends.

All was ended suddenly. A leap – a cry – flurry of steel and claw, then silence. As before, the morning light and the same brute crouched yonder; and he saw under its feet, broken and bent and white, the ruined limbs of Dymer, killed outright all in a moment his story done... He looked and Dymer still lay dead among the flowers and pinned beneath the brute: but as he looked he held his breath; for when he had gazed hard with steady eyes upon the brute, behold, no brute was there, but someone towering large against the skies... And from the distant corner of day's birth he heard trumpets blowing and bells ring.

This symbolises the idea that all concept of physical want and need, all sense of the material, must be metaphorically destroyed in order to allow for the purity of the ascension process to be completed.

As discussed previously, the consequences of Dymer’s licentious behaviour (for instance, the riot in the city causing widespread death and destruction as opposed to the liberty Dymer had imagined), and the horror Dymer experiences at the revelation, are taken to have instigated the ascension of his understanding of the forms of virtue. In Dymer Lewis makes use of this same ascension process. We can observe clear stages in which the central character ‘Dymer’ transforms his mind-set from desiring material wealth to seeking understanding of true intelligible reality over the illusion that he can find happiness and virtue in this material wealth. When he is physically killed, he does not resist it – resigning
to his fate, if you will – and it is only at this point that he ascends to a reality that is spiritual in nature rather than physical.\(^\text{181}\) We can see the resemblance between Socrates’s insistence in *Crito* that he will not commit an unrighteous act by making an escape attempt.\(^\text{182}\) Instead, he submits to his execution, citing that one must always do the right thing, regardless of the circumstances.\(^\text{183}\)

We can observe here a slow acceptance of changing ideals. As discussed previously, a reading of *Dymer* and *Spirits in Bondage* alongside Lewis’s autobiography *Surprised by Joy* details the personal changes he was undergoing during his youth. It allows the recognition of the progression from a stark rejection of Platonism to an acceptance of it, including and most prominently acceptance of the concept of an Absolute Being as shaped by Platonism, before his developing into the modern thinker currently understood.\(^\text{184}\) This insight into Lewis’s youthful views shows intimately how Platonism influenced Lewis’s conversion to Christianity.

The physical death of Dymer’s body prior to his meeting the monster he begat with the divine woman he must slay is indicative of achieving a stage of ascension that is not bound to the imperfect physical copy of the form.\(^\text{185}\) It suggests advancement from the illusion of physical reality and understanding that reality doesn’t have physical bounds; that true reality can only be achieved through complete overthrow of all physical attachments.\(^\text{186}\) The destruction of Dymer’s “physical” form is also representative of the Christian ideal of reaching ‘heaven’ – which in the eyes of Christianity is only reachable upon physical death. In terms of Platonism, we can see this represented by the concept of the intelligible reality and the sensible illusion of reality.\(^\text{187}\) As I will continue to argue in Chapter Four, this inference led Lewis to be influenced by some of the Christian Platonist thinkers such as St Augustine. In the next chapter, then, I will further explore Lewis’s growing acceptance of the

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\(^{181}\) Plato, *Crito*

\(^{182}\) Ibid.

\(^{183}\) Ibid.

\(^{184}\) Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, pp.243-245

\(^{185}\) Plato, *Phaedo*

\(^{186}\) Ibid, *Phaedo & The Symposium*

\(^{187}\) Ibid, *Phaedo*
principles of Christian-Platonism, and ultimately his conversion to fully accepting this mindset.

In summation, the narrative poem *Dymer* highlights the importance of not falling victim to illusion and wishful thinking. We learn, through the central character, that the human senses cannot be trusted to judge what is virtuous.\textsuperscript{188} The forms of true virtue can only be comprehended through use of the pure intellect.\textsuperscript{189} Divorcing oneself from sensory temptation allows for the process of the ascension of the soul to begin.\textsuperscript{190} Ultimately, this practice of virtue leads to *eudaimonia* and a better quality of life free from the human suffering that comes with placing importance on transient material things.\textsuperscript{191} Given that Platonic theories so heavily influenced the writing of the text, particularly considering it was written during the period leading up to his conversion, it is quite revealing concerning Lewis's own ascension toward an acceptance of a divine spirit. It is clear from a reading of this text, that by 1926, the year of publication of the text, Lewis had been influenced strongly by Platonism and was beginning to accept its tenets.

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid. *Phaedo & The Symposium*
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid. *Phaedo*
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid. *Gorgias & Phaedo*
Chapter Four – Christian Platonism

In order to contextualise the circumstances under which Lewis's conversion to Christianity took place, following the development Lewis underwent during the years in which he wrote *Dymer*, I will discuss the influences of Christian Platonist tenets. In particular, I focus on works by Saint Augustine, and show how this thinking influenced Lewis’s position from developing Platonist to Christian Platonist. I will try to show how metaphysical tenets in Platonic philosophy are a driving force behind Christian Platonist theologies. Exploring the influences of such Christian Platonist thinkers as Augustine will allow me to identify the core traits of Platonism that are carried through to influence the construction of Lewis’s brand of Christianity.

Augustine grew to distrust the human senses, viewing them as flaws, or “deficiencies” that lead to sin. Augustine expended considerable effort in attempting to reach a Divine state of Grace that was not degraded by the deficiencies of the senses. The Platonic principle of trusting only introspection by the intelligible mind as a means of comprehending the forms of reality can be identified in this thinking. In this chapter, I argue that Platonic tenets remain central to the development of Lewis’s view of universal morality, and his own development. Namely, in developing the Platonic principles accepted through the writing of *Dymer* through using a similar Christian application to Augustinian thinkers. I will show that we can see from this that Platonism had a direct impact on Lewis’s conversion from atheism to Christian Platonist. To achieve this, I will explore Christian Platonist tenets, in line with Lewis's developing ideas as shown in *Mere Christianity* and supported by *Surprised by Joy*. This chapter, then, will allow me to show that proving God’s existence was only of partial importance to Lewis. The universal morality of Plato’s virtue theory is consistently reinforced throughout the post-conversion works written by Lewis. I will discuss these works and their themes in following chapters.

Some common themes that are carried through include the relationship between the body and the soul and the aim of transcendence in which human ascent can be achieved through Divine love. The soul is, additionally, viewed as superior since the senses are
understood by Plato to pollute people’s ability to view reality through direct introspection by the intellect. For Lewis, the aim appears to be a quest for the ascension of the soul through a synthesis of Platonic philosophy and Christian theology.

In addition, using Augustine as an example of a Christian Platonist we can clearly see Platonic principles underlying the theological principle that God is the Supreme Reality. Within that reality are Plato’s forms. Augustine is principally known for his reflections on the relationship between God and the soul. He argued that the human senses pollute knowledge of God, since they are subjective. Augustine relies heavily on the grace of God; that is, God is known only when “He shines His light on the human soul” so to speak. In other words, it is only through God’s discretion that some element of truth or reality may be attained. In his Confessions, Augustine also views this as having the consequence of minimising human suffering over potential loss, as God is constant and eternal.192

We can see how this is mirrored in Lewis’s Platonism, in that one must learn not just to love the individual instant, but the archetypal form, or essence, that can be found in looking toward an Absolute Being, or Divine figure-head. This is especially important when we recognise the imperfection in the individual sensible instant, and look toward the perfection inherent in the forms themselves. Lewis utilises this to overcome his own tendency toward suffering emotional pain, leading toward his conversion.

**Part One: Christian Platonism – Influences on Lewis**

As stated, I will first study Lewis’s gradual conversion to Christianity in terms of Augustine’s final position; Augustine was a theological figure who overcame his own youthful troubles through undergoing a conversion process, utilising Platonic principles in order to define his Christian theology. This seems consistent with Lewis’s conversion from atheist to reluctant acceptance of believing in an Absolute Being, through to building upon his new developing Platonist-influenced moral philosophy by bridging it with elements of theology. As I will

show, Lewis utilises similar tenets that emerge from Augustine’s Platonic theology and we can see that Lewis’s own experiences strongly mirror those of Christian Platonist thinkers such as Augustine. An understanding of Augustine’s position, therefore, is important in contextualising Lewis’s Christian Platonic development. Furthermore, an understanding of the way these themes arise in *Mere Christianity* will then allow me to show, over the course of this thesis, the way in which Lewis’s approach to a Platonist interpretation of morality changed after his conversion to Christianity.

In becoming a Christian Platonist, Augustine was among the first to bridge the two schools of thought. Augustine’s *Confessions* tells of his first encounters with Platonism and the influence it had during the time in which he turned away from Manichaeism and toward Christianity. Augustine is regarded as being central to the transition from paganism to Christianity. Immediately this suggests a correlation with Lewis. In his theological treatises, Lewis often compares Christian doctrine to paganism, particularly in *Reflections on the Psalms*. Lewis’s own life also reflects a similar transition to that experienced by Augustine; with pagan traditionally denoting those people who do not subscribe to mainstream religions. Lewis, prior to converting to Christianity, was an atheist who would later convert, just as Augustine converted from Pagan schools of thought to Christianity. We can understand from the diary Lewis kept in the years preceding his conversion (which is published under the title *All My Road Before Me*) that one of the reasons for this was a dissatisfaction with the capacity of philosophy for conveying truths. *Surprised by Joy* showed how a turn to theism when combined with Platonic philosophy seemed to provide the answers that Lewis sought. The same is true of Augustine; Platonism played a

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193 Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, p.102
196 Meredith F. Eller, 'The Retractationes of Saint Augustine', *Church History*, (ND), pp.172-82 at p.179.
particularly significant role in Augustine’s own transition from Paganism to Christianity.\textsuperscript{197} As Blackburn states; “Augustine’s philosophy was always at the service of his theology”.\textsuperscript{198} The same is true of Lewis. Both Lewis and Augustine found a combination of philosophy and theology, specifically Platonism and Christianity, to be the most appropriate in conveying metaphysical truths concerning the nature of reality.

For Augustine, the search for these truths began with Manichaeism. In his \textit{Confessions} he describes his experiences with the Manichees. In his bid to discover the philosophical truths that he sought, Augustine confesses that “I fell in with a sect of sensualists, men with glib tongues who ranted and raved and had the snares of the devil in their mouths... ‘truth and truth alone’ was the motto which they repeated to me again and again, although the truth was nowhere to be found in them.”\textsuperscript{199} As described, the Manichees held that evil was embodied by matter and Augustine observed that they seemed to have a particularly strong fixation on this view.\textsuperscript{200} Blackburn describes Manichaeism as “the doctrine that the world is not governed by one perfect Being, but by a balance of the forces of good and evil. The doctrine elevates the devil, as the personification of evil, into a position of power comparable to that of God”.\textsuperscript{201}

We can see from this why Augustine observed the Manichees to have had a strong fixation with the idea that evil is embodied by matter.\textsuperscript{202} The view of the devil being a personification of evil supports this, since a personification is typically an image of something portrayed in a manner that is empirically observable. Augustine supplies these thoughts at the time he was a follower of Manichaeism and having his early encounters with God:

\begin{quote}
When I tried to think of my God, I could only think of him as a bodily substance, because I could not conceive of anything else... For the same reason I believed that evil, too, was some similar kind of substance, a shapeless, hideous mass, which might be solid, in which case the...
\end{quote}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{198} Blackburn, 'Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy'.p.28
\bibitem{199} Augustine, \textit{Confessions}, p.60
\bibitem{200} Ibid.p.104
\bibitem{201} Blackburn, 'Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy'.p.222
\end{thebibliography}
Manichees called it earth, or fine and rarefied like air. This they imagine as a kind of evil mind filtering through the substance they call earth. And because such little piety as I had compelled me to believe that God, who is good, could not have created an evil nature, I imagined that there were two antagonistic masses, both of which were infinite, yet the evil in a lesser and the good in a greater degree.203

From this we can see Augustine’s interpretation of the principles of the Manichees. This element of doubt as to the true nature of that which cannot be empirically observed is what gave rise to Augustine’s need to ascertain the truth with respect to the nature of reality. “I wanted to be just as certain of these things which were hidden from my sight as that seven and three make ten” and subsequently it was the Catholic Church that began to attract his attention.204 Collinson and Plant attribute to this a “restless longing for truth and religious understanding” that possibly stemmed from his lifestyle prior to adopting Manichaeism (which Collinson and Plant describe as “a life of debauchery”).205

In his search for this understanding, Augustine explains in the Confessions that the Platonist works appealed to him because they contained all those elements of Christianity that had initially attracted him.206 Tarnas corroborates that Platonism influenced many early Christian intellectuals in this manner; suggesting that Platonism contributed “metaphysical insight to some of the deepest of Christian mysteries”.207 Tarnas explains that Christianity initially developed in the manner that it did due to the influence of a metaphysical structure that has its origins in Plato and was further cemented by such figures as Justin Martyr and Augustine.208 Tarnas explains;

In terms reminiscent of Platonism with its transcendent Ideas, Christian theologians taught that to discover Christ was to discover the truth of the cosmos and the truth of one’s own being in one unitary illumination.209

203 Augustine, Confessions.p.104
208 Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View.p.102
209 Ibid.
We can see from this that Platonism played an important role in the early development of Christianity as a systematic theology. Because of this association it is also clear to see why such prominent Christian scholars as Augustine and Lewis also expressed an affinity for Platonism, or why elements of Platonism emerged in their works, as this influence both mirrors and supports key elements of the Christian faith.

Collinson and Plant describe the Platonic views that Augustine upholds: "like Plato, he thought of the soul as inhabiting and deploying the body... He said, 'man is, as far as we can see, a rational soul making use of a mortal and material body'”.\(^{210}\) This, fundamentally, acknowledges the dualist nature of reality. According to Collinson and Plant Augustine also acknowledges the Platonic notion that all knowledge is derived from rationality and takes on two types; that which is transmitted via the senses and that which is independent of the senses.\(^{211}\) Collinson and Plant cite Augustine in explaining that knowledge of the latter type is perceived directly by the mind.\(^{212}\) "'Reason is the mind’s sight, whereby it perceives truth through itself, without the intermediary of the body'. This theory of the way in which the mind knows and understands is redolent of Platonism”.\(^{213}\) We can also understand from this that Plato's term “sensible” for describing the material aspect of reality is derived from the same modes of empirical observation that Lewis associates with the material.

Collinson and Plant continue to explore the influence of this particular Platonic tenet on Augustinian thought and surmise that “for Augustine, as for Plato, the highest intellectual activity results in an illumination of the mind and the recognition of certain ultimate and eternal truths which he believed to be latent in all human minds”.\(^{214}\) Richardson explains that the human soul shares a relationship with God through His “incorporeal” and "intellectual" nature.\(^{215}\) This relationship with an incorporeal intelligence that is


\(^{211}\) Ibid.

\(^{212}\) Ibid.p.43 & Richardson, 'Resist Not Evil', p.234

\(^{213}\) Ibid. & Richardson, 'Resist Not Evil', p.234

\(^{214}\) Collinson and Plant, 'Augustine of Hippo'.pp.43-44 & Richardson, 'Resist Not Evil', p.234

\(^{215}\) Richardson, 'Resist Not Evil', (p.234) & Griffin and Paulson, 'Augustine and the Corporeality of God', p.97
fundamentally morally good allows the soul to reach perfection and become enlightened, which Ramey echoes in his acknowledgement of the Augustinian idea that “heaven is reality itself”. In this context this can be taken to mean that only through God and heaven can the human soul attain perfection because it is heaven that reflects reality. Plato's influence can clearly be seen here. Enlightenment cannot be achieved through solely acknowledging the material aspect of reality principally because its nature as being empirically observable means that what we observe with our senses is often inaccurate, thus resulting in imperfections and an erroneous view of the nature of reality. Subsequently, due to the limitations inherent in the material, any being that is limited to the material would also reflect this imperfection and its presentation of copies of an original Form, rather than showing the original Form itself. As a result, perfection can only be achieved through putting into practice knowledge of the true nature of reality.

This also has importance for contextualising Lewis’s view of universal morality. The notion that everyone possesses fundamental knowledge of the moral concepts of good and bad is commonly held to be a means for Lewis to prove God's existence. The role of Platonic metaphysics in influencing Lewis's Christianity, however, has additional significance for Lewis's in that it also acts as a support for his belief in the existence of universal morality. The idea here is that recognition and acceptance of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature is fundamental to upholding moral good. The rejection of knowledge that Lewis views as being fundamental to our understanding of reality is what he defines as being morally questionable.

Moral implications can also be identified, as Watson suggests, in citing an excerpt from The Great Divorce in order to illustrate this point: “Heaven is reality itself. All that is fully real is Heavenly... the choice of every lost soul can be expressed in the words 'better to

216 Richardson, 'Resist Not Evil’, (p.234) & Watson, 'Enlarging Augustinian Systems: C.S. Lewis’s the Great Divorce and Till We Have Faces’, & Griffin and Paulson, 'Augustine and the Corporeality of God’, p.97
217 Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View. pp.6-9
218 Ibid.
219 Watson, 'Enlarging Augustinian Systems: C.S. Lewis’s the Great Divorce and Till We Have Faces',
reign in Hell than serve in Heaven’. There is always something they insist on keeping, even at the price of misery. There is always something they prefer to joy – that is, to reality”. There is clearly a fundamental moral distinction here between the illusionary material-based appearance and intelligible reality. To associate heaven with reality indicates that reality is fundamentally incorporeal, having its basis in intelligible reflection using the mind divorced from the senses. Furthermore, a rejection of this knowledge then results in the morally adverse conditions that constitute hell. Collinson and Plant show this principle to be reflected in Augustine’s works, explaining that during the early development of Christianity as a systematic theology, this notion resulted in the formation of moral standards against which our actions can be compared and judged.

There are, however, some elements of Platonism from which Augustine seems to distance himself. Lewis, too, shows instances in which his thoughts seem to deviate from Platonic doctrine. One such example of this is shared by both Augustine and Lewis and shows how Lewis’s interpretation of Christian Platonism further mirrors Augustine’s. As a Christian, Augustine subscribed to the belief that each individual soul was created by God. As a result of this fundamental Christian tenet, Augustine was unable to embrace Plato’s view of the soul as being separated from its place of origin, which Plato holds is its true "home", while it is inhabitation of a material body.

In Lewis’s theory concerning the three dimensions, which I will examine further in Part Two of this chapter, he provides an explanation as to what happens to the human soul when knowledge encompasses the incorporeal in addition to the material aspect of reality and then compares this to the state of the soul when only the material is accepted. But

221 Collinson and Plant, ‘Augustine of Hippo’. pp.44 & 45
where Plato implies that a complete relinquishing of the material is necessary to attain enlightenment, Lewis appears to apply his own Platonic ideas in an explanation of what he calls “practical theology”; openly stating that “as you advance to more real and more complicated levels, you do not leave behind you the things you found on the simpler levels: you still have them, but combined in new ways – in ways you could not imagine if you knew only the simpler levels”.226 We can see from this the way in which the combination of Christian and Platonic beliefs resulted in developments and changes in the way in which metaphysical philosophy matured in the thoughts of both Lewis and Augustine.

**Part Two: Lewis’s Conversion to Christian Platonism**

Here I will examine the manner in which Lewis’s newly developed Christian Platonism emerges in his own Christian text, *Mere Christianity*. This is important in further building on the foundations Lewis established during his early development, as I discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. This examination will allow me to set the Platonic context within which Lewis presents his ideas in other texts written following his complete conversion from atheist to believer in an absolute divine figure within a Platonic context, to further shaping those Platonic beliefs within a sect of Christianity.

The most prominent theme that permeates Lewis’s Platonic Christianity is his belief in the human ability to recognise the distinction between appearance as we observe it with the subjective senses and intelligible reality.227 To make this point here, Lewis states that Christianity tells us about “another world, about something behind the world we can touch and hear and see”.228 This marks a distinction between that which is observable with the five senses and that which is not; that which is but which cannot be observed with the senses. In Platonism this is referred to as the sensible (aesthetikos).229 The distinction

228 Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.p.156
between appearance as observed with the senses and intelligible reality, here, lies in Plato's conception of the Form as constituting the true essence of a thing, with its sensible counterpart typically being an imperfect copy.\textsuperscript{230} The sensible copy is usually thought of as representing appearance principally due to the idea that the true defining Form is often obscured by the imperfections and limitations inherent in the sensible copy.\textsuperscript{231} Hence the Forms are understood to represent true reality. Plato explains:

\begin{quote}
We distinguish between the many particular things which we call beautiful or good, and absolute beauty and goodness. Similarly... we say there is corresponding to each set a single, unique Form which we call an “absolute” reality... and we say that the particulars are objects of sight but not of intelligence, while the Forms are objects of intelligence but not of sight.\textsuperscript{232}
\end{quote}

Thus we can see that the Forms are incorporeal in nature, and that it is due to this nature that that the archetypal Forms are often discounted as representing reality. This leads to a general acceptance of the appearance that the sensible represents reality because it is immediately observable in a tangible way, thereby producing a deviation from true reality.

One of the ways in which Lewis demonstrates the importance of recognising this distinction in \textit{Mere Christianity} is through use of a metaphor in which he recalls the testimony of a Royal Air Force Officer who, despite holding a reverence for God, expresses distaste for theology and its associated religious doctrines. Lewis cites this unnamed officer:

\begin{quote}
I know there’s a God. I’ve felt Him: out alone in the desert at night: the tremendous mystery. And that’s why I don’t believe all your neat little dogmas and formulas about Him. To anyone who’s met the real thing they all seem so petty and pedantic and unreal!\textsuperscript{233}
\end{quote}

Lewis demonstrates here an understanding of the distinction between appearance and reality using Christian ideology as a metaphor. In this example, Lewis shows written religious doctrines to be a material, sensible, representation of God rather than God Himself. In effect, he suggests that, despite what religious doctrine holds to be of importance, it

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\begin{itemize}
\item Field, \textit{The Philosophy of Plato}. p.20
\item Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity}. p.153
\end{itemize}
essentially amounts to words written on paper that reflects the views of the authors, as opposed to being representative of an actual manifestation of God’s word. By using this metaphor, Lewis takes written religious doctrines to be a representative of God and not a manifestation of God Himself. Thus, there is a distinction between the reality of God Himself and the sensible, material texts that feature principles associated with Him. This repeats a distinction between that which is real and that which has its basis in an imperfect sensible copy of reality. Further, the statement that “to anyone who’s met the real thing they all seem so petty and pedantic and unreal” implies that it is morally inappropriate to revere that which has the illusionary appearance of being real rather than being indicative of reality itself.\textsuperscript{234} Lewis consolidates his position on this by stating that “I quite agreed with that man... I think he really was turning from something real to something less real”.\textsuperscript{235} Lewis's acceptance of the RAF officer's views supports that Lewis upholds the position that reality is dualist in nature and that this must be embraced in a practical manner because putting erroneous knowledge into practice is indicative of a morally questionable person who is “petty and pedantic”.\textsuperscript{236}

Another example Lewis makes use of in order to show the distinction between appearance and reality by using the metaphor of a map. Lewis explains that the notion of appearance versus reality is like viewing a real location and subsequently turning to look at a map which depicts that same location.\textsuperscript{237} As with the previous example, the individual in this case turns their attention away from the real location to the less real depiction of that location on the map.\textsuperscript{238} What is pictorially depicted on the map does not have the same essential reality that the actual place does. Despite the distinction between reality and the appearance of reality, however, Lewis also places emphasis on the positive role that appearance is able to play. In thinking of how to complete a journey, for instance, a map is often pivotal to our being able to determine the most appropriate route to our

\textsuperscript{234} Field, \textit{The Philosophy of Plato}.p.20
\textsuperscript{235} Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity}.pp.153-154
\textsuperscript{236} Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity}, p.153
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.p.154
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.
Similarly, because the less real appearance is based on the experiences and characteristics of reality, the sensible object is an important component in understanding the ways in which we reach an understanding of reality. Thus the practical use of knowledge of both the material instant and the incorporeal essence is important for moral behaviour.  

The use of the map metaphor gives rise to a number of connotations, however. In practical terms, both the map and the accompanying experiences (both the material and the incorporeal) are then to morality and thus to the enlightenment of the human soul. As Lewis explains, the experience inherent in the original Form might be lacking in practical moral value without the aid of an accompanying "map" of the sensible copy for guidance, and likewise the material "map" might be lacking in practical moral value without the benefit of previously having experienced the reality of what it is like to embark on a journey that requires use of a map. This demonstrates that in addition to having a clear understanding of the distinction between appearance and reality, Lewis also reiterates that use of both the material and the incorporeal, that is the sensible and the Form, are necessary to morality, and, in turn, becoming enlightened.

Another way in which Lewis demonstrates an understanding of the distinction between the empirically observable and the incorporeal and their relationship with the concept of appearance and reality is through application of his concept of Bios and Zoe. He explains these two terms as he applies them:

The Biological sort which comes to us through Nature, and which (like everything else in Nature) is always tending to run down and decay so that it can only be kept up by incessant subsidies from Nature in the form of air, water, food, etc., is Bios. The Spiritual life which is in God from all eternity, and which made the whole natural universe, is Zoe.

The importance of utilising these terms is that it allows us to observe Lewis’s recognition of the distinction between that which is appearance driven (and which can represent falsehood or illusion of what is real) and that which is inherently real. That Lewis relates

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239 Ibid.
240 Friedlander, Plato - an Introduction.pp.16-17
241 Lewis, Mere Christianity.pp.154-155
243 Lewis, Mere Christianity.p.159
244 Ibid.p.154
the Form to Zoe, which is spiritual and Godly in nature, suggests his leaning towards Christian Platonism. Indeed, the suggestion that God is an example of Zoe also demonstrates an understanding of the eternal and perfect nature which is inherent in the world of Forms.

In explaining the relationship between human beings and the concepts of Bios and Zoe, Lewis considers human beings to be the “highest of the animals”, largely as a result of the complexity of our physiological systems, our capacity for love and our capacity for reason.245 “When we come to man, the highest of the animals, we get the completest resemblance to God which we know of... Man not only lives, but loves and reasons: biological life reaches its highest known level in him”.246 Here Lewis uses another metaphor to explain this position; stating that the situation is akin to a statue which contains a likeness of a human being but cannot be considered a real human being because of its nature as being comprised of stone.247 This idea has origins in the Bible, in which “man” was said to be made in God’s image (Gen 1:26-28). Lewis’s statue metaphor suggests that Platonism is reflected here in emphasising that we are not the same as God but rather that we are imperfect replicas. From this context we can also understand that Lewis considers human beings to predominantly be characterised by Bios, hence the human propensity for mistaking the sensible as being solely indicative of reality.

Conversely, for the purposes of analogy, we can associate Zoe with the element of reality pertaining to God. Considering the distinction between the sensible aspect of reality, which is occupied by humans, and the incorporeal aspect of reality occupied by God, we can understand Zoe to be characterised by an archetypal essence that is not present in the manifested appearance of the sensible world that is familiar to humans.248 In addition, since Zoe is not characterised by anything that can be considered sensible, it can be understood in a context similar to Plato’s intelligible reality. This interpretation is supported by Sarah

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245 Lewis, Mere Christianity, pp.158-159
246 Ibid.
247 Ibid, p.157
248 Kilby, The Christian World of C.S. Lewis, p.18 & Lewis, Mere Christianity, p.159
Broadie’s argument that "Plato has established the immateriality of intelligence".249 This highlights that the both the intelligible mind and Lewis’s concept of Zoe have little basis in the sensibly observable copy of reality. Furthermore, that Lewis’s Zoe is rooted in the spiritual, or what is Godly, highlights that he has applied a Christian interpretation to the Platonic tenet.250

It is apparent that Lewis does not consider their close relationship to Bios to be an imprisonment for Humans. Just as Plato believes that the ascent of the soul to the divine realm of forms can be achieved through the practice of virtuous acts and a virtuous nature, the evolution of the Human soul can also occur. In developing his statue analogy, he writes that “the world is a great sculptor’s shop. We are the statues and there is a rumour going round the shop that some of us are some day going to come to life”.251 This reflects the idea that embracing knowledge of the dualist nature of reality is central to the enlightenment of the human soul. This idea can also be seen in Plato’s cave parable, in which it is explained that the chains which bind individuals to the cave wall can be cast off in order to allow the individuals the opportunity to journey out of the cave to experience the reality of the world that lies beyond it, with that individual’s eyesight slowly becoming accustomed to the light of the reality beyond the cave.252

Lewis includes a chapter in Mere Christianity entitled “Time and Beyond Time”.253 This chapter, with its counterpoising of “time” and "beyond time", can be seen to refer to the distinction between that which is material in nature and that which is incorporeal in nature. Friedlander identifies the Platonic influences on this in his discussion of Plato’s theory of “being” and “beyond being”.254 Lewis’s comments on the subject is important in that they provide an extended presentation of the Platonic theory of “being” and “becoming” and

250 Lewis, Mere Christianity.p.159
251 Ibid.
253 Lewis, Mere Christianity.pp.166-171
254 Friedlander, Plato - an Introduction.p.75
indicates his ongoing usage of Platonism as a vehicle for expressing his Christian ideals. In the chapter, Lewis draws the distinction between that which lies within the field of time and that is not limited to the field of time. In further explanation, Lewis states that "our life comes to us moment by moment... that is what time is like". This refers to the nature of the material aspect of reality which is reinforced by the phrase "our life comes to us" and thus we can see that this sensible version of reality means that we are limited to that which is possible within the parameters of the "moment by moment" manner in which time operates. Not only is this notion evident in Plato's thoughts, as I will show, which Ross corroborates, in stating that the human world is primarily sensible in nature, and that it can be understood in terms of Plato's "becoming". That is, due to its tangible nature reality has an identifiable beginning and is in a constant state of flux. In other words, it can be perceived by the senses, hence Plato's usage of the word 'sensible'.

The constant change that is present in that which is in a state of becoming (the sensible) can be identified in the very fact that human beings change and develop constantly throughout their lives, undergoing biological and social changes, which vary according to the effects of experiences had throughout our life cycle. Plato emphasises this state by explaining that reality is "always becoming and never is", which further corroborates the idea that there is never any culmination or perpetuity in that which is in a state of becoming, as it is constantly in a state of development and fluctuation. Conversely, this also means that the sensible is also naturally prone to decay. The presence of decay and limitation by their very nature renders that which is in a state of becoming as imperfect. This is expounded by Lewis's implication that the sensible aspect of reality is characterised by a series of moments, as opposed to a single uniform moment. This suggests that there is a

255 Plato, 'Timaeus'. pp.715-716
256 Lewis, Mere Christianity p.167
257 Plato, 'Timaeus'. p.716 & Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas p.221
258 Plato, 'Timaeus'. p.716 ss27d to 28b
259 Ibid. p.716 ss27d to 28b & Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas p.221
260 Plato, 'Timaeus'. pp.715-717 ss27d to 28b
261 Ibid.
262 Ibid.
263 Ibid.
series of individual instances "in time", and because these instances are individual, change becomes possible.\textsuperscript{264}

Following this, Lewis examines the nature of that which is beyond time. In order to clarify this concept Lewis uses another metaphor, again drawing on the nature of God to illustrate his meaning. Lewis states that "almost certainly God is not in Time. His life does not consist of moments following one another".\textsuperscript{265} What is meant by this is that God is typically not limited to a chronological framework of moments passing in a sequential manner as humans are and, as such, God is thought to exist beyond such parameters. Lewis repeats this in explaining that "...every other moment from the beginning of the world is always present for Him... He has all eternity in which to listen to the split second of prayer put up by a pilot as his plane crashes into flames".\textsuperscript{266}

Lewis uses yet another analogy to illustrate this: that of the act of writing a novel. He first states that there is a clear distinction to be recognised between the characters who exist in the novel and the author responsible for their creation. In the novel, furthermore, the characters are explained as being limited to the time-line described, and so they must consistently follow that chronology.\textsuperscript{267} The author, however, does not exist within the events that occur in the novel and thus is not limited to the time-line described. The author, then, is free to move at will between viewing earlier and later chapters in the novel without causing any chronological discrepancies to the story.\textsuperscript{268} It is with this understanding that Lewis compares the relationship between God and Human Beings. It is also clear that this type of relationship depicts the difference between what it means to be in time for human beings and what it means to be beyond time for God. Field explains this by noting that the soul has the capacity to survive the physical death of the body.\textsuperscript{269} Lewis expresses this by stating that "God is not hurried along in the Time-stream of this universe any more than an

\textsuperscript{264} Friedlander, Plato - an Introduction.pp.29-30 & Lewis, Mere Christianity.p.167
\textsuperscript{265} Lewis, Mere Christianity.p.167
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{267} Ibid.pp.167-168
\textsuperscript{268} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{269} Field, The Philosophy of Plato.pp.84-85
The author is hurried along in the imaginary time of his own novel. He has infinite attention to spare for each one of us. He does not have to deal with us in the mass.\textsuperscript{270}

Lewis's conception of "beyond time" can be understood in context of Plato's "being" which is described as "that which always is and has no becoming".\textsuperscript{271} This refers to that which is eternal and unchangeable. Since it is eternal and not prone to developmental changes, it is not prone to decay and therefore is thought to hold a higher degree of perfection than that which is in a state of becoming, in addition to having no point of creation or end (since it is eternal it has always been in a constant state of being). That Lewis uses God to describe that which is eternal and which is not limited the field of time suggests a link between his "beyond time" and Plato's "being". That Lewis also draws distinctions between the converse aspects of reality also implies his recognition of the Platonic distinction between the two states.\textsuperscript{272}

Also of importance to understanding the Platonic influences on Lewis's Christianity is a comparison of Lewis's statue analogy with the role of shadows in Plato's cave parable. Lewis notes a "shadowy or symbolic resemblance" in his explanation of the difference between a statue and a human being.\textsuperscript{273} This use of the statue analogy, however, compares humans to statues in order to illustrate the distinction between appearance and reality as it appears in Plato's cave parable. In the cave parable, this is seen in the distinction that is drawn between the shadows that are cast on the cave wall and the fire and various objects that are positioned near it.\textsuperscript{274} In the cave parable, the prisoners view the shadows on the cave wall as reality because their bonds are so restrictive that they cannot turn their heads to see anything else in the cave, i.e. the objects and the fire causing the shadows.\textsuperscript{275} A distinction can be seen here between the appearance that the shadows give and the reality that these are merely images cast on a wall by objects and a fire which the prisoners cannot

\textsuperscript{270} Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity}.p.168  
\textsuperscript{271} Plato, "Timaeus".pp.715-716 s27d  
\textsuperscript{272} Crombie, \textit{An Examination of Plato's Doctrines}.p.253  
\textsuperscript{273} Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity}.p.159 Plato, "The Simile of the Cave".pp.278-286 ss515-521  
\textsuperscript{274} Plato, "The Simile of the Cave".pp.278-279 ss515  
\textsuperscript{275} Ibid.p.279 ss515
see while they are bound to the cave. Lewis employs the same distinction in his statue analogy, in which statues are understood to be representative likenesses of human beings, though they cannot be considered as human themselves because they lack certain human characteristics.

The cave wall, and the shadows that play across it, in Plato's cave parable signify that the sensible in that the shadows are representative of that which can be observed with the five human senses. Ferguson, in addition, suggests that the physical properties associated with the cave wall itself influence the idea that the cave wall, in part, represents the sensible aspect of reality. The shadows, then, are considered to be sensible by association, especially considering that shadows are by-products of that which is considered to be more real (in this example the fire), as they are created when light is cast on something else (the objects). Lewis's usage of statues as an example illustrates the same point as Plato, noting that the purpose of a statue, or shadow, is to imitate a human and provide a likeness, rather than intending to actually become a real human. As Lewis states, "a statue has the shape of a man but is not alive". Thus, just as shadows are less real than the fire and objects which cast shadows in Plato's cave parable, so are the statues are less real than their human counterparts, as Lewis makes clear.

Lewis also notes this in Christian terms, explaining the adage that 'man' was made in God's image, rather than being an exact replica of God. 'Man' is like God, not God himself. This suggests a clear distinction between the sensible and the intelligible reality, seeing as humans are typically associated with the sensibly observable material appearance of reality in addition to being limited to the field of time. Lewis's statue analogy mirrors this

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276 Ibid. pp.278-279 s515
277 Ibid. p.282 s517
278 A.S. Ferguson, 'Plato's Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', The Classical Quarterly, 16/1 (1922), pp.15-28.p.16
280 Lewis, Mere Christianity.p.158
281 Ibid. pp.157-158
in that, as previously explained, the statue looks like a human but is not actually a real human being.

Lewis then turns the discussion toward the possibility that the statue might be able to "come to life". That is, become human. The idea conveyed in this analogy demonstrates Lewis's belief that, despite the fact that part of the nature of the sensible is the creation of limitations, humans retain the ability to change their circumstances from reflecting on the purely sensible to accepting the knowledge that true reality can only be observed through purely intellectual. In the cave parable, this is shown in the journey that is undertaken by the prisoners who becomes freed from their bonds. In the parable we see the prisoners move away from the shadows that are cast on the cave wall and journey out of the cave. The freed prisoners come to understand that fire is responsible for casting the light against the objects that created the shadows, and upon finding the sunlit world outside the cave, and their eyesight adjusts to this newfound light, they come to comprehend true reality as it exists beyond the cave. It is interesting that Lewis chooses to use analogies to present his interpretation of Plato's ideas. This is advantageous as it allows Lewis to retain the integrity of Plato's own written style while at the same time presenting his own thoughts, further reinforcing Plato's influence on Lewis's work. Brisson explains the importance of this style, stating that it can be used to depict and communicate aspects of true events in a manner that people will more easily be able to commit to memory, as was discussed in the Introduction to this thesis.

Finally, the role of physical death is also important for understanding why knowledge of the dualist nature of reality plays an important role in the process of the human soul becoming enlightened. Plato places considerable emphasis on recognising the

282 Lewis, Mere Christianity. p.159
283 Field, The Philosophy of Plato. p.20
284 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'. pp.280-283 ss516-518
285 Ibid.
286 Ibid.
Forms and on reducing, if not eliminating, the influence of the sensible.\textsuperscript{288} Given the limitations that govern the sensible aspect of reality (which is predominantly the aspect of reality that humans exist in), it should be logically impossible to attain enlightenment while one is still physically living. This idea was presented in Chapter Three, when in \textit{Dymer} the central character endures physical death before he is able to face his psychological demons and enter heaven where the Forms reside. The reason for this is that complete relinquishment of the material aspect of reality also requires an individual to relinquish their own material existence. The nature of human existence means that it is impossible to completely attain enlightenment during the course of our lives, as this would almost certainly result in the physical death of the person in question. That is, the loss of their physical form. Lewis’s statue analogy implies recognition of the same principle.\textsuperscript{289} In order for the statue to come to life, it must become human which would result in the complete loss of its stone structure since stone has no place in human physiology.\textsuperscript{290} Likewise with Plato’s cave parable, the individual leaves behind their familiar world, which consists of shadows cast across the cave wall, in order to venture out of the cave and they retain nothing from their life within the cave as they pursue this journey.\textsuperscript{291}

Lewis also writes of this as a return to God as he associates this aspect of reality with Him.\textsuperscript{292} In other words, the distinction between the sensible and the forms can be understood in a Christian context as ‘earth’, or sometimes ‘hell’, and ‘heaven’. This interpretation is important to note in relation to Lewis’s personal context as a Christian. Heaven, typically, is taken to be associated with God.\textsuperscript{293} Because Lewis associates God with both Zoe and that which is ‘beyond time’ (or in a state of ‘being’) we can understand heaven to be representative of the forms; the incorporeal aspect of reality. The positive moral connotations that are associated with God and ‘heaven’ also reinforce that morality is the

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{288} Plato, \textit{Phaedo}
  \item \textsuperscript{289} Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity}.p.159
  \item \textsuperscript{290} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{291} Plato, ‘The Simile of the Cave’.pp.279-280 ss516-517
  \item \textsuperscript{292} Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity}.pp.56-57
  \item \textsuperscript{293} Augustine, \textit{Confessions}.p.287 citing Matt 6:8
\end{itemize}
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result of acceptance of the knowledge that sensible reality is inferior to the forms of reality. The use of God as an example for this is also a means of reinforcing the distinction between these two aspects of reality.

Clarke asserts that, while Lewis is recognisant of this view, he does not necessarily subscribe to it (this is evidenced by my position that Lewis’s works argue that morality is the result of acceptance that reality is dually material and incorporeal and that retaining a focus on the sensible inhibits the human development toward attaining the forms). Clarke writes of Lewis that “his Biblical perspective warned him that in its fallen state, humanity was intelligent enough to know that life ends in death, but not strong enough to endure that knowledge”. Fear of death often influences decisions on whether or not to embrace aspects of reality other than the material. As Clarke states, “in [Lewis’] world view, both factors must be taken into account. They explain... our fear of death.”

This fear is made clear by Plato in the cave parable when it is explained that the freed prisoner journeying out of the cave experiences the disdain of the other prisoners upon their return. Lewis responds to this general fear by first explaining the conception that leads to it.

Some people think that after this life, or perhaps after several lives, human souls will be ‘absorbed’ into God. But when they try to explain what they mean, they seem to be thinking of our being absorbed into God as one material thing is absorbed into another. They say it is like a drop of water slipping into the sea. But of course that is the end of the drop. If that is what happens to us, then being absorbed is the same as ceasing to exist.

In other words, people are generally afraid of death because they are afraid of losing their individuality in a sensible context and so this fear poses a significant hindrance to people’s ability to accept and practice the knowledge that human beings must strive toward attaining the forms in order to acquire and accept universal morality. Lewis’s intention, then, is to attempt to address this fear by promoting a different understanding of the concept. “The whole purpose for which we exist is to be thus taken into the life of God. Wrong ideas about

294 Clarke, C.S. Lewis: A Guide to His Theology. p.51
295 Ibid. p.52
296 Plato, ‘The Simile of the Cave’. pp.281-282 s517
297 Lewis, Mere Christianity. pp.160-161
what that life is will make it harder. And now, for a few minutes, I must ask you to follow rather carefully”. 298

Lewis then proceeds to explain his theory concerning the three dimensions of reality in order to promote his argument that it is possible to accept the incorporeal aspect of reality while retaining individuality. The theory of the three dimensions depicts movement from accepting only the sensible aspect of reality to accepting the incorporeal aspect, the form, as well, in addition to showing “how human souls can be taken into the life of God and yet remain themselves – in fact, be very much more themselves than they were before”. 299 This suggests that human beings can reach a higher potential by accepting that reality is both empirically observable and incorporeal in nature. This results in developing morality for the person in question and thus the potential for enlightenment to be achieved. The three dimensions theory suggest that we do not relinquish what was gained on previous levels as we advance through the levels, but rather we retain it as we advance in order to reach our highest moral potential. “As you advance to more real and more complicated levels, you do not leave behind you the things you found on the simpler levels: you still have them, but in new ways – in ways you could not imagine if you knew only the simpler levels”. 300 This repeats Lewis’s view that physical death does not necessarily result in the loss of individuality, nor even is physical death always necessary for a life of morality and development toward enlightenment.

Lewis explains the machinations of this theory in that we, as human beings, begin our lives at the level of the first dimension, which is considered to be the lowest and which can be understood as being the equivalent of plain straight lines. The next dimension, dimension two, depicts more lines than dimension one and additionally suggests the beginnings of shape taking place. The third and final dimension, the highest, shows a complete figure, “one solid body”. 301 The first dimension corresponds to the sensible aspect

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298 Ibid. p.161
299 Ibid.
300 Ibid.p.162
301 Ibid.pp.161-162
of reality, as it is the simplest dimension and lacks the substance of the two higher
dimensions, just as the shadows in Plato’s cave lack the real substance inherent in the world
beyond the cave.\textsuperscript{302} The third dimension, then, corresponds with the world of Forms, or the
incorporeal spiritual Zoe as Lewis calls it. For Lewis it is important that human beings
advance through these dimensions because the first dimension is “simple and rather empty”, meaning that to remain on the level of this dimension would result in a morally
deficient human being.\textsuperscript{303}

Further, this theory emphasises the importance of recognising and accepting that
reality is composed equally of sense and form and that ignorance of the existence of one of
these components results in moral deficit and a subsequent inability to become
enlightened.\textsuperscript{304} As Prewitt also states, Lewis’s views imply the importance of human
characteristics (those that have their basis in the sensible) for “spiritual warfare”,
suggesting the necessity of material human characteristics in the advancement toward
enlightenment.\textsuperscript{305} Clarke, furthermore, supports this by saying that “the intellect or spirit of
a man must be joined to the animal body by the ‘chest’... only then is he fully human. But
when the heart is unable to connect to the objective truth outside of him... the result is ‘men
without chests’; people who lack the capacity for moral development”.\textsuperscript{306} This continues the
argument that recognition of the sensible and the incorporeal aspects of reality is vital for
the moral advancement of the human race.

In conclusion, Lewis writes that “it is something we never could have guessed, and
yet, once we have been told, one almost feels one ought to have been able to guess it because
it fits in so well with all the things we know already”.\textsuperscript{307} This speaks of the underlying

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\textsuperscript{302} Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.p.279 s515
\textsuperscript{303} Lewis, Mere Christianity.p.162
\textsuperscript{304} Kevin Corrigan, 'Positive and Negative Matter in Later Platonism: The Uncovering of Plotinus's
Dialogue with the Gnostics', in Ruth And Turner Majercik, John D. (ed.), Gnosticism and Later
\textsuperscript{305} Janice C. Prewitt, 'The Heroic Matriculation: The Academies of Spenser, Lewis and Rowling', West
\textsuperscript{306} Clarke, C.S. Lewis: A Guide to His Theology.p.36
\textsuperscript{307} Lewis, Mere Christianity.p.163
\end{flushright}
universal morality which is central to understanding the importance of a Platonic reading of Lewis’s works. This universal morality suggests that knowledge of the true nature of reality is available for everyone to access and that rejection of this knowledge results in immorality, which subsequently results in the inability of the human soul to develop towards enlightenment. Furthermore, the Christian-Platonic themes that arise over the course of *Mere Christianity* are indicative of the themes that are present in Lewis’s other popular works. As such, an understanding of the Platonic context of these themes, as discussed in this chapter, is central to understanding the metaphysical and moral context surrounding the texts to be discussed in subsequent chapters. Chapter Five of this thesis, then, will discuss the Platonic context surrounding Lewis’s approach to love. This chapter will show the moral importance of recognising the dualist nature of reality and further establish that this knowledge alone is insufficient to morality and that it must be embraced in a practical way. Lewis’s views on love, particularly in *The Four Loves* and *Till We Have Faces*, will be used as an example to show this.
Chapter Five – Platonic Influences on Lewis’s Conception of Love

In this chapter I will examine the ways that Lewis’s conception of love was influenced by Platonism by showing how Lewis’s texts *The Four Loves* and *Till We Have Faces* repeat the position that recognition and acceptance of the intelligible nature of reality is central to morality. I will show how Lewis follows Plato’s theory that reality can only be observed with the intelligible mind. The use of love as an example here suggests that in the mind of the post-conversion Lewis, practical applications of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature is essential to morality and that merely possessing this knowledge is insufficient to constitute morality. This is supported by the use of love as an example due to the role that love takes on a daily basis in the lives of human beings. In this chapter, then, I will examine *The Four Loves* and *Till We Have Faces* and explore the influences of Platonic metaphysics and *The Symposium* on these texts. To this end, I will also show that Plato’s ladder analogy, as presented in *The Symposium*, confirms the morality inherent in accepting true nature of reality.

Part One: Types of Love

*The Four Loves* evidences correlations between Lewis’s views of love and Platonism.\(^{308}\) Before undertaking my discussion of the way Lewis’s conception of love reflect his Platonism, an understanding of the distinction Lewis makes between what he calls “need love” and “gift love” is important. Lewis explains that "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 for which he will die without sharing or seeing".\(^{309}\) Of need-love, Lewis explains that “we are born helpless” and that it is because of this state that “we need others physically, emotionally, intellectually”.\(^{310}\) So we can see that there is a clear distinction between acts of selfless giving that holds no expectation of receiving anything in return, and states of need.

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\(^{308}\) Ibid. p.3


\(^{310}\) Ibid. p.2
that highlight those types of things that are vital to everyday living. Strauss discusses the role of this in Plato, explaining that in Eros love there exists the distinction between needs, as epitomised in sexual union, and the self-sacrifice that Lewis describes as characterising gift-love, examples of which can include a parent dying for the well-being of their offspring. These ideas repeat the conception of love as presented in Plato's *Symposium* when Diotima says to Socrates

> Haven't you noticed what a terrible state animals of all kinds... get into when they feel the desire to reproduce. They are all sick with the excitement of love, that makes them first want to have sex with each other and then to rear what they have brought into being. Even the weakest of animals are ready to fight with the strongest and die for the sake of their young; they are prepared to be racked with hunger themselves in order to provide food for their young, and to do anything else for them.

Further to this, we can see the Christian influence on Lewis’s philosophy here as he elaborates by stating that need-love is by no means the only type of love humans can offer God and that gift-love is not limited to God alone. He does, however, caution “those few exalted souls” whose lives are informed by gift-love not to believe that they are able to exist solely on such “heights” and accordingly they must give equal attention to their physical needs. Thus, Lewis stresses the importance of recognising both the material and the incorporeal aspects of reality. We can see also that this position in the context of love has a practical application which was absent in the pre-conversion *Spirits in Bondage*. With need-love and gift-love as an example, we can see that it is insufficient simply to recognise the distinction between the two. Love, in this instance, has a practical application which is fundamental to its operation. For example, the action of giving in some manner is fundamental to the definition of gift-love. If the action is absent then gift-love ceases to be gift-love. Thus, we can see that for the post-conversion Lewis, morality stems from a practical application of the knowledge that reality is dually comprised of the material and the incorporeal.

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312 Ibid. pp.218-219  
Lewis comments further on need-love. On page three of *The Four Loves* Lewis says that need is not entirely selfish, after all “lack of appetite is a bad medical symptom because men do really need food”.316 Dulles argues that this is the cusp of our transcendence to attaining a state in which agape love can manifest, pointing out that “if we did not receive, we would have nothing to give; and if we were not disposed to give, we would be spiritually unprepared to receive”.317 Again, we can see how the knowledge of the intelligible nature of reality demands a practical application in the post-conversion Lewis.

Likewise, Strauss points out that in *The Symposium* the character Eryximachus discusses the role of medicine and healthy and diseased bodies, arguing that it is “noble” to utilise medicine to care for the body and maintain its health.318 As Strauss suggests, “in medicine it is noble to satisfy love felt for what is healthy in the body”.319 Dulles supports this reading, explaining that from a Christian perspective “the body... is separated from the spirit and reduced to the status of a thing to be exploited at will. Quite different, however, is the idea of Eros that prevailed in classical philosophy, including in Plato”.320 We can understand from Eryximachus that this reinforces the importance of a practical application of the knowledge. In the context of love, this also shows love for that which is good for the human condition, because ultimately a healthy body is preferable to a diseased one, therefore it is good to act in such a way that would preserve the health of the body.321 For Plato, this is what love signifies; a desire to possess that which is good.322

The idea of goodness in the physical body also has a role in *Mere Christianity* in which Lewis explains that advancement to the higher dimensions does not necessarily imply physical death, as was discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.323 In his explanation, Lewis states that we can advance by retaining that which we have gained on the lower

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316 Lewis, *The Four Loves*.p.4  
317 Dulles, ‘Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis’, p.21  
320 Dulles, ‘Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis’, p.21  
dimensional levels, and we do not need to relinquish our physical lives, as would be necessary if we completely forego our physical needs. In The Four Loves Lewis writes in confirmation of this; “the highest,’ says the Imitation, ‘does not stand without the lowest’”. Incidentally, the reference to “imitation” as the figure who is speaking can be identified as Platonic when one views it in the context that the sensible is an imperfect copy of the Form and thus is an imitation of that archetype. In addition to this, the reference to the highest and the lowest might also be considered a reference to the distinction between the material and the incorporeal. Materialism alone, as has been established, is morally questionable and thus is considered to be the “lowest”. As Friedlander says, “there is a path to knowledge leading upward through predetermined stages... to the higher and highest forms of knowledge”. In context of this hierarchy Lewis later returns to the quotation with respect to highest and lowest in The Four Loves, this time qualifying it; “since ‘the highest does not stand without the lowest’ we had better begin at the bottom, with mere likings”. Likings, then, might be associated with the base desires typically associated with the material aspects of reality, also acknowledging hierarchical structure. Strauss supports this by saying "it is base to satisfy love felt for what is sick in the body", So just as Plato discusses the sensible aspect of reality and the intelligible aspect of reality that exists beyond the parameters of sensible observation, so too does Lewis. I will discuss this further in Part Two of this chapter.

To further this discussion, Lewis offers an additional analogy; "a plant must have roots below as well as sunlight above and roots must be grubby". The choice of wording here is significant to identifying the Platonic context that influenced Lewis's work.
Foremost, the reference to sunlight is a reference to the role of sunlight in Plato’s cave parable. The prisoner in Plato’s story, who has been released from his chains, journeys out of the cave and toward the sunlight which his eyesight must then adjust to. This refers to the process of enlightenment in terms of adjusting to true reality after having existed solely within the material aspects of reality. We can see that this has evolutionary value because the knowledge of true reality enhances our understanding of the world and our ability to function as intelligible creatures, and thus we are closer to becoming enlightened.

In addition to the sunlight imagery, the image of the flower having needs from the darkness beneath the ground as well as the sunlight above the ground represents the dualist reality that is also true of Plato’s cave parable. In Plato’s parable there is the darkened shadowy world within the cave and the bright sunlit world outside the cave. Finally, the phrase “roots must be grubby” can be taken as an acknowledgement of the imperfect nature of the sensible and that the sunlit world in the parable, which is characteristic of the world of Forms, is perfect by comparison. Furthermore, the idea that both the “grubby roots” and sunlight are necessary to the survival of the flower suggests acknowledgement that reality is dually comprised of that which is material and that which is spiritual and that to lack knowledge of either of these results in moral deficiency.

334 A.S. Ferguson, 'Plato’s Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', The Classical Quarterly, 16/1 (1922), pp.15-28 & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.p.280, section 516
In elaborating the distinction between need-love and gift-love, Lewis explains that “need-love, as Plato saw, is the son of poverty”.\textsuperscript{340} Poverty typically indicates a state of being in which there is a deficiency of the fundamentals required for human life.\textsuperscript{341} Given that Lewis has claimed that need-love is typical of this type of deficiency, we can understand that for him this represents a lack of something fundamental.\textsuperscript{342} Plato makes the same claim.\textsuperscript{343} In the \textit{Symposium}, Socrates explains his views on love, stating that it is characterised by desire which indicates lack, the reason being that when you desire something, or someone, you feel a need to have something that is not currently in your possession, namely that you lack it.\textsuperscript{344}

> 'When he desires and loves, does he have in his possession what he desires and loves or not?' 'He doesn't – at least probably not,' he said. 'Think about it,' Socrates said. 'Surely it's not just probable but necessary that desire is directed at something you need and that if you don’t need something you don’t desire it?'\textsuperscript{345}

Not only does this remark emphasise that love as desire is characterised by a lack of that which is the object of one's affection, it also points toward this as an aspect of what Lewis calls need-love.\textsuperscript{346} It is clear that Lewis has adopted this reasoning in his extrapolation of the meanings inherent in need-love.

With respect to lack in context of desire, as it is portrayed in \textit{The Symposium}, we can see that there is a particular emphasis on lack in terms of love, which, in turn, offers insights into the perceived importance in the role that love plays.\textsuperscript{347} Plato states in \textit{The Symposium} that “love was a great god”.\textsuperscript{348} Additionally, Lewis also makes comments in \textit{The Four Loves} which suggest that love is an integral part of our lives. He states that “without Eros none of us would have been begotten and without Affection none of us would have been reared; but we can live and breed without Friendship”.\textsuperscript{349} The idea that two of these types of love are

\textsuperscript{340} Lewis, \textit{The Four Loves}.p.2
\textsuperscript{344} Plato, \textit{The Symposium}.p.42
\textsuperscript{345} Ibid.p.42
\textsuperscript{346} Dulles, 'Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis', p.24 & Field, \textit{The Philosophy of Plato}.p.122
\textsuperscript{347} Plato, \textit{The Symposium}.p.42
\textsuperscript{348} Friedlander, \textit{Plato - an Introduction}.p.46 & Plato, \textit{The Symposium}.p.45
\textsuperscript{349} Dulles, 'Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis', p.21 & Lewis, \textit{The Four Loves}.p.70
essential to our basic existence reiterates the importance that love has in this context. While the statement “but we can live and breed without Friendship” also suggests that although friendship is not necessarily vital to human existence it implies that other types of love do hold such importance. The concept of lack in terms of love, then, points toward a basic deficiency of something that is held to be vital to the condition of human life. As Friedlander points out “they do not designate complete being, but rather aspects, movements, and powers leading toward such being”. This also reiterates the importance of recognising the dual material-incorporeal nature of reality and accentuates the practical role that this knowledge should take on in order to allow the human condition to flourish.

Another example of Platonic influence on Lewis’s position in *The Four Loves* concerns particulars and universals. Tarnas points out “Plato taught that what is perceived as a particular object in the world can best be understood as a concrete expression of a more fundamental Idea”. This theory promotes the notion that objects embody a property whereas the property itself is not limited only to the specific instance in question.

One of Plato’s critics once stated, “I see particular horses, but not horseness.” Plato answered, “That is because you have eyes but no intelligence.” The archetypal Horse, which gives form to all horses, is to Plato a more fundamental reality than the particular horses, which are merely specific instances of the Horse, embodiments of that Form.

In this context, Lewis describes the English affinity for nature. “I mean here that love of nature which cannot be adequately classified simply as an instance of our love for beauty”. Tarnas comments on the Platonic view of this, saying that “beauty is only an attribute of the particular, not its essence”. This statement is important in that it immediately draws attention to that which cannot solely be understood in throught the

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352 Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, p.6
353 Ibid.p.7-8
354 Ibid.p.8
355 Lewis, *The Four Loves*, p.22
356 Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, p.6
individual instance and it also implies that something exists that is superior to individual instance. Lewis draws his position from this theory. He writes that Of course many natural objects – trees, flowers and animals – are beautiful. But the nature-lovers whom I have in mind are not very much concerned with individual beautiful objects of that sort. The man who is distracts them... he is always stopping to draw their attention to particulars... While you are busying yourself with this critical and discriminating activity you lose what really matters – the 'moods of time and season', the 'spirit' of the place... Nature-lovers want to receive as fully whatever nature... is, so to speak, saying. Here Lewis makes the distinction between individual instances, or particulars, that exist within nature and the universal Form of nature. From his assertion that the 'man' who is concerned with "individual beautiful objects" is distracted and distracting, it becomes clear that he views the universal "spirit" of nature to be both superior and perfect in comparison with the beauty in individual instance, as does Plato. This notion is, in essence, central to an understanding of the theory of Forms in that the Form, which is universal, is greater than the individual instances that comprise the sensible, thereby contributing to the perfection inherent in the Forms. As Tarnas says, “the essential factor in the event is the archetype, and it is this level that carries the deepest meaning”. Lewis makes this same point in suggesting that individual instances in nature alone are inferior to the universal "mood" and "spirit" that is embodied by nature.

Lewis's use of beauty in the example he chooses to use also mirrors Platonism in that Plato holds beauty to be the highest good. In The Symposium Plato describes, through Socrates, the disparity between the beauty of physical things and the beauty of the Forms, holding that “beauty in general and... individual instances” are not comparable.

358 Lewis, The Four Loves.p.22
359 Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View:p.6
360 Yancey, 'Hearing the World in a Higher Key', pp.25-28
361 Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View:p.6
362 Yancey, 'Hearing the World in a Higher Key', p.27
364 Plato, The Symposium.p.60
means that there is a distinction in the nature of universals and individual instances, representing two very different aspects of reality, making it inappropriate to compare the two.\textsuperscript{365} Lewis makes the same assertion in stating that the nature-lover who only appreciates individual instances are a distraction for the nature-lover who seeks to appreciate the beauty inherent in nature as a whole; that is, the universal.\textsuperscript{366} We can see that both Plato and Lewis speak of particulars; that is, individual instances and universals in the points that they seek to make. Likewise, both Lewis and Plato suggest that universals are superior to particulars. To attain enlightenment, then, there must be recognition of both the empirically observable particulars and the incorporeal universal.\textsuperscript{367} Tarnas supports this, writing that “Plato directs the philosopher’s attention away from the external and concrete, from taking things at face value, and points ‘deeper’ and ‘inward,’ so that one may ‘awaken’ to a more profound level of reality”.\textsuperscript{368}

Finally, it is important to point out that Lewis’s method of exploring love corresponds with the structure that is adopted in Plato’s Symposium.\textsuperscript{369} In The Four Loves, Lewis extrapolates his understanding of love through exploring the various types that love can manifest in and the characteristics that are typical of these types.\textsuperscript{370} This kind of extrapolation corresponds with the Symposium in which a group of characters each present a speech through which they explain what their understanding of love is.\textsuperscript{371} Gould emphasises this connection when he affirms that both Lewis and Plato have embarked on the task of differentiating between the different types of love.\textsuperscript{372} Through these speeches, Plato shows an acceptance of the existence of different types and expressions that love can

\textsuperscript{365} Strauss, On Plato’s Symposium.p.232
\textsuperscript{368} Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View.p.8
\textsuperscript{369} Gould, Platonic Love.p.3
\textsuperscript{370} Wood, ‘Love’s Sacred Order: The Four Loves Revisited’,
\textsuperscript{371} Gould, Platonic Love.p.3
\textsuperscript{372} Ibid.p.3
“Plato does not have a comprehensive theory of love. Rather, he diverts certain received opinions about love to his own peculiarly philosophic ends”. Given the manner in which both Lewis and Plato approach the topic, we can see that there is a predisposition toward Platonism on Lewis’s part.

Lewis begins *The Four Loves* by separating love into two different categories. As noted above, these are “need love” and “gift love”. These categories are further broken down into four types; friendship, affection, Eros and charity. Lewis explains the characteristics of each type in order to advance the reader’s understanding of the types of love. What is first noteworthy is that Lewis mentions the Greek roots of some of the different types. For example, he explains that affection is derived from the Greek “Storge”, friendship “Philia” and “Eros”. Lewis begins by explaining that “the Greeks called this love Storge... I shall here simply call it affection” and he continues on to cite the Greek Lexicon. Likewise, in the *The Four Loves* in which he discusses friendship, Lewis makes direct reference to “Philia” in order to show what it is he is responding to. We can see from Lewis’s acknowledgment of the Greek sources of these terms that he evidences a predisposition towards the Greek understanding of love.

With respect to the correspondences between the actual types of love mentioned by both Lewis and Plato, several things can be noted. In the speech delivered by the character Pausanias in *The Symposium*, we can observe the distinction Lewis also makes between “common love” and “heavenly love” (eros, or lust based, love and unconditional charitable love in Lewis’s terminology). During this explanation, Pausanias speaks of the difference between love affairs which predominantly serve the individuals’ base desires, and the type of love that reflects what Plato refers to as the “heavenly goddess”.

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373 Ferrari, ‘Platonic Love’. p.248
374 Ibid. p.248
375 Dulles, ‘Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis’, p.24
376 Ibid. p.21 & 23
378 Lewis, *The Four Loves*:p.39
380 Dulles, ‘Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis’, p.21 & 23
Lewis makes reference to charity as a type of love. This is discussed with frequent reference to the Christian God. Lewis also frequently refers to the Christian God in context of gift-love, as described above, and it is in this context that Godly love is thought of as charitable because it does not request anything in return.\footnote{Dulles, ‘Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis’, p.24 & Lewis, The Four Loves, p.153} As God represents the epitome of gift-love, He also represents a form of love which corresponds with Pausanias’s notion of the highest type of love as being akin to the “heavenly goddess”.\footnote{Ferrari, ‘Platonic Love’, pp. 248-249 & Plato, The Symposium, p.14} In both Lewis and Plato the type of love referred to is embodied by a divine being and explained as being distinct from other types of love, supporting the view that both Lewis and Plato place importance not only in the idea of a distinction between types of love but that there exists a hierarchy within those types as well.\footnote{Gould, Platonic Love, p.3 & 35}

I have already discussed the notion of love as desire (which implies lack).\footnote{Ibid. p.66} It is noteworthy that Lewis’s conception of Eros suggests that same lack is inherent in desire. Lewis likens Eros to need-love.\footnote{Lewis, The Four Loves, p.115} As said previously, this stems from the idea that we desire that which we do not have, just as we desire water when we are thirsty.\footnote{Ferrari, ‘Platonic Love’, p.252} “Love, after all, is desire, and to desire is not yet to have”.\footnote{Ibid. p.252} In the speech given by Agathon in The Symposium it is claimed that “everyone turns into a poet... when he is touched by love”.\footnote{Plato, The Symposium, p.37} This is meant in the context that love instils creative inspiration.\footnote{Strauss, On Plato’s Symposium, p.201} Lewis discusses the same prospect in The Four Loves. “There is indeed at certain moments a high poetry”.\footnote{Lewis, The Four Loves, p.124} This statement follows a repetition of the statement that “the highest does not stand without the lowest” and is further explained as being the companion of “unpoetry”.\footnote{Ibid.} By this, Lewis refers to those emotionally painful moments that can make love seem less than appealing.\footnote{Ibid.} There is a correspondence, then, between Lewis’s thoughts and elements of the speeches given by...
Agathon in the sense that both acknowledge the creative arts, particularly poetry, as being a by-product of love, or even a characteristic of it.

Following this, Lewis can be seen to acknowledge the beliefs of the character Alcibiades who argues in *The Symposium* that love is rarely separable from misery and disappointment.

The subject of love and pain is central to Lewis's philosophy and from this it is clear that he did not allow the "poetic" aspect of love to be the sole influence on his academic work on the subject. Pain also has a presence, as we can see in *A Grief Observed*. In *A Grief Observed*, Lewis details his feelings following the death of his wife. These include feelings such as the impression of having a door slammed in his face by God, which posed a significant challenge for Lewis's Christian faith. In *The Four Loves* Lewis explains that Eros love is characterised by the feeling that even when a relationship cannot bring happiness, those involved often prefer to stay in that relationship than to part. "Better to be miserable with her than happy without her. Let our hearts break provided they break together". This suggests that Lewis perceives it to be a common occurrence in Eros love for individuals to experience more misery in choosing to pursue an imagined happiness within their relationship than to experience the trauma of ending a bad relationship. In *The Symposium*, Alcibiades holds the same notions. Alcibiades recalls a memory for the group in which he experienced rejection at the hands of a desired lover and says that "my experience is that of someone bitten by a snake". His experience with unrequited love immediately makes it clear that he ascribes to a theory of love in which pain is central, as opposed to happiness and "poetry".

There are also correlations between Lewis's thoughts and Eryximachus' speech in *The Symposium*. Eryximachus argues for an understanding of love that is primarily

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398 Lewis, *The Four Loves*.p.130
399 Kelly, 'The Sense of an Ending', p.2378
400 Plato, *The Symposium*.p.71
metaphysical in nature rather than based on feeling.\textsuperscript{402} In response to this notion, Lewis writes that "this love is really and truly like Love Himself. In it there is a real nearness to God".\textsuperscript{403} We can see from this that Lewis finds truth in Eryximachus’ argument. Both agree that love is not simply that which is embodied in material instance (that is, in physical pleasures or in material objects that make life more comfortable) but rather that love is a metaphysical force, akin to the gift-love exuded by the Christian God (as is Lewis’s assertion).\textsuperscript{404} To compare love with this type of God, as I have shown is the case in Lewis’s thoughts in this instance and in \textit{The Symposium}, can offer an understanding of unconditional love as being separate from, and superior, to that which is material in nature.\textsuperscript{405}

\textbf{Part Two: Levels of Love}

In this part of the chapter I will show how elements of Lewis’s philosophy were influenced by Plato’s “ladder” analogy as described by Socrates in \textit{The Symposium} who recalls a conversation with Diotima of Mantinea.\textsuperscript{406} The ladder analogy is intended to communicate important insights with respect to the movement from that which is earthly in nature to that which is divine – or spiritual as is Lewis’s term for this.\textsuperscript{407} Strauss explains that “the eros of the beautiful leads to transcending the beautiful”.\textsuperscript{408} In \textit{The Symposium} this is also explained with respect to beauty.\textsuperscript{409} In terms of love, then, as is the purpose of \textit{The Symposium}, we can see that the analogy of the ladder depicts the concept of movement toward divine and immortal love.\textsuperscript{410} This love, furthermore, is the product of beauty (which is the example used in \textit{The Symposium}) because Plato holds the Form of beauty to be the highest good and, as a result, occupying the place at the top of the ladder. "This is the right method of approaching

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Lewis, \textit{The Four Loves}.p.133
\item Gould, \textit{Platonic Love}.p.6
\item Ferrari, 'Platonic Love'.p.251 & 257
\item Plato, \textit{The Symposium}.p.45
\item Strauss, \textit{On Plato’s Symposium}.p.241
\item Plato, \textit{The Symposium}.pp.60-62
\item Dulles, 'Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis’, p.24 & Plato, \textit{The Symposium}.p.60
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the ways of love... beginning from these beautiful things always to go up with the aim of reaching that beauty”.411

As a Christian, Lewis emphasised recognition of the spiritual in addition to the material as being central to the well-being of the human condition.412 He particularly emphasises this in *The Four Loves* in his discussion of need-love. Despite the fact that Lewis stresses the dangers of needs that are unnecessarily excessive (Lewis terms refers to this as an addiction), he also stresses the importance of remembering that, despite this, some needs are necessary for physical survival.413 Thus, the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature must have a practical application in order to ensure that human beings are not subject to physical death.

Lewis also suggests that love is embodied by the Christian God.414 The connotations of moral goodness that surround the Christian God implies that Lewis views this love as embodying the highest good just as Plato refers to love as a god in *The Symposium*.415 Lewis's use of God as an example also mirrors Plato's notion of love as the highest good, being that it is immortal and inherently perfect.416 Lewis's emphasis on the divine as being a manifestation of this type of love supports the view that Christianity had a significant influence on his development as a Platonist.417

Lewis discusses love with respect to the Christian God on two occasions in *The Four Loves*. In discussing gift-love and charity-love he attempts to extrapolate the kind of love that is inherent in, and embodied by, the Christian God.418 The first point that Lewis makes is with respect to the nature of God. Considering that God is “blessed, omnipotent, sovereign and creative” then it can be hypothesised that the type of love exuded by such a being is

412 Yancey, ’Hearing the World in a Higher Key’, p.28
413 Lewis, *The Four Loves*.p.3
414 Dulles, ’Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis’, p.24
418 Dulles, ’Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis’, p.24
similarly superior. The nature of this love is explained in the context of gift-love which is contrasted with need-love. Lewis is careful to explain that while gift-love is typical of God, need-love is typical of human beings, thus accentuating the distinction between love that has its basis in the material and love which has its basis in the spiritual. This is especially true when we look at the difference between types of love that serve physical needs and desires and types of love that appear to serve a spiritual purpose, which we can see at work in both Lewis and Plato.

The connection between Lewis and Platonism is also reflected in that both refer to love as the embodiment of a god. This suggests that this type of love possesses a quality not found in the material aspect of reality that is occupied by human beings. Lewis describes this difference as “a silly woman’s temporary indulgence, which is really self-indulgence, to a spoiled child – her living doll while the fit lasts – is much less likely to ‘become a god’ than the deep, narrow devotion of a woman who (quite really) ‘lives for her son’”. This demonstrates an acknowledgement that there is a distinction between need-love and gift-love. Gift-love, then, appears to have particular importance in that it comprises the essence of true love. Further to this, Lewis states that "our loves do not make their claim to divinity until the claim becomes plausible". This repeats the distinction that Plato makes between appearance and reality. The reference to plausibility suggests that the early stages of moral development, in which materialism is dominant, are not indicative of reality and thus moral development cannot take place. We can see this at work in context

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421 Gould, *Platonic Love* p.3
423 Yancey, 'Hearing the World in a Higher Key', p.25
424 Lewis, *The Four Loves* p.8-9
426 Lewis, *The Four Loves* p.9
428 Dulles, 'Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis', p.24 & Yancey, 'Hearing the World in a Higher Key', p.28
of love. Love can perhaps be considered as divine when it is coloured by such actions that confirm professed sentiments rather than a given confession by a “lover” that is not followed by any action or behaviour that demonstrates the confession to be true.\textsuperscript{429} Thus we can also see that a morally good expression of love requires practical expression of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature.

We can also see this same idea at work in Lewis’s analogy concerning nature lovers, as discussed in Part One. As stated previously this analogy details the distinction between individuals who are solely interested in individual instances within nature, for example a particular tree or flower, and those who appreciate nature in its entirety and wish to experience the “spirit” or “essence” that characterises nature.\textsuperscript{430} Not only does this example demonstrate the difference between particulars and universals, as explained previously, but this analogy also demonstrates the distinction between the sensible and the Form, using nature as an example.\textsuperscript{431} In this case, the individual instance of a tree, or a flower, constitutes a copy or example of the archetype or essence that embodies all trees, or flowers.\textsuperscript{432}

In this context we can see that Lewis has again made a clear reference to there being two distinct aspects of reality.\textsuperscript{433} Lewis suggests that people have a tendency to not only manifest a type of love that is materialistic in nature, but also recognise the essence that constitutes unconditional love. Lewis labels the lover of individual instance as a “distraction” and in so doing clearly shows that a love of the “spirit” of nature is of higher importance than that of individual instance.\textsuperscript{434} We can see this at work in Plato’s \textit{Symposium} in that the ladder analogy displays these aspects of reality in a hierarchical structure.\textsuperscript{435} The Form of beauty occupies the top of the ladder and it is this that all other expressions of

\textsuperscript{430} Lewis, \textit{The Four Loves}.pp.22-23
\textsuperscript{431} Tarnas, \textit{The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View}.pp.6-9
\textsuperscript{432} Ibid.pp.6-9
beauty are intended to lead toward. The concept of a hierarchy has importance here. The portrayal of the sensible attributes of beauty as occupying the bottom-most rungs of the ladder and the Form of beauty occupying the top-most rungs of the ladder clearly emphasises the sentiment that the Forms are hierarchically superior to the sensible. This is also expressed in the idea that one is encouraged to move up the ladder and away from the rungs at the bottom. The bottom rungs of the ladder do retain importance however. They are necessary in order to move upward because one cannot climb to the top of the ladder unless there are rungs at the bottom to step on.

Lewis acknowledges this necessity in his theory of the three dimensions in Mere Christianity. In this theory Lewis also describes the process of movement from acknowledging one aspect of reality, one dimension, to another. In this case, the individual moves from a simplistic and basic dimension towards one that is much more complex and therefore a greater indication of reality. Lewis also acknowledges the importance of the first dimension in his assertion that individuals have the capacity to retain that which they gained on the two lower dimensions as they move toward the third dimension. Therefore, we can see that both Lewis again demonstrates the Platonic concept of a hierarchy that suggest that a knowledge of the dualist nature of reality is morally superior to only possessing knowledge of the material aspect of reality.

The ladder analogy is explained in The Symposium by Diotima, as recounted by Socrates. You begin at the bottom of the ladder and work your way to the top with each rung on the ladder representing a different level. The first level, and lowest on the ladder,
refers to individual instance. Plato describes this as the act of loving only one “body”.448 That is, the physical incarnation of one individual human being.449 From this the realisation grows that the beauty inherent in this particular “body” can be related to the beauty of other “bodies”, meaning that all people have the capacity to possess beauty.450 This extends into a love of all beautiful “bodies”, thus steering feelings away from a love of one particular individual.451 Here, the emphasis on physical beauty, particularly in the individual instance, is lessened and the turn is to an appreciation of the beauty of the mind which grows into a preference for intellectual beauty over physical beauty.452 This love of beauty of the mind opens the way toward a love of beauty in the socio-political arena, with respect to laws and accepted social practices.453 At this rung on the ladder there has been an experience of various types of beauty with begins to give rise to an understanding that all types of beauty are related in one way or another, and that any regard solely for physical beauty is not only unimportant but “petty”.454

This naturally leads toward a love of the beauty that is inherent in forms of knowledge and then subsequently on a widespread or universal level.455 Beauty in individual instances is no longer considered to be of importance and any attachment to a particular person is extinguished.456 Plato here explains through Socrates, who relates Diotima’s words:

In that form of life... if in any, human life should be lived, gazing on beauty itself. If you ever saw that, it would seem to be on a different level from gold and clothes and beautiful boys and young men. At present you’re so overwhelmed when you see these that you’re, together with many others, to look at your boyfriends and be with them forever, if that was somehow possible, doing without food and drink and doing nothing but gazing at them and being with them. So what should we imagine it would be like... if someone could see beauty itself, absolute, pure, unmixed, not cluttered up with human flesh and colours and a great mass of mortal rubbish, but if he could catch sight of divine beauty itself, in its single form?457

449 Ferrari, ‘Platonic Love’.p.256
452 Ferrari, 'Platonic Love'.p.257 & Plato, The Symposium.p.60
454 Plato, The Symposium.p.60
456 Plato, The Symposium.p.60
457 Ibid.pp.61-62
As we can see, there is a clear distinction between types of beauty and the perfection inherent in the Form and it is this that is emphasised as being that which love should strive for rather than remaining enamoured with the trappings of love that exists in the sensible aspect of reality.\textsuperscript{458} Again, we can see that Lewis makes the same point in his nature-lover analogy.\textsuperscript{459} Clearly, Lewis displays an acknowledgement of, and support of, this concept. The nature-lover who appreciates the "spirit and mood" of nature and finds interest in individual instance to be a distraction demonstrates an emphasis on the importance of the Form as opposed to the sensible.\textsuperscript{460}

Also corroborating the argument that Lewis continues to emanate Platonic principles in this context is his statement concerning the Pagan belief that the physical body is the “tomb of the soul”.\textsuperscript{461} This belief system emphasises a dualist understanding of the human person that holds the body and the soul to be separate entities. This is evident in the idea that one of those entities, the body, has the capacity to confine the other and that without such confinement the soul would have the ability to exist independently.\textsuperscript{462} For example, Lewis writes of Plato’s influence on the development of creationist theories and states that “it is not ordinary Pagan religion” and that Plato’s thoughts concerning the sun and its associated theological connotations are “in sharp contrast to ordinary Paganism”.\textsuperscript{463} As we can see from this, it appears that Lewis acknowledges Plato to be Pagan and that he saw Plato as revolutionising Pagan theological tenets. It is also evident in \textit{Reflections on the Psalms} that Lewis admits to Paganism as having had a powerful influence on him, which shows in his statement that “there is a Pagan, savage heart in me somewhere”.\textsuperscript{464} Thus, we can see that elements of both Lewis’s conceptions of love and theology have clear influences

\textsuperscript{458} Ferrari, ‘Platonic Love’.pp.258-259 & Plato, \textit{The Symposium}.pp.60-61
\textsuperscript{459} Tarnas, \textit{The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View}.pp.6-7
\textsuperscript{460} Lewis, \textit{The Four Loves}.p.22
\textsuperscript{461} Ibid.p.122 & Willis, \textit{Pleasures Forevermore: The Theology of C.S. Lewis}.pp.65-66
\textsuperscript{462} Tarnas, \textit{The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View}.p.44
\textsuperscript{463} Lewis, \textit{Reflections on the Psalms}.p.69 & 74
\textsuperscript{464} Ibid.p.83
in aspects of the theological tenets he associates with the Ancient Greeks, with Plato often being cited in the examples of Paganism that Lewis gives in his writing.465

Platonic influence on Lewis’s thought is also evident in his explanation of what he names the sky father and the earth mother as respectively representing Form and matter.466 Lewis claims that these are each masculine and feminine aspects of eros love and his assertion that each of these characteristics respectively represents Form and matter suggests that Platonic metaphysics is central to Lewis’s understanding of love.467

Lewis goes on to say that “neither the Platonic... type of erotic transcendentalism can help a Christian. We are not worshippers of the Life Force... Neither must we ignore or attempt to deny the god-like quality. This love is really and truly like Love Himself. In it there is a real nearness to God”.468 Wood supports this, arguing that a love with "supreme likeness to divine love" would have the possibility of becoming a “tyrannical power” which arises from the experience of a feeling that it is absolute.469 Lewis’s statement that “neither must we ignore or attempt to deny the god-like quality”, then, might be taken as implying that it is important to retain attention on the material aspect of reality.470 From this we can see that Lewis places considerable emphasis on the need to embrace Platonic ideals in order to allow his faith as a Christian to be strengthened. This is confirmed by his following statement that “total commitment is a paradigm or example, built into our natures, of the love we ought to exercise towards God and Man”.471 Thus we can see that Lewis upholds the importance of recognising and accepting that reality is dualist in nature.

In addition, the emphasis Lewis places on “love Himself” can be shown to have importance. In using this type of expression, Lewis has personified love and the use of a capital H suggests that he is referring to it as a divine entity in the same manner to which

466 Lewis, The Four Loves.p.125
468 Lewis, The Four Loves.p.133
469 Wood, ‘Love’s Sacred Order: The Four Loves Revisited’,
470 Ferrari, ‘Platonic Love’.p.259
471 Lewis, The Four Loves.p.133
the Christian God is commonly referred (with the use of capital letters). This also suggests that there is a correlation between Lewis's conception of eros love and Plato's assertion in the first speech in *The Symposium* that love is a Goddess.\(^{472}\)

It is also important to note, however, that Lewis does extensively discuss the flaws that are also associated with Eros love and that the fact alone it lacks the infallible and perfect nature that is inherent in God.

Love and beauty have an important connection for Plato.\(^{473}\) In *The Symposium* Plato uses the ladder analogy in order to show that the Form of beauty is the highest good. Thus, by relinquishing the importance we place solely on sensible manifestations of beauty in order to pursue this Form, love can be attained, as is evident in "this is the right method of approaching the ways of love".\(^{474}\) This is also acknowledged by Lewis in *Till We Have Faces*.\(^{475}\)

*Till We Have Faces* is Lewis's retelling of the "myth" concerning Eros and Psyche which details the love relationship between a mortal woman and a god.\(^{476}\) Lewis's version of the myth is told from the perspective of Psyche's sister, Orual, as an attempt to show her side of the story.\(^{477}\) Simply put, the story explains that Psyche is beautiful and Orual is not.\(^{478}\) Orual feels an obsessive love for her sister and when Psyche is taken away by the god of the mountain (representative of Eros) to live in a beautiful castle, Orual feels that her sister has been stolen from her and journeys to the castle in an attempt to rescue her.\(^{479}\) In the story, Psyche had been forbidden by her god-husband to look at him. Orual, however, convinces Psyche to disobey and look upon him for fear that her sister had married a monster.\(^{480}\) The god of the mountain banishes Psyche for her betrayal and thereafter she is condemned to

\(^{472}\) Dulles, 'Love, the Pope, and C.S. Lewis', pp.23-24
\(^{473}\) Ibid. p.60
\(^{474}\) Ibid. p.61
\(^{479}\) Ibid. & Lewis, *Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold*.p.85
\(^{480}\) Lewis, *Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold*.p.124 & 175
performing a series of gruelling tasks by the goddess Ungit (Aphrodite in Greek).\textsuperscript{481} Orual has a series of dreams that allow her to see the tasks that her sister has had to perform, as told in the original myth.\textsuperscript{482} Orual later realises that her love for her sister was not unconditional as she had initially thought, but possessive and driven by jealousy and it is through this realisation that she is then able to reconcile with Psyche.\textsuperscript{483}

There are a number of elements in Lewis's version of the myth that correlate with Platonism.\textsuperscript{484} The first obvious correlation is that of the relationship between the mortal Psyche and Eros, the god of the mountain, which represents the physical and intelligible aspects of reality, which also exist at opposing ends of Plato's ladder.\textsuperscript{485} In Till We Have Faces, a relationship between human and divine is shown that has a number of consequences. Initially, the union between human and divine is frowned upon. “For any daughter of our house to mix, even in lawful marriage, with those who have not... divine descent, is an utter abomination”.\textsuperscript{486} There are also ramifications in that Psyche is initially influenced more greatly by the mortal, materialistic, love of her sister than the divine love of her husband.\textsuperscript{487} Psyche is banished as an outcast as a result of her betrayal.\textsuperscript{488} As we can see, the preference for the mortal over the divine has had negative consequences, just as in Plato's ladder there is an emphasis on the imperfection that is inherent in the physical aspect of reality and that the immortal Form should be embraced instead.\textsuperscript{489} Lewis reinforces the importance of Plato's mandate through his emphasis on the consequences that result when Psyche chooses to follow her mortal sister's instructions instead of those given to her by her god-husband.\textsuperscript{490} We can also see here that the practical application of knowledge of the true nature of reality must reflect reality's dualism. In this instance, for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{481} Ibid.p.182 & pp.308-317
\item \textsuperscript{482} Ibid.pp.251-256, pp.280-281 & pp.294-295
\item \textsuperscript{483} Dorman, 'The Cosmology of Error: Mark Twain, C.S. Lewis and Johannes Kepler in Literary Trilogue',
\item \textsuperscript{484} Elgin, 'True and False Myth in C.S. Lewis's "Till We Have Faces"', p.101
\item \textsuperscript{485} Chennell, 'Till We Have Faces by C.S. Lewis', p.67 & Dorman, 'The Cosmology of Error: Mark Twain, C.S. Lewis and Johannes Kepler in Literary Trilogue',
\item \textsuperscript{486} Lewis, Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold.p.152
\item \textsuperscript{487} Ibid.p.175
\item \textsuperscript{488} Ibid.p.182
\item \textsuperscript{489} Wood, 'Love's Sacred Order: The Four Loves Revisited',
\item \textsuperscript{490} Elgin, 'True and False Myth in C.S. Lewis's "Till We Have Faces"', p.101
\end{itemize}
example, despite knowledge of this dualist nature, Psyche engages in behaviour that reflects her materialist roots and thus this has negative consequences.

The next important example of Plato’s influence on Lewis, with respect to the ladder analogy, is that of Psyche’s beauty. Psyche is well known for her beauty within the story and thus is chosen to be the wife of the god of the mountain.\textsuperscript{491} We can see here that there is a connection between beauty and the divine, showing Lewis’ acknowledgement of Plato’s conception that the Form of beauty is the highest good, since the beautiful Psyche is now connected to the god of the mountain.\textsuperscript{492} Physical beauty, however, is shown by Lewis to be problematic. It is Psyche’s beauty that incurs the wrath of the goddess Ungit, driving the goddess to demand that Psyche be sacrificed.\textsuperscript{493} Psyche is later forced to journey to the deadlands to “get beauty in a casket from the Queen of the Deadlands, from death herself; and bring it back to give it to Ungit so that Ungit will become beautiful”.\textsuperscript{494} In both instances physical beauty has resulted in significant challenges for Psyche and perhaps might also serve to highlight the imperfections associated with that which is material in nature. After her initial disobeying of her god-husband, Psyche does not, however, succumb to material needs again. Her willingness to perform the tasks set for her by Ungit, and her success, suggests that Psyche has been able to overcome her material limitations and thus her beauty; and self-less love of her god-husband, in turn, allows her to transcend her status as a mortal human being, as is confirmed at the culmination of the story when her sister Orual declares “now I knew that she was a goddess indeed”. This reiterates the view that morality is dependent on practical action, or behaviour, which reflects knowledge of the dualist nature of reality.

In addition to this, the name “Psyche” itself is important, as it designates the mind, or that which is intelligible, which is of course important for Plato.\textsuperscript{495} As we can see in the

\textsuperscript{491} Dorman, 'The Cosmology of Error: Mark Twain, C.S. Lewis and Johannes Kepler in Literary Trilogue', \& Lewis, \textit{Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold}.p.35 \& 63
\textsuperscript{492} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{493} Lewis, \textit{Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold}.p.36, 43 \& 54
\textsuperscript{494} Ibid.p.312
\textsuperscript{495} Field, \textit{The Philosophy of Plato}.p.110
ladder analogy, the intelligible Form of beauty holds a place at the top.\textsuperscript{496} This importance is evident in Lewis’s retaining of the name “Psyche” in his retelling of the myth. It also presents physical death as being inconsequential.\textsuperscript{497} As discussed in Chapter Four, and just as Plato portrays the notion that physical life cannot be sustained in the attaining of enlightenment, in Lewis’s text Psyche faces possible death on two occasions in order to appease the gods. In the first instance, she is to be sacrificed to the god of the mountain and yet she is found alive and living in a palace as his wife.\textsuperscript{498} It is clear that because of Psyche’s willingness to accept death she has attained a life within the palace of the god of the mountain. In the second instance, Psyche is instructed to embark on a journey to retrieve beauty in a casket from the Queen of the Deadlands which is to be given to the goddess Ungit.\textsuperscript{499} This task also requires her physical death, and yet because of her willingness to face death a second time, relinquishing her physical life, she re-emerges from the deadlands with the casket of beauty having been transformed into a goddess herself.\textsuperscript{500} The character of Psyche demonstrates Lewis’s understanding of the idea that the intelligible mind can overcome its physical limitations when the individual in question chooses to no longer be influenced by the needs that are inherent in the physical. This is also seen in Plato’s ladder analogy in that there is primarily an importance placed on the relinquishing of bodily desires in order to ascend to the intelligible Form and thus be enlightened.\textsuperscript{501}

Another example of Plato’s influence on Lewis in Till We Have Faces is the contrast between appearance and reality.\textsuperscript{502} Orual attempts to recover Psyche’s remains, following the sacrifice, but she finds Psyche alive and her sister claims that they are standing on the steps of a palace which Orual cannot see.\textsuperscript{503} Orual’s material love for her sister, shown in her
obsession with bringing her body home, suggests that Orual is unable to see reality.\textsuperscript{504} Her obsessive focus on her own material need for Psyche means that she is only able to see the physical appearance of the place rather than the reality that the palace of a god is situated there.\textsuperscript{505}

In this context there is also a reference within \textit{Till We Have Faces} to a creature that is known as “the shadowbrute”.\textsuperscript{506} In the story, the mortal characters initially believe that Psyche’s sacrifice is to be made to the shadowbrute and thus they fear it. When Psyche later explains to Orual what really happened, it is revealed that she was not confronted by the shadowbrute at any time and was instead rescued by the god of the west wind.\textsuperscript{507} We can see that in this instance the idea of a shadow-creature represents appearances.\textsuperscript{508} As mentioned in Chapter Four, this refers to what the characters believe, as opposed to the reality that Psyche was not going to be attacked by such a creature, and that her “sacrifice” signified something entirely different; that her relinquishing of physical life would allow her to ascend to the realm of the gods, just as in Plato’s ladder analogy one ascends from a love of bodily things toward the Forms.\textsuperscript{509} There is also a correlation with Plato’s cave parable in that the creature in \textit{Till We Have Faces} is referred to as a “shadow” brute.\textsuperscript{510} As we know, in the cave parable shadows flicker across the cave wall which the prisoners believe to be real when in fact they are only representations of the reality that a bonfire and objects are situated behind them.\textsuperscript{511} Thus, the cave parable displays the contrast between appearance and reality, signified by shadows, which is also shown in \textit{Till We Have Faces} in Orual’s belief

\textsuperscript{504} Dorman, ‘The Cosmology of Error: Mark Twain, C.S. Lewis and Johannes Kepler in Literary Trilogue’,
\textsuperscript{505} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{506} Lewis, \textit{Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold}.pp.54-56
\textsuperscript{507} Ibid.pp.120-121
\textsuperscript{508} Elgin, ‘True and False Myth in C.S. Lewis’s ”Till We Have Faces”’, pp.99-100
\textsuperscript{509} Ibid. p.100 & Ferrari, ‘Platonic Love’.p.256
\textsuperscript{510} Elgin, ‘True and False Myth in C.S. Lewis’s ”Till We Have Faces”’, p.99 & Tarnas, \textit{The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View}.p.103
that a shadow-brute will attack and kill her sister when in fact Psyche is rescued by the west-wind. 512

We can see Plato's influence on Lewis in Psyche's explanation that when she was bound to the holy tree for her sacrifice "all my old longings were clean gone". 513 This clearly shows a distinction between material and spiritual aspects of reality. It also inculcates a movement from accepting only the material aspect of reality to accepting the dualist role both take on in comprising reality, which we can see at work as Psyche begins to relinquish her mortal needs and becomes aware of the divine reality. 514 Her lack of need for the things that characterised her material life suggests that her enlightenment has begun.

Finally, we can also see a clear example of Psyche's movement from recognising only the sensible aspect of reality toward also recognising the Forms in her confession to Orual that "it's the being mortal; being, how shall I say it? ...insufficient". 515 That Psyche expresses a feeling of inadequacy at her own mortal nature after she has been in the presence of the gods shows a recognition that there are two distinct aspects of reality and, as pointed out in Chapter Four, that the divine is perfect whereas that which is mortal is characterised by lack; just as in Plato the sensible is imperfect and lacking in comparison to the perfection inherent in the Forms. 516

In conclusion, we can see that Lewis's conception of love is strongly influenced by Platonic ideas concerning love. In addition, these influences reinforce the position that morality is the result of recognition and acceptance that reality is dually comprised of the empirically observable and the incorporeal. Further, Lewis's examination of love provides an example of the necessity of a practical application of this knowledge. This shows a stark contrast with the philosophy of the pre-conversion Lewis which upheld that this knowledge

512 Lewis, Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold pp.54-55 & pp.120-121 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato’s Cave', p.132
513 Lewis, Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold p.118
514 Strauss, On Plato's Symposium pp.221-222
515 Lewis, Till We Have Faces - a Myth Retold p.124
516 Dorman, 'The Cosmology of Error: Mark Twain, C.S. Lewis and Johannes Kepler in Literary Trilogue' & Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View p.8
alone is sufficient for morality. Lewis's post-conversion works show that a practical action is central to morality and thus this is retained in his maintaining the position that reality is dualist in nature. This position is also prominent in *The Chronicles of Narnia* and thus this will be further discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis.
Chapter Six – Platonic Influences on *The Chronicles of Narnia*

In *The Chronicles of Narnia* many influences are identifiable, promoted by Lewis through utilising imagery and symbolism.\(^{517}\) Michael Ward, for example, examined the cosmological themes depicted in the *Chronicles*.\(^ {518}\) Edwards, furthermore, examines the role of mythopoeia, or “the act of myth-making” in the *Chronicles*.\(^ {519}\) Such influences were considered to be so varied that the books attracted criticism from Tolkien.\(^ {520}\)

Edwards, however, makes it clear that this is an important advantage as “a true myth has the power to explain where we came from, to shape our identity and purpose, to instil hope, to promote justice, and to sustain order”.\(^ {521}\) In this chapter, I seek to identify the Platonic influences on *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The most prominent examples can be found in “The Last Battle” and “The Silver Chair”, and so I will primarily discuss these two texts. In Part One of this chapter, then, I will discuss “The Last Battle” and show it to be an analogy of Plato’s theory of Forms. I will show the practical role that the knowledge of the dualist nature of reality has through examining the Platonic influences on the apocalyptic destruction that Narnia is subjected to in this text. In Part Two of this chapter, I will similarly discuss the influence of Plato’s cave parable on “The Silver Chair”. In so doing, in this chapter I will show that practical applications of this knowledge directly impact the capacity for individuals to become enlightened and these practical applications must have moral value.

**Part One: “The Last Battle”**

Despite “The Last Battle” being the final book in the series, I examine it first here owing to the prominence that Plato’s theory of Forms has in the culmination of the story. Because of

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\(^{521}\) Edwards, *Not a Tame Lion*.p.29
this, it plays a significant role in the resolution of the series. In examining this text, then, two tasks will be undertaken; first, I will identify the Platonic influences that permeate text, and second I will show that Lewis's approach to Platonism here differs from his pre-conversion interpretation of Platonism. I will show that this difference recognises the practical value that is inherent in recognising and accepting the dualist nature of reality. A practical implementation of this knowledge is shown here to reflect either morality or immorality which Lewis takes to directly influence the ability of a person to become enlightened.

As mentioned, the final chapters of “The Last Battle” offer an extensive explanation of the Platonic context surrounding the events in the story. The character Professor Digory begins this explanation of the sequence of events by saying “it’s all in Plato, all in Plato: bless me, what do they teach them at these schools?”. This is also reinforced by Matthews, who states that “Lord Digory’s comment, ‘it’s all in Plato,’ is quite correct”. Starr also makes reference to Plato’s “world of ideal Forms” in connection with Lewis’s statement here. The Chronicles, like Plato’s own myths, do present a story version of Plato’s theory of reality. Though Matthews accepts that the Chronicles of Narnia are influenced by Platonism, Digory’s statement at the end of “The Last Battle” that “it’s all in Plato” is significant because Lewis rarely mentioned Plato by name in his works and we can see from the inclusion of this reference that Platonism was a significant influence on the book. The fact that Lewis only specifically mentions Plato by name once in the series implies that he perhaps did not always feel that it was necessary to specifically name what his philosophical influences were, despite their permeating his work. This is evident when Professor Digory

526 Matthews, 'Plato in Narnia'.p.178
says “bless me, what do they teach them at these schools?” and from this one may infer that Lewis perhaps felt that such influences did not require explanation.

The events that lead up to the revelation that “it’s all in Plato” begin with the apocalyptic destruction of Narnia. The inhabitants of Narnia, along with the protagonists of the story, all proceed through a doorway opened by Aslan which leads out of Narnia in order to escape the destruction. On the other side of the door, however, they discover that they are now in a world that resembles a bigger and better version of the Narnia that they are familiar with. This surprises them when they consider a previous revelation from Aslan that they would never be able to return to Narnia. Professor Digory explains:

Listen, Peter. When Aslan said you could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of. But that was not the real Narnia. That had a beginning and an end. It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia which has always been here and always will be here: just as our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or a copy of something in Aslan’s real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream.

A deconstruction of this statement will extrapolate, and reinforce understanding of the Platonic influences here. We can first observe Platonism in the statement that “when Aslan said you could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of. But that was not the real Narnia”. What is prominent here is the distinction between the appearance that the material constitutes reality when in fact reality is not composed solely of that which is empirically observable. The material Narnia is an imperfect copy of the real Form of Narnia.

Another prominent parallel with Platonism the reference that the material copy of Narnia “had a beginning and an end”. This refers to the notion that the sensible is limited by the constraints of time, that is it is temporal in nature and subject to decay, while the world of Forms is eternal. As extrapolated in Chapter Four of this thesis, this refers to the

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529 Ibid., *The Last Battle*, pp.205-206
530 Ibid.
531 Ibid.
532 Andrew Smith, ’Eternity and Time’, pp.196-216 & pp.204-207
Plato’s explanations of that which is in a state of being and that which is in a state of becoming.\footnote{Plato, ‘Timaeus’, in Benjamin Jowett (ed.), The Dialogues of Plato (3; London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp.705-80,p.715-716, section 27d-28b} The sensible world, as explained, is characterised by this state of becoming, and is further characterised (as Lewis explains) by a series of moments in which time passes, subjecting it to beginnings and ends.\footnote{Smith, ‘Eternity and Time’.p.207} The implication that the imperfect sensible copy of Narnia “had a beginning and an end” also implies similar time-based limitations in that it has a marked genesis and a marked death, and that it does not last forever.\footnote{CF C.S. Lewis, The Magician’s Nephew, 7 vols. (The Chronicles of Narnia, 1; London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005).}

"It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia which has been here and always will be here" is another Platonic parallel in Professor Digory’s explanation.\footnote{Mary Carman. Rose, ‘The Christian Platonism of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and Charles Williams’, in Dominic J. O’meara (ed.), Neoplatonism and Christian Thought (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), pp.203-12,p.210, & Kilby, The Christian World of C.S. Lewis.p.139} The reference to “shadow” is a direct allusion to Plato’s cave parable, in which the signature feature is a series of shadows cast across a cave wall by a fire which prisoners believe to be real instead of recognising their true nature as shadows.\footnote{Plato, ‘The Simile of the Cave’, The Republic (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1955).pp.278-279, section 515} This imagery acts as a simile to depict the theory of Forms in which the sensible imperfectly imitates the original Form. “Has been and always will be here” refers to the state of Being that characterises the world of Forms. The idea that the Form of Narnia “has been and always will be here” suggests that an archetypal Form of Narnia exists eternally.\footnote{Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View (London: Pimlico, 2000).pp.6-8} Lewis, as explained in Chapter Four of this thesis, refers to this as "beyond time" which also makes plain that the Form of Narnia is not subject to the constraints of time that the sensible copy of Narnia is subjected to. Because the Form of Narnia is without all such associated limitations we can infer that perfection is inherent in the Form of Narnia. This is also revealed in the character’s observations that this new Narnia is bigger and better the further in they get.\footnote{Lewis, The Last Battle.pp.203-204 & Starr, ‘Meaning, Meanings and Epistemology in C.S. Lewis’, pp.1-2} Lucy observes that “they have more colours on them and they look father away than I remembered and they’re more… more… oh, I don’t
know..." to which Professor Digory responds “more like the real thing”. Matthews also makes this observation, citing that the new place the characters find themselves in seems to be more real than the sensible counterpart that has just been destroyed. Lewis’s emphasis on this distinction serves to reinforce the importance of recognising that reality is dualist in nature.

Lewis also writes that “they kept on stopping to look round and to look behind them, partly because it was so beautiful but partly also because there was something about it which they could not understand” to which the character Peter remarks that “it reminds me of somewhere but I can’t give it a name”. This suggests that through Peter, Lewis is making a reference to recognising that there exists an incorporeal aspect of reality in addition to the material aspect of reality. Lewis also makes similar assertions in Mere Christianity, discussing our conceptions of other aspects of reality and stating that the incorporeal aspects of reality retain that which is attained in the sensible rather than relinquishing it. Lewis explains that that there is an element of incomprehensibility for those who have not experienced the reality’s dualist nature. Similarly, the characters in “The Last Battle” cannot quite comprehend the new aspect of reality that they find themselves the inhabitants of. Through this, we can see the implication that you cannot understand what is “beyond time” until you are existing beyond time. In other words, one cannot comprehend the machinations of the incorporeal aspect of reality while one retains attention solely on the sensible aspect of reality. We can see this in Plato’s cave parable in which prisoners are chained to the cave wall. While they remained chained they cannot see anything but the wall on which shadows are reflected; they cannot see that fire and

541 Matthews, 'Plato in Narnia'.p.176
543 Lewis, The Last Battle.p.203
544 C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (San Francisco HarperCollins, 2001).p.162
545 Ibid.
546 Smith, 'Eternity and Time'.p.204
objects are behind them causing these shadows, nor can they see the path which leads beyond the fire and out of the cave. They must accept the knowledge given to them by the individual who returns to the cave in order to convince them of the true nature of reality in the hopes that they will become freed from their bonds.

As I have previously made reference to, the culmination of the novel occurs when Narnia is destroyed. This suggests Narnia's natural development. The first book in the series, which is titled "The Magician's Nephew", describes the genesis of Narnia while the final book in the series, "The Last Battle", describes its end. This ending is described by Lewis in an almost apocalyptic sense, and in a highly dramatic manner. For example, he makes a point of describing the way in which the stars fall from the sky and hit the ground beneath them, along with the spreading darkness that cloaks everything in shadow and the rush of all existing creatures to get through the door Aslan has opened which leads to another world. The reason that such a great deal of emphasis is placed on this physical ending of Narnia is Lewis highlighting the importance of the transition of moving from the sensible copy of Narnia to the Form of Narnia. Likewise, in Plato's cave parable, there is a great deal of importance placed on the way in which the individual adjusts to the light as they begin to venture out of the cave, which also reiterates the idea that the transitory movement between acceptance only of the material aspect of reality and acceptance of the dualist nature of reality holds significance.

The final chapter of "The Last Battle", which follows the events in which Professor Digory gives his explanation of Platonism, is aptly named "Farewell to the Shadowlands". "Shadowlands" is another direct reference to Plato's cave parable which identifies shadows as less real alternatives to the real artefacts that cast the shadows in the fire light. In "The Last Battle", Lewis uses the character of Professor Digory to explain that the sensible copy

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548 Ferguson, 'Plato's Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16 & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'. pp.278-279, section 515
550 Lewis, The Last Battle. pp.182-185
551 Malcolm, 'The Cave Revisited', p.60 & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'. p.280, section 516
552 Ferguson, 'Plato's Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16
of Narnia that has just been destroyed is the equivalent to Plato’s shadow-realm within the cave. “Farewell to the Shadowlands”, then, refers to the act of moving away from the sensible Narnia and toward the Form of Narnia. This also makes clear the distinction between the Form and the Sensible, using Narnia as an example, and reinforcing an understanding of the previously existing Narnia as representative of the sensible.

Aslan’s country is referred to as occupying the centre of the Form of Narnia. Aslan’s country is referred to as “the end of the world” and is the farthest place one can ever reach in The Chronicles of Narnia and thus the character’s having reached Aslan’s Country represents the culmination of the journey that they undertake through the series. Aslan’s country is described as being the central focal point of the Form of Narnia and is the place where the characters find themselves upon travelling through the Form of Narnia. Considering that Aslan’s country is the central focal point of the Form of Narnia, we can understand this to be a metaphor for Plato’s world of Forms. The character’s discovery of an archetypal version of England within Aslan’s country suggests that England can be understood as dually consisting of properties that pertain to both the sensible and the Form.

It is here that we can begin to observe the practical value that the post-conversion Lewis appeared to place on his interpretation of Plato’s theory of Forms. I will here examine a number of examples within the text. I will explore the Platonic influences inherent in these examples and show the practical value that Lewis placed on these examples. This enables me to show how human behaviour that reflects either acceptance or rejection of the knowledge that reality is dually comprised of the material and the incorporeal has practical value that directly impacts morality and the subsequent ability to become enlightened. The following utilises the presence of fear and the speech in the inhabitants of Narnia as examples of tangible results of the dual sensible and intelligible nature of reality that have practical value.

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553 Lewis, The Last Battle. p.219
554 Ibid. pp.219-220
The destructive end of Narnia that is depicted in "The Last Battle" shows Lewis to be placing emphasis on the temporality of the sensible copy of Narnia. This reinforces the materialist nature of the sensible copy of Narnia and creates the distinction between the sensible copy of Narnia and the intelligible Form of Narnia which by comparison is not temporal. The Forms are understood to be original, or archetypal, and eternal. Through this, Lewis demonstrates Narnia is comprised of both the material, as evidenced by it being in a state of Becoming and hence being imperfect, and incorporeal. The imperfection inherent in the material aspect of Narnia can be seen in the fact that at this stage the Narnian inhabitants appear to be indifferent towards Aslan as they have never met him and only have misinformed preconceptions as to who he is. Edwards argues that this indifference allows doubts, uncertainties and fears to manifest, as evidenced by the imperfection in the sensible copy of Narnia. This fear is also present in Plato's cave parable when the prisoners express distrust of the prisoner who returns after having been freed from his bonds.

Also noteworthy is the role that the talking beasts play in the destruction of Narnia. In "The Magician’s Nephew", which provides an account of Narnia’s creation, Lewis explains how the talking animals came into existence. Lewis writes that Aslan exhales a deep breath of air that is followed by a “flash like fire (but it burnt nobody)” after which Aslan speaks a command demanding that Narnia awaken and for the animals to “be talking beasts”. This suggests that the animals of Narnia were not originally born to be talking beasts. In "The Last Battle", however, when the talking beasts arrive at the door and look on the face of Aslan they momentarily feel fear before “they suddenly ceased to be talking animals. They were just ordinary animals". Thus, the talking beasts that inhabit the sensible copy of

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555 Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View.* pp.8-9
556 Edwards, *Not a Tame Lion.* p.162
557 Plato, "The Simile of the Cave". p.281, section 517
558 Lewis, *The Magician’s Nephew.* p.134
559 Lewis, *The Last Battle.* p.186
Narnia have been reverted to their original silent Forms before they are able to enter the Form of Narnia.

Speech and fear can both be identified as having tangible effects in the sensible aspect of reality. Their inclusion as important focal points for the sensible suggests that such things have a practical role in either hindering or aiding the protagonists' ability to become enlightened. The role of fear is a hindrance because of its capacity for emphasising the reluctance of an individual to engage in behaviour that will have a practical impact on their ability to achieve goals. Likewise, the capacity of the creatures of Narnia for speech can serve as an aid for the protagonists because it allows those creatures to aid in the protagonist's ability to achieve goals. As speech is a property inherent in the sensible aspect of reality, however, we can observe that it too is disbanded in the destruction of the sensible copy of Narnia. The practical impact of such examples, though, indicates that there tangible results can be observed as a result of knowledge of the dualist nature of reality that directly impact the ability to become enlightened. The fact that Lewis creates a place, in these stories, which features living creatures who have problems, goals and desires, suggests that the post-conversion Lewis intended the position that reality is dualist in nature to have practical value.

This can also be observed in the inclusion of themes such as death, and particularly time. Both reflect the state of becoming that is characteristic of the sensible aspect of reality. Death is a tangible representation of the cessation of time and thus we can see that both examples are important in showing the ways in which knowledge of the dualist nature of reality has a practical impact on the ability to become enlightened. In Chapter Four of this thesis, I discussed the notion that an individual can only truly reach the realm of Forms upon their death. This idea is reinforced in “The Last Battle” when the children recall that they appeared in Narnia in the midst of a train accident. Aslan explains that they actually died in this accident, which is why they were able to return to Narnia, and why they are now

560 Lewis, The Last Battle:pp.168-169
entitled to stay.\textsuperscript{561} The implication that while the children sustained physical lives they were unable to access Narnia as they had previously been told by Aslan, and that upon their deaths Narnia becomes accessible once more supports the implication that complete accessibility to the world of Forms only occurs upon the death of the physical body.\textsuperscript{562} This suggests that only upon engaging in behaviour that results in physical death does enlightenment then become possible, as we can see in the children’s inability to return to Narnia until their deaths in a train accident.

An important character to note in this line of reasoning is Father Time who is utilised by Lewis to give an insight into the ways in which time affects the sensible world.\textsuperscript{563} Father Time first appears in “The Silver Chair”, which precedes “The Last Battle” in the series. Father Time is encountered in “The Silver Chair” by the characters Jill, Eustace and Puddleglum who are led down into a series of caves by a warden. The party come across a large sleeping giant. When Puddleglum asks who the giant is, the warden replies

\begin{quote}
That is old Father Time, who was once a King in Overland... And now he has sunk down into the Deep Realm and lies dreaming of all the things that are done in the upper world. Many sink down, and few return to the sunlit lands. They say he will wake at the end of the world.\textsuperscript{564}
\end{quote}

This scene indicates that there is a clear link between temporality and the sensible aspect of reality. While the sensible world is [in operation], Father Time is asleep, representing the continual movement of time. His awakening, then, represents the end of time and the subsequent removal of the associated temporal restrictions. This reiterates the notion previously discussed in Chapter Four in which it is suggested that the enlightenment of the human soul is only possible once material limitations are removed in their entirety, representing physical death. As Smith writes; “How can we have a share in eternity if we are in time?”\textsuperscript{565}

\textsuperscript{561} Ibid.p.221
\textsuperscript{562} Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity}.pp.161-162
\textsuperscript{563} CF Chapter Three of this thesis for a discussion of Lewis’s conception of time in comparison to that which is beyond time.
\textsuperscript{565} Smith, ‘Eternity and Time’.p.204
In "The Last Battle" Father Time awakens, causing the destruction of the sensible copy of Narnia. Before this takes place, Aslan leads the characters through a door and roars "'Now it is time!' then louder, 'Time!'" and then so loud that it could have shaken the stars, 'TIME'.\(^{566}\) At this point the doorway opens through which all living things in Narnia must go.\(^{567}\) In response to this call, a giant begins to approach which Jill and Eustace recognise as Father Time, whom they had come across in "The Silver Chair" and who had been fabled to awaken on the day the world ended.\(^{568}\) Aslan confirms this;

> 'Yes,' said Aslan, though they had not spoken. 'While he lay dreaming, his name was Time. Now that he is awake he will have a new one.' Then the great giant raised a horn to his mouth... After that – quite a bit later, because sound travels so slowly – they heard the sound of the horn: high and terrible, yet of a strange, deadly beauty.\(^{569}\)

As a result of the horn blast, the ending of Narnia is set into motion. The stars begin to fall, etc. At the culmination of the destruction sequence, Aslan commands Father Time to finish the destructive sequence. Father Time then extinguishes the sun, leaving the remains of the sensible copy of Narnia cloaked in ice and darkness, and the protagonists go through the doorway.\(^{570}\) The awakening of Father Time, then, is central to orchestrating this ending, reinforcing that time constraints are characteristic of the sensible aspect of reality and subsequently that the cessation of time results in the cessation of the sensible. Thus time is fundamental to the nature and workings of the sensible. Aslan, of course, is the one to give the command but it is Father Time who acts on the command, emphasising the role that time plays in the workings of the sensible world in addition to the idea that the sensible cannot exist in perpetuity like the eternal Forms can.

The awakening of Father Time not only represents the temporality inherent in the sensible aspect of reality, and repeats the idea that the sensible is not eternal, but the role of Father Time in the stories also highlights the imperfection that is characteristic of that which is temporal. We can also see that this temporal nature is an unchangeable aspect of the sensible (for example, it is only when Father Time awakens and Narnia is destroyed that

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\(^{566}\) Lewis, The Last Battle.p.181

\(^{567}\) Ibid. p.181

\(^{568}\) Ibid.pp.182-183

\(^{569}\) Ibid.p.182-183

\(^{570}\) Ibid.p.191
the inhabitants are permitted to leave). In addition, Father Time’s sleeping and waking states, in addition, signify the distinction between the states of being in time and being beyond time.

We can see that Father Time has practical value in that time governs the operation of the sensible aspect of reality. While Father Time is asleep, time is in operation and the characters are set certain limitations which restrict their actions. When Father Time awakens, time comes to an end and the doorway between the sensible Narnia and the Form of Narnia opens, allowing for movement between the two aspects of reality. The cessation of time, thus, has practical value because it directly impacts whether or not the characters are able to become enlightened.

As mentioned, the doorway through which the occupants of Narnia leave their dying world is also significant. Quite literally, the characters use the door to move from one world to another.571 In “Wardrobe as Christian Metaphor”, King asserts that “the literal doors that the children use to enter Narnia... doors function to take the children... into a new other world; that is, the doors serve to move them from a mundane, everyday experience to a new world, a new reality, a new life”.572 This statement supports the idea that Lewis uses the imagery of the door to represent movement from accepting only the sensible aspect of reality to recognising and accepting the role of the Forms. The reference to a movement from that which is “mundane” to a “new reality” also signifies this. The phrase “new reality” is important as it signifies the Platonic distinction between that which is real and that which only has the appearance of being real. The “mundane”, then, is the imperfect copy of “reality”.573 That the characters in the story use this door to move from the dying sensible copy of Narnia to the world that is discovered to be the Form of Narnia (as is explained by the character Professor Digory at the outset of this chapter) supports the idea that Lewis intended to use the door as a metaphor for movement from sensible imperfection to attaining the enlightenment inherent in Plato’s world of Forms.

571 Ibid.pp.181, 186-187
573 Malcolm, ‘The Cave Revisited’, p.60
That Aslan is the controller of the door also suggests the practical value of knowledge of the dualist nature of reality. It is at Aslan’s command that the door is opened, as are all other doors that appear throughout the series in order to accommodate the children’s movement between their own world and Narnia. That an individual has control over a door of this kind also implies that the controller has already experienced what is on the other side of the door and subsequently has already attained enlightenment. Plato’s cave parable can be referenced here, in which a prisoner has been released from their bonds and journeys out of the cave to discover a sunlit world. Once this individual has become accustomed to the light, they return to the cave to educate the remaining prisoners of what they have experienced. Aslan, in this context, is representative of this freed individual who attempts to educate the other less-informed characters, which we can see in that he controls the door to the Form of Narnia and determines who will be able to enter (for example, the “talking beasts” do not enter, but the protagonists are permitted to enter with Aslan). King supports this connection by saying that “literal doors lead to... Aslan”. A further connection between Aslan and the door that is pointed out by King is that the door leads to “Aslan’s country”. “They have entered Aslan’s country through the stable door He created”. In “The Last Battle” this is reinforced when the children discover that Aslan’s country is at the heart of the Form of Narnia, hence the character of Aslan depicts a direct connection with Plato’s world of Forms.

Aslan represents the practical value of knowledge of the dualist nature of reality firstly because we know him to have attained enlightenment already. In “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” it is revealed that he has knowledge of magic from before the dawn of time, meaning that he has knowledge the nature of reality that was in existence before the

574 King, ‘The Wardrobe as Christian Metaphor’, p.25
575 Malcolm, ‘The Cave Revisited’, p.60
576 Plato, ‘The Simile of the Cave’.p.280, section 516
577 Ibid.pp.280-281, section 516-517
578 King, ‘The Wardrobe as Christian Metaphor’, p.25
579 Ibid. p.26
580 Ibid. p
581 Lewis, The Last Battle:pp.219-220
genesis of the material Narnia. He has knowledge, then, of both the sensible nature of Narnia
and the Form that existed prior. In “The Last Battle” we can see this also in that he is the
controller of the door which leads from the sensible copy of Narnia to the Form of Narnia.
The practical value of knowledge of the dualist nature of reality is reflected in the wisdom
and advice that Aslan often imparts to the characters across the series, with this wisdom
and advice often being central to the success of the characters in fulfilling their objectives.
Thus, following Aslan’s advice is considered to be morally good and so we can see that
morality is directly influenced by practical applications of the knowledge that reality is
dualist in nature.

Morally negative consequences of not recognising and accepting the dualism that
Aslan represents can be seen in the character Shift the Ape who discovers a lion skin and
makes a donkey named Puzzle wear it in an attempt to imitate Aslan and dupe the Narnians,
allowing Shift to rule over them. At the culmination of the story, when the Pevensie children
return to Narnia and set about convincing the Narnians the truth, they encounter a group of
dwarves who had believed so strongly that the imitation Aslan was real that they refuse to
believe the truth when confronted with it. The dwarves’ refusal to believe the truth that
Puzzle the donkey is not Aslan represents a rejection of the knowledge of the true nature of
reality with the consequence that they lose the ability to see reality completely. This can
also be understood in context of Plato’s cave parable in which the chained prisoners are
only able to see the shadows and cannot see the objects behind them, or the fire, which
together create the source of the shadows. With respect to the dwarves in “The Last Battle”
this is shown in their acceptance only of what Shift the Ape tells them, which has the
practical result of their becoming unable to hear the real Aslan’s voice and only his lion’s
roar. Furthermore, they do not see anything that is given to them by Aslan in its true
Form. They do not see the rich feast that is produced for their benefit. They believe the wine
to be water from a donkey’s trough, and believe the other foods to be nothing more than

582 Edwards, Not a Tame Lion.p.158 & Lewis, The Last Battle.pp.174-181
583 Holbrook, The Skeleton in the Wardrobe: C.S. Lewis’s Fantasies - a Phenomenological Study.p.47
584 Ibid. & Lewis, The Last Battle.p.179
hay or raw cabbage leaves. "It was clear that they couldn’t taste it properly". This suggests that the choice of the dwarves (to only believe the falsity committed by Shift) has practical value in that they become devoid of the morality and opportunity that would have otherwise resulted in their enlightenment. The dwarves see only the appearance of reality, rather than reality itself, and thus they can now see only the appearance. That is, they can no longer see things in their true Form; they can no longer see reality. When Tirian addresses one of the dwarves as “earth man” this point is reinforced. We can observe the term “earth man” to be a reflection of the connection that the dwarves have to the tangible empirically observable aspect of reality, which is characterised by that which is detectably by the five senses in the physical world. The connection the dwarves have to the earth, as “earthmen” also shows their inherent unwillingness to embrace those aspects of reality that are not characteristic of the sensible domain that is their earth-realm. Thus we can see that the choice of the dwarves to reject knowledge of reality has had practical consequences that directly impact them.

This result is particularly evident in the dwarves’ conception of their surroundings. It must be noted that while the children know they are in the woods, the dwarves still very much believe that they are in a stable. As such, the children can see their surroundings without hindrance, while the dwarves cannot since they believe that they are in a dark stable. The source of the children’s sight is revealed to be their recognition of the morality inherent in the truth that Aslan represents, which the dwarves do not have. The recognition of the children of the reality that Aslan represents, despite Shift’s deception, indicates that they are closer to attaining enlightenment than the dwarves, and so are able to see what the dwarves cannot. The dwarves, then, represent the antithesis of the story.

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585 Lewis, The Last Battle.p.180
586 Ibid.
587 Holbrook, The Skeleton in the Wardrobe: C.S. Lewis’s Fantasies - a Phenomenological Study.p.47
588 Lewis, The Last Battle.p.177
589 Ibid.
590 Ibid.pp.176-177
591 Holbrook, The Skeleton in the Wardrobe: C.S. Lewis’s Fantasies - a Phenomenological Study.p.48
592 Ibid.p.48
The Pevensie children, who are the protagonists, represent the morality and enlightenment that result from recognition and acceptance of the dualist nature of reality, while the dwarves represent the immorality and lack of enlightenment that is characteristic of only accepting the sensible as being indicative of reality. They reject Aslan for similar reasons. Because they only accept what their senses observe, they do not believe that they are in Aslan’s presence.⁵⁹³

That the choice of the dwarves has had the practical result of limiting them only to what they can see is also reflected in Aslan’s declaration that he is unable to change their perception; “you see... they will not let us help them. They have chosen cunning instead of belief. Their prison is only in their minds, yet they are in that prison”.⁵⁹⁴ This statement reiterates the practical value of recognising the dualist nature of reality. The choice of the dwarves represents a practical option that can be taken which has results which directly affects their ability to become enlightened (that is, to enter the Form of Narnia through the doorway opened by Aslan). This ideology is also present in Plato’s cave parable in that the prisoners are able to remove their chains at any time, though they do not choose to do so. This implies that the chains are representative of their own conceptions respecting their reality, which in actual fact is appearance governed by shadows.⁵⁹⁵ Likewise, the dwarves “prison” is entirely their own conception and while they could choose otherwise, such as to believe in Aslan’s presence, they do not and so this has the practical consequence of leaving them imprisoned in their false reality.

Finally, mention must also be made of Shift the ape’s behaviour in manipulating Puzzle the donkey into wearing a lion skin in order to convince everyone that he is really Aslan.⁵⁹⁶ This represents an imperfect imitation of Aslan, suggesting a copy of the original Form. Lewis makes specific mention the distinction between the real Aslan and the

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⁵⁹⁴ Lewis, *The Last Battle*. pp.180-181
⁵⁹⁵ Ferguson, 'Plato’s Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16
⁵⁹⁶ Lewis, *The Last Battle*. pp.13-23
imitation of Aslan through Shift who refers to “the real Aslan, as you call him”. This highlights the distinction between reality and appearance which draws Edwards’ remark about “how easy it is for others to be taken in by appearances”. This infers that people have an increased susceptibility of trusting that which their senses discern rather than that which is incorporeal and has no empirically observable appearance. This example also represents the practical embodiment of the immorality that results from a rejection of knowledge of reality. We can see that it is immoral in the fact that Shift wishes to use what is effectively a lie to benefit himself in terms of gaining sole leadership of Narnia in order to profit which comes at the cost of Narnia’s inhabitants who are treated cruelly under Shift’s rule.

We can see that Plato’s theory of Forms is a central component of “The Last Battle”, which can especially be seen in Professor Digory’s explanation of Narnia being symbolic of Plato’s theory. The role of Platonism is also particularly important in expounding the practical value that the post-conversion Lewis identified as being vital to the position that morality is derived from recognition and acceptance that reality is dually material and incorporeal in nature. “The Last Battle” shows the actions and behaviours of the characters in accepting or rejecting this knowledge has practical value that directly impacts their ability to become enlightened.

**Part Two: “The Silver Chair”**

“The Silver Chair” directly precedes “The Last Battle” in the chronology of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Similarly, Platonic influences can also be identified. In particular, the imagery in “The Silver Chair” can be shown to directly mirror Plato’s cave parable. In this part of the chapter, then, I will discuss the ways in which Plato’s cave parable influenced “The Silver Chair”.

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597 Ibid.p.23
598 Edwards, *Not a Tame Lion*.p.160
599 Ibid. p.160
Chair” in addition to showing how the post-conversion Lewis used these influences to show the importance of knowledge of the dualist nature of reality having a practical role.

Gareth Matthews supports the idea that “The Silver Chair” is Lewis’s embellishment of Plato’s cave parable.\textsuperscript{601} The story details the travels of two children (Jill and Eustace) and their companion Puddleglum. Together they undertake a journey into the underworld, which is comprised of a network of caves. That the predominant setting of the story is an underground network of caves is the first indication that Platonism was particularly influential for Lewis, since it is a cave that is the primary point of reference in Plato’s parable.\textsuperscript{602} An immediate Platonic premise is created with the usage of the cave as the predominant setting for the story.\textsuperscript{603}

We can first identify Platonic influence in the way in which the inhabitants of the cave perceive reality. In “The Silver Chair” the occupants of the cave-world, or the “underworld” as it is known, firmly believe nothing to exist beyond the cave in which they live and this belief is encouraged by the character of the witch-queen who controls the “underworld”.\textsuperscript{604} As Matthews asserts, this supports the idea that the world is characterised by appearances and illusions, particularly with the cave dwellers who “merely [accept] what we’re told and so on and so remain chained to the shadowland”.\textsuperscript{605} “Chained to the shadowland”, here, can be interpreted as representing the prisoners who think that shadows constitute reality when in actual fact they represent only the appearance of reality rather than reality itself. And as Puddleglum’s strength of will suggests, moral qualities are intrinsically linked to the ability to recognise reality (faith and courage, for example, are reinforced throughout the Narnia series) and so be able to remove the figurative chains that bind one to the figurative cave wall that represents the sensible world occupied by human beings. We can see how these moral qualities show the practical value of recognising and

\textsuperscript{601} Matthews, ‘Plato in Narnia’. pp.173-175
\textsuperscript{602} Holbrook, \textit{The Skeleton in the Wardrobe: C.S. Lewis’s Fantasies - a Phenomenological Study}. p.48
\textsuperscript{603} Osborn, ‘Deeper Realms: C.S. Lewis’s Revisions of Joseph O’neill’s Land under England’, & Holbrook, \textit{The Skeleton in the Wardrobe: C.S. Lewis’s Fantasies - a Phenomenological Study}. p.48
\textsuperscript{604} Lewis, \textit{The Silver Chair}. pp.183-184
accepting the dualist nature of reality in Puddleglum's ability to secure freedom from the witch for himself and his compatriots when he physically acts on his knowledge of what constitutes reality. This will be discussed further later in this part of the chapter.

This also implies that there is a certain amount of difficulty involved in cave dwellers' ability to change their circumstances. This is also reflected in Plato's cave parable in which there is a certain amount of difficulty involved in the movement of the individual in journeying out of the cave and up toward the world above.\textsuperscript{606} In one way this is shown in the difficulty faced by the individual to become accustomed to the gradual increase in the amount of light seen and thus the individual's ability to see properly is not immediate and only occurs after a significant amount of time has passed.\textsuperscript{607} The second difficulty shown in the cave parable is that of the conceptions of the other prisoners that there is nothing behind them – no fire, no objects, and no sunlit world above the ground, especially when the unchained individual returns to the cave to convince them otherwise.\textsuperscript{608} These difficulties are shown to be necessary to the journey and offer a tangible means by which knowledge of the dualist nature of reality can be put into practice, with the intended result being enlightenment. These difficulties are reinforced in "The Silver Chair" by the witch's attempt to manipulate the cave dwellers into believing that there is no sun, a belief that is magically reinforced in order to retain the occupants of the cave as prisoners within the illusionary world.\textsuperscript{609} Central to "The Silver Chair", then, is the Platonic theme of not being duped into believing that illusionary appearances represent reality. This theme is also present in the cave parable in which the prisoners within the cave believe the shadows on the cave wall to represent reality when they in fact do not.

The significance of the rule of the witch over the world within the caves in "The Silver Chair" is also evidence of the corruption and imperfection that is present in the sensible aspect of reality. This is seen through the witch's need to maintain control of the
underworld apparently for her own ends which typically includes power-driven motives. The importance Lewis places on morally positive practical applications of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature can be seen here. The witch represents a morally adverse application of this knowledge which has negative results for the other characters in that the witch’s behaviour directly impacts their ability to become enlightened because it restricts their knowledge of reality.

Such motives are typical of the materialistic nature associated with the sensible world, for example the disparity associated with politics. In this sense, Lewis’s witch (or “the Lady of the Green Kirtle” for she is not the same witch that is featured in “The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe”) displays certain characteristics that might be akin to a Dictator, which usually involves an individual claiming totality of control and power over a population of people. Considering that the individual in question would benefit at the cost of the populace, this suggests a morally adverse result of the practical application of knowledge of reality. This also repeats the idea that the sensible world is imperfect in comparison with the perfection inherent in the intelligible world of Forms. In The Republic, Plato writes of this that “I suppose the makers of the laws are the weaker sort of men, and the more numerous. So it is with a view to themselves and their own interest that they make their laws and distribute their praises and censures; and to terrorize the stronger sort of folk who are able to get an advantage”. This suggests a lack of moral goodness in the practical behaviour that the “makers of the laws” engage in, hence the reference to them as “the weaker sort of men”. Lewis’s witch in “The Silver Chair” repeats this distinction. The witch, in this instance, is a law maker since she exercises complete control over the thoughts and actions of the people who live in the cave world, and since this control removes her subjects’ belief in Aslan and Narnia. Thus, the witch’s behaviour has the result of inhibiting the cave dwellers’ ability to attain enlightenment. This reiterates the importance of engaging in morally sound behaviour that reflects knowledge of the dualist nature of reality.

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This is based on the idea that it is morally wrong to engage in behaviour that impedes another's ability to become enlightened.

A particularly strong example of the witch's control is seen in the character Prince Rillian. The witch keeps Prince Rillian prisoner by means of an enchanted silver chair. The enchantment acts by reinforcing the false belief that the witch has instilled in Rillian that the real world outside of the cave is a mere dream, or product of the imagination. We can immediately see that the witch's behaviour in doing so has the practical consequence of negatively impacting Rillian's ability to become enlightened. Not only does this reinforce my previous statements concerning the consequences of dictatorial control where the witch is concerned, but it is also representative of the prisoners who are chained to the cave wall in Plato's cave parable. In the parable, the prisoners are only able to see the shadows that flicker on the wall, thanks to their bonds. The prisoners believe the shadows to be real because they cannot see the fire or the objects behind them that have created these shadows. It can be seen in both examples, that given in "The Silver Chair" and that given in Plato's cave parable, that control has been imposed on a group of people that has the effect of restricting their ability to recognise the dualist nature of reality and thus become morally educated and subsequently enlightened.

It is pertinent to note, however, that in both "The Silver Chair" and Plato's cave parable, this control is not absolute. There is evidence of this in the fact that central to both texts is realisation of the truth that reality is dually comprised of the material and the incorporeal and that it is upon acting on this realisation in a practical manner that the bonds are able to be removed and morality, and subsequently enlightenment, becomes possible. In Plato's cave parable an individual who has already been enlightened as a result of his journey out of the cave, returns to attempt to convince the remaining prisoners that the

611 Wright, 'The Origin of Plato's Cave', p.133 & Matthews, 'Plato in Narnia', p.174
612 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave', p.278, section 515
613 Ferguson, 'Plato's Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16 & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave', p.279, section 515
614 Ferguson, 'Plato's Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16 & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave', p.279, section 515
shadows on the cave wall do not in fact represent reality. In "The Silver Chair", it is Puddleglum’s gloomy outlook and scepticism that renders him unsusceptible to the magic used by the witch to control her subjects, while Rillian, Jill and Eustace are susceptible to it. This allows Puddleglum to stamp out a fire that appears to be the source of the magic. This suggests that in both instances bonds can be removed through acquiring knowledge of reality via the actions of an external party. Puddleglum’s actions remind them of their knowledge of Narnia, thus releasing them from the enchantment that controls them, just as the enlightened individual in Plato’s cave parable provides knowledge of reality that is intended to enable the prisoners to remove their bonds. Puddleglum’s behaviour in extinguishing the fire shows the importance of a practical application of the knowledge of the dualist nature of reality. It is insufficient that Puddleglum is in possession of this knowledge. He is required to act on it in, in this case by extinguishing the fire, in order to ensure that he secures freedom for himself and his compatriots.

The following paragraphs further detail the influences of Plato’s cave parable on Lewis’s "The Silver Chair". To this end, imagery pertaining to the sun and fire are prominent in both Plato’s and Lewis’s texts. In "The Silver Chair", the children and Puddleglum attempt to explain to the witch about Narnia and Aslan, both of which lie beyond the bounds of the underworld. The witch affirms her disbelief in this and subsequently tries to convince them that Narnia is not real.

You see? When you try to think out clearly what this sun must be, you cannot tell me. You can only tell me it is like the lamp. Your sun is a dream; and there is nothing in that dream that was not copied from the lamp.

When the children and Puddleglum do not show any signs of accepting the witch’s story, she utilises the fumes from an enchanted fire in order to put them into a magic-induced stupor which has the effect of convincing them that no world exists outside of the underworld and that accordingly the sun does not exist either. Considering that the sun

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617 Lewis, The Silver Chair.p.188
618 Ibid.p.187
cannot shine beneath the ground in the underworld cave network, the other inhabitants also do not believe that the sun exists, much less that there is a world above the ground.\textsuperscript{619} We can see that the inhabitants trust only what is empirically observable, and as we know this does not reflect the reality that Narnia exists outside the network of caves. As previously explained, it is only when Puddleglum extinguishes the fire that the children and Rillian are able to be released from the enchantment that instils in them the belief that the sun, Narnia and Aslan are not real.\textsuperscript{620} Thus, the fire in "The Silver Chair" constitutes a significant influence on the creation of their illusion. We can also see that the fire represents the necessity of knowledge of reality having a practical role. While the children and Puddleglum all have knowledge that both the cave world and Narnia exist, it is only through Puddleglum’s act of extinguishing the enchanted fire that this knowledge is enforced. It is only on the enforcement of this knowledge in a practical manner that their freedom is secured.

Plato’s cave parable features this same imagery and meaning. Here, the illusion that prisoners are convinced represents reality is merely a series of shadows cast across a cave wall.\textsuperscript{621} Importantly, the source of these shadows, of the illusion, is a fire situated behind them, reflecting off a series of objects to create the shadows.\textsuperscript{622} In both Plato and Lewis, also, we can see that those who are imprisoned cannot comprehend the light sources (that is, the sun and fire) that in both instances are the source of an illusion believed to be reality.\textsuperscript{623} Thus, we can see that Platonic imagery has a strong influence on Lewis’s approach to The Chronicles of Narnia in "The Silver Chair".

Returning to the witch’s attempts to convince the children and Puddleglum that Narnia just a projection of their imaginations, the following argument is given;

\begin{quote}
You have seen lamps, and so imagined a bigger and better lamp and called it the \textit{sun}. 
You've seen cats, and now you want a bigger and better cat, and it's to be called \textit{a lion}...
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{619} Matthews, 'Plato in Narnia'.p.173  
\textsuperscript{620} Lewis, \textit{The Silver Chair}.pp.188-191  
\textsuperscript{621} Ferguson, 'Plato’s Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16 & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.278-279, section 515  
\textsuperscript{622} Ferguson, 'Plato’s Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16 & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.278-279, section 515  
\textsuperscript{623} Notopoulos, 'The Symbolism of the Sun and Light in the Republic of Plato', p.170
look how you can put nothing into make-believe without copying it from the real world.\textsuperscript{624}

In this statement, we can see that the witch relies on Platonism in order to formulate her argument.\textsuperscript{625} The influence of Platonism can first be identified in this argument in the distinction that is made between appearance and reality. The witch attempts to reinforce her power over the children and Puddleglum by reinforcing that appearances represent reality when in actual fact they do not. Matthews suggests that here Lewis is again reinforcing Plato's cave parable, through the witch's attempt to convince the protagonists that their belief in the Narnia is an illusion; that Narnia is not real, just as the firelight and the objects in Plato's cave produce the shadows that the prisoners believe to be real.\textsuperscript{626} The witch's statement also alludes to the theory of Forms. It acknowledges a belief in "bigger and better" versions of that which exists in the sensible aspect of reality, meaning that what the sensible represents a flawed copy of the original Form. The reference to that which is "bigger and better", also points toward the superiority and inherent perfection of the Forms. We can see this through taking a closer look at the two examples used in the witch's statement, one of which refers to Aslan. As I have established in part one of this chapter, references to Aslan's country signify the world of Forms. Aslan, then, represents enlightenment.\textsuperscript{627} Even in "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" when Narnia appears to be under the control of the White Witch, Jadis, Aslan's power is immediately visible when he returns to Narnia, as can be seen in the beginnings of spring which permeate the witch's perpetual and magically induced winter. The sun, additionally, retains similar importance as the example of Aslan's spring breaking the magic which had produced the otherwise unending winter.\textsuperscript{628} Thus, we can see that the witch's attempt in "The Silver Chair" to convince the protagonists that Aslan and the sun do not exist highlights the attempt to procure an illusion as reality, just as the prisoners in the cave parable are convinced that...

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{624} Lewis, \textit{The Silver Chair}.p.190  \\
\textsuperscript{625} Osborn, 'Deeper Realms: C.S. Lewis's Revisions of Joseph O'neill's Land under England ', p.117  \\
\textsuperscript{626} Ferguson, 'Plato's Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16, Matthews, 'Plato in Narnia'.p.175 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato's Cave', p.133  \\
\textsuperscript{627} Malcolm, 'The Cave Revisited', p.60  \\
\textsuperscript{628} Notopoulos, 'The Symbolism of the Sun and Light in the Republic of Plato', p.166
\end{flushright}
the shadows flickering on the wall constitute reality when in actual fact they represent appearance rather than reality itself.\textsuperscript{629}

Further to this, there is also importance in the role of the enchanted fire that induces the belief that Narnia is not real and subsequently threatens to imprison the protagonists in the cave world.\textsuperscript{630} When Puddleglum is able to extinguish this fire, the imprisoning stupor disappears. We can see that this idea has its origins in Plato’s cave parable in which a combination of light from the fire and a series of objects cast shadows across the cave wall, thus creating the illusionary appearance that the prisoners take to be representative of reality.\textsuperscript{631} Thus, we can see that in both texts fire is the source of illusion and appearance, and likewise in both instances the fire strengthens the bonds that can only be removed upon recognition of the dualist nature of reality.

A quotation of some importance respecting this is given through Puddleglum. Puddleglum states that

\begin{quote}
Suppose we have only dreamed, or made up, all those things – trees and grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself. Suppose we have. Then all I can say is that, in that case, the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones. Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one. And that’s a funny thing, when you come to think of it. We’re just babies making up a game, if you’re right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow. That’s why I’m going to stand by the play-word. I’m on Aslan’s side even if there isn’t any Aslan to lead it. I’m going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn’t any Narnia.\textsuperscript{632}
\end{quote}

The crux of this statement is, in essence, that the Form is superior to the sensible; that which is empirically observable. Firstly, the distinction is made between these two aspects of reality, as can be seen when Puddleglum states that “the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones”. The term “real” here is taken to mean that which is material in nature, or that which is empirically observable. That which is “made-up” in this context is indicative of that which is incorporeal. The statement also implies the superiority

\textsuperscript{629} Ferguson, 'Plato’s Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16, Notopoulos, 'The Symbolism of the Sun and Light in the Republic of Plato', p.163 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato’s Cave', p.133
\textsuperscript{630} Lewis, The Silver Chair.p.190-191
\textsuperscript{631} Ferguson, 'Plato’s Simile of Light, Part 2, the Allegory of the Cave', p.16, Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.p.279, section 515 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato’s Cave', p.133
\textsuperscript{632} Lewis, The Silver Chair.p.191-192
of the incorporeal, as is also seen in the statements "suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one" and "but four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow". Matthews points out the similarities between Puddleglum’s monologue and a discussion that features in Plato’s Republic in which Socrates and Glaucon speak of a scenario in which a painter might paint the ideal perfect person but cannot show that such a person exists in the sensible aspect of reality. The idea that the perfect, ideal person does not exist in the sensible aspect of reality reflects the notion that the sensible is an imperfect example of the archetypal Form which cannot exist in the sensible aspect of reality. This is also reinforced in Puddleglum’s assertion that that the witch’s “real” world, that is the empiric is hollow in comparison with the children’s “made-up” world.

Finally, the practical role that the post-conversion Lewis saw as being an inherent aspect of recognition and acceptance that reality is dualist in nature can be observed in the character of a giant called Father Time, as was discussed in part one of this chapter. Father Time appears in both “The Silver Chair” and “The Last Battle”. In my discussion pertaining to “The Last Battle” in part one of this chapter, I made the distinction between Father Time’s sleeping and waking states, drawing attention to the notion that the sleeping giant represented the movement of time and the subsequent continuation of the sensible aspect of reality and the waking state of the giant represented the cessation of both time and the sensible aspect of reality. Where “The Last battle” saw Father Time awaken, “The Silver Chair” features Father Time in a sleeping state. Given that Father Time is first encountered asleep in the underworld network of caves, and given that the caves represent the sensible in Platonic terms, we can see further evidence that Father Time's sleeping state represents the operation of time and its influence on the sensible aspect of reality. This is so, because Father Time has not stirred and continues to remain in the cave (that is, the sensible). Smith corroborates this by explaining the measurable quality of time and further reflecting that

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633 Matthews, 'Plato in Narnia'.p.176
634 Smith, 'Eternity and Time'.p.207
635 Ibid.p.207
eternity is not measurable in the same way; “how can we have a share in eternity if we are in time?” Thus, the sleeping state of the giant, Father Time, represents the existence of material aspect of reality. Part one of this chapter detailed the practical value of knowledge of the dualist nature of reality that the character of Father Time represents.

Thus, it can be seen that the inclusion of the underworld network of caves in “The Silver Chair” is particularly influenced by Plato’s cave parable. Lewis utilises imagery from the cave parable in order to reinforce the position that recognition and acceptance of knowledge that reality is dualist in nature must have a practical application in order to constitute as morality, which can be seen in behaviour undertaken by the witch (or “the lady of the green kirtle”). The resulting imprisonment of other inhabitants of the underworld suggests that the practical application must be morally be sound if enlightenment is to take place.

**Part Three: Additional Examples**

In this part of the chapter, I will discuss additional examples that arise in “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” and “Prince Caspian” which both reflect that positive practical applications of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature constitutes a universally applicable definition of morality and this has importance for the attainment of enlightenment.

The character of the White Witch is significant in showing the consequences that come from negative practical applications of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature. The White Witch is a villain who features in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* and whose history is shown in *The Magician’s Nephew*, which also describes the genesis of Narnia. *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, conversely, depicts the White Witch’s downfall.

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636 Ibid, pp.204-207
In *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, we see the Witch at the height of her villainy. She controls Narnia with a perpetual winter in which Christmas never arrives, hence her becoming known as the "White" Witch. Should any of the residents of Narnia show disloyalty in any manner, they are punished by the Witch by being transformed into statues.\(^{637}\) This is a morally adverse practical application of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature. Not only does it provide an insight into the morally reprehensible nature of the Witch, it also evidences a reversal of the statue metaphor in *Mere Christianity* which is discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis. Rather than showing the role of incorporeal, archetypal essence in instigating the transformation from an object into a real living entity, however, this example shows the witch to be actively removing that incorporeal essence. This effectively puts the character in question into a purely materialistic state and removes their capacity to become enlightened.

The character of Mr Tumnus the faun is an example of this. Mr Tumnus is transformed into a statue by the Witch as punishment for helping Lucy to leave Narnia rather than turning her over to the Witch's secret police.\(^{638}\) Conversely, that the children view Mr Tumnus' rescue and restoration as being of high importance reflects a morally sound practical application of the knowledge of reality.\(^{639}\) The importance of this knowledge taking on a practical role is paramount in this example because should the children fail to act on their knowledge, Mr Tumnus will continue to remain a statue and will never attain enlightenment. That the children wish to restore Mr Tumnus to his former self also suggests that they place value on the intelligible essence that is necessary in animating the material object and their willingness to act on their moral goodness. The Witch, on the other hand, clearly views this essence as repugnant since she prefers to remove it from the individual instead. As Lewis explains in *Mere Christianity*, the use of statue imagery here represents a lack of real life in that which is solely material in nature and suggests that the incorporeal


\(^{638}\) Ibid. p.86

\(^{639}\) Ibid. p.87
intelligible essence is required if the material example is to be considered as a real living entity. Considering that the Witch is portrayed by Lewis to be evil in the story, her behaviour in transforming Narnia's residents into statues as punishment for disloyalty and treason, she represents rejection of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature. Her evil nature also exacerbates the immorality inherent in this rejection.

This act of rejection represents a significant impediment in the receiving character's capacity to become enlightened, and because this is considered to be a punishment for disloyalty we can see that it is evidence of the Witch's own inability to attain enlightenment. That she would interfere with another's ability to attain enlightenment is evidence of her capacity for evil. This example is important to note because it represents a failure of a universally applicable definition of morality which, in turn, carries the consequence of an inability to attain enlightenment. This theme will be further discussed in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

An example of a positive practical application of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature, however, is featured in "Prince Caspian". Here we see Lucy, Peter, Edmund, Susan and a dwarf journeying through Narnia in order to reinstate Prince Caspian as the rightful ruler. Along the journey, when they are trying to navigate their way through a difficult gorge, Lucy claims to have seen Aslan.640 Her companions, however, strongly deny that Aslan is presenting, claiming not to be able to see him.641 In the first instance, this demonstrates the distinction between the empirically observable aspect of reality and the incorporeal. This also repeats the idea that both aspects are present within reality.

Despite the disbelief expressed by her companions, however, Lucy maintains her belief in the presence of the incorporeal Aslan. She acts on these beliefs by leaving their camp one night and following Aslan when she sees him again.642 She is rewarded with an encounter in which she can speak to and touch Aslan and receive his advice.643 We can see

641 Ibid. pp.155-157
642 Ibid. pp.148-155
643 Ibid.
here how Aslan represents dualist reality in that he appears to be incorporeal and yet he is empirically observable to Lucy in that she can see, touch and speak to him. The disbelief expressed by Lucy’s companions represents a rejection of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature. Because of this rejection, they can only see that which is empirically observable, or material, in nature. That Lucy acts on her belief that Aslan is present by actually following him suggests that her recognition of the dualist nature of reality (as embodied by Aslan) has practical value.

At Lucy’s insistence, the others agree to follow her when she next sees Aslan. Edmund in particular defends Lucy though he cannot yet see Aslan himself.\footnote{Ibid. p.139 & 159} He does so on the basis that Lucy has been correct about such matters in the past (CF Lucy’s discovery of Narnia in the wardrobe in “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe”). Thus Edmund also displays a willingness to give practical value to the idea that reality is dualist in nature. It is notable that in following Lucy, the others first see Aslan’s shadow before seeing Aslan himself.\footnote{Ibid. p.161} Shadow imagery is significant in that it refers to Plato’s cave parable in which shadows on a cave wall are imitations of reality itself. And the same is true here. The shadow is an imperfect imitation of Aslan himself. That they first see his shadow implies that this is a result of their previous adherence only to what was empirically observable. As such, they at first only see the imperfect imitation of Aslan rather than seeing Aslan himself.

Susan is the last of the four children (excepting the dwarf) to see the real Aslan. Up until this point, we can observe that Susan has been highly resistant to the knowledge that the incorporeal Aslan is present among them. She claims that Lucy’s insistence on this fact is derived from Lucy “being downright naughty”.\footnote{Ibid. p.158} This incident offers insight into the role that Susan takes later in the series. We can here see the beginnings of Susan’s rejection of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature, which we can see is cemented in “The Last Battle” in which it is mentioned that Susan does not re-enter Narnia and become

\footnote{644 Ibid. p.139 & 159}
\footnote{645 Ibid. p.161}
\footnote{646 Ibid. p.158}
enlightened upon the physical Narnia's destruction because at that point she is preoccupied with materialistic things such as make-up and parties.647

When Susan finally does see Aslan in this instance, however, we can see that fear has played a pivotal role in Susan's resistance to recognising the true nature of reality. Aslan states "'you have listened to fears, child,' said Aslan. 'Come, let me breathe on you. Forget them'."648 As discussed in Chapter Four, in *Mere Christianity*, Lewis claimed that fear plays a role in preventing recognition of true reality.649 We can see this notion embodied in Susan in that her fear initially prevents her from seeing the reality of the incorporeal Aslan's presence.

After Susan, the dwarf is the very last of the group to see Aslan. Unlike the others, however, he does not gain the ability to see Aslan through his own efforts. The dwarf represents complete rejection of the incorporeal aspect of reality and strictly adheres to materialism. When asked by Peter, the dwarf replies that "I have no use for magic lions which are talking lions and don't talk, and friendly lions though they don't do us any good, and whopping big lions though nobody can see them. It's all bilge and beanstalks as far as I can see".650 The dwarf's firm belief in an empirically observable reality means that at no point can he realise that Aslan is present, as with the others. It is only at Aslan's command that he is finally able to see the truth.

From these examples, we can see that knowledge of the dualist nature of reality alone is insufficient for morality and enlightenment. Positive practical value is also necessary. We can also observe that rejection of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature has the consequence of preventing morality and, in turn, enlightenment.

647 Lewis, *The Last Battle*, pp.165-166
648 Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, p.165
649 Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p.161
650 Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, p.159
Conclusion

Thus we can see that the claim that reality is dually comprised of that which is empirically observable and that which is incorporeal is central to *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The included characters and associated imagery also allows Lewis to show that acceptance or rejection of this knowledge has practical results that either influence or limit morality, and that this practical application can directly impact a person's ability to become enlightened. Chapter Seven of this thesis, then, will explore the role of this claim in other Platonist motivations for Lewis's belief in a universal morality. This opposes previously held assumptions that such motivations actually showed Lewis's need to prove the existence of God.
Chapter Seven – Heaven and Hell

In Chapter Four of this thesis I examined the Augustinian influences on Lewis’s thinking. Augustine is widely acknowledged as the first Christian to make use of Platonic concepts in order to create a connection between Platonism and Christianity, as shown in Chapter Four. Of importance here was the influence of Manichaeism on Augustine and the associated moral connotations this influence had on Augustinian thinking. Namely, this refers to a “struggle” between good and evil coupled with the belief that the bodily, and that which is also comprised of matter, is evil. As I explained in Chapter Four, Augustine’s maturation toward Platonism encouraged an embrace of a dualist view of human nature that acknowledged the role of the human mind and soul.

The importance of this thinking for Lewis lies in the associated moral connotations, which Lewis emphasises in utilising imagery pertaining to heaven and hell as seen in The Great Divorce and The Screwtape Letters. The usage of heaven and hell reiterates Lewis’s belief in universal morality. In this chapter, I will explore the Platonic influences on this belief in reinforcing the claim that practical value of knowledge of the dualist nature of reality is a requirement for morality. I will draw attention to the significance of this universal morality in that it allows for the enlightenment of the human person, which differs from previously held arguments that Lewis’s universal morality signified a desire to prove God’s existence.

Part One: The Great Divorce

The Great Divorce is a novel in which Lewis responds to William Blake’s The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. The phrase “the great divorce” immediately sets the pretext for this, with Lewis claiming heaven and hell to be separate from each other, rather than unified as the

title of Blake's text implies. *The Great Divorce* features a protagonist who is first introduced as being a new occupant of a dull and grey town that is revealed to be hell. The story subsequently follows the protagonist's bus journey from hell to the outskirts of heaven. The idea that heaven and hell are independent of each other is central here. The usage of heaven and hell shows the Christian context that permeates the work of the post-conversion Lewis. The role of heaven and hell implies concepts of good and evil that are universally knowable by all. The influence of Platonism, however, suggests that proving God's existence was not the sole motivation for Lewis's belief in universal morality. I will examine the Platonic influences on this belief throughout this chapter. Allred supports this in claiming that the context of *The Great Divorce* is Platonic.  

At the outset of the book Lewis describes hell to be a grey town much like any other town except that it is presented as colourless and devoid of joy. When a bus appears, clearly having arrived from a place which is a stark contrast (we later learn that this is heaven), Lewis describes both it and the driver; “it was a wonderful vehicle, blazing with golden light, heraldically coloured. The driver himself seemed full of light”.  

This description reinforces the contrast between hell and the bus, which clearly is not from hell. The bus is distinct from, and independent of, the town. Subsequently, the description of it as “heraldic” and “blazing with golden light” also confirms that the bus clearly doesn't belong to the colourless grey town which is presented as being hell. As Adams points out, such contrasting imagery serves to accentuate that the two are distinct from each other. The description of the bus immediately creates the predisposition toward heaven's separateness from hell. The

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655 Adams, 'The Great Divorce: An Essay',
656 Lewis, *The Great Divorce*.p.3
657 Adams, 'The Great Divorce: An Essay',
658 Ibid.
“heraldically colour” bus that is “blazing with golden light” is in stark contrast to the colourless, dull nature of hell and thus we can understand that the bus has journeyed here from heaven. The idea that transportation is required in order for people to move from hell to heaven (and vice versa as *The Great Divorce* shows) repeats the idea that the two are separate and completely distinct.

The separateness of heaven and hell is important in understanding Lewis’s approach to universal morality because it defines morality on the basis of whether the person occupies heaven or hell. In terms of my central claim, we can understand this morality to have its basis entirely in the acceptance or rejection of knowledge of the dualist nature of reality. Rejection of this knowledge, then, can be taken to represent evil or ‘hell’, while acceptance of this knowledge (in addition to this knowledge having practical value as is indicative of the post-conversion Lewis) can be taken to represent good or ‘heaven’. This structure, as is utilised by *The Great Divorce*, suggests that morality can be universally understood in this context. The Platonic influence of the separateness of heaven and hell is overt.659 Plato holds the sensible aspect of reality to be less desirable than the intelligible, hence the emphasis on the necessity of a journey in order to move from one to the other, as is seen in the cave parable in which the freed individual must journey out of the cave.660 Here also we can see that the two aspects of reality (the cave and world beyond the cave), one clearly more morally desirable than the other.661

In order to further extrapolate this theme, I will discuss some of the Platonic influences on the text. The first hint that Platonism is an overt influence on *The Great Divorce* can be found in Allred who states that “the books structure and premise are heavily Platonic”.662 As mentioned previously, correlations can first be identified with Plato’s cave parable. In *The Great Divorce* hell is described as a dark, dingy place in which it rains

662 Allred, 'The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce',.
perpetually, with the towns-folk who are waiting for the bus displaying negative outbursts of emotion. This depiction of hell shows it to be negative place that appears to lack defining substance. This is reminiscent of Plato’s cave parable in that the atmosphere within the cave is dark and shadowy, resulting in the chained occupants knowing only this aspect of reality.\textsuperscript{663} The negativity entrenched in the occupants as a result of their bondage to such a place is evident in their disparaging response to the individual who has experienced the world outside the cave.\textsuperscript{664}

This lack of defining substance is reflected in \textit{The Great Divorce} in that the occupants of hell are described as being ghost-like and insubstantial with Lewis describing their desire to obtain “real commodities”.\textsuperscript{665} Clearly, the dull and dreary “grey town” that is hell lacks those properties which would have made it substantial and real. Reality, as I argue in this thesis, is dually comprised of the empirically observable and the incorporeal. A failure to recognise either results in the insubstantiality that is representative of a lack of reality. As Allred points out, this has correlations with Plato’s cave parable.\textsuperscript{666} In the cave parable, the situation within the cave is depicted as less real than that which lies beyond the cave because it is principally composed of shadows cast by a fire and a series of puppets.\textsuperscript{667} The chained prisoners do not see the puppets but only the shadows cast and thus erroneously believe the shadows to be real.\textsuperscript{668} Allred supports this in emphasising that “Hell also illustrates Plato’s theory of a world of shadows... Hell is the ‘shadowlands’”.\textsuperscript{669} This indicates a clear correlation between Plato’s cave parable and Lewis's portrayal of hell.

The settings of heaven and hell in \textit{The Great Divorce} reinforce that moral connotations are attached to this. This immediately draws the implication that hell epitomises evil while heaven is thought of as epitomising good. We can understand, then,
that *The Great Divorce* signifies the importance of positive moral betterment.\(^{670}\) The same is true of Platonism. In *The Symposium* Diotima describes the process of ascension from the material to the Form with an emphasis on the moral superiority of the Form.\(^{671}\) This idea is further reinforced in *The Great Divorce* when Lewis describes the protagonist’s initial description of, and reaction to, the destination of the bus. In comparison to the dark and dreary imagery that characterises Lewis’s portrayal of hell, this new place is described as being fresh and light and being in possession of a solidity that is not found in hell.\(^{672}\) This place is clearly indicative of reality, which is in opposition to the insubstantiality that characterises hell. This place is explained to be where the ghosts are met by beings who intend to escort them to heaven. Lewis describes these escorts as spirits in order to differentiate between them and the ghosts from hell. This description also reiterates the fundamental separateness between heaven and hell, in addition to reinforcing that heaven is more morally desirable.\(^{673}\)

The reaction of the ghosts to this destination presents an interesting conundrum. The ghosts display fear and misgiving and prefer the dismal world of the grey town that they are accustomed to.\(^{674}\) Furthermore, pain also appears to permeate their reactions to this new place, as is shown in the following statement; “Will you come with me to the mountains? It will hurt at first, until your feet are hardened. Reality is harsh to the feet of the shadows”.\(^{675}\) This emphasises the distinction between two aspects of reality.\(^{676}\) Additionally, being escorted by a spirit is presented as the only means of entering heaven and subsequently becoming enlightened. That this enlightenment is not possible for those who remain in hell shows the importance of recognising and accepting that which universally constitutes morality (as is evidenced in the concept of heaven) and that this

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\(^{670}\) Adams, ‘*The Great Divorce: An Essay*’,


\(^{672}\) Allred, ‘”The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce”’, & Lewis, *The Great Divorce*.pp.21-23

\(^{673}\) Adams, ‘*The Great Divorce: An Essay*’, & Allred, ‘”The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce”’,

\(^{674}\) Lewis, *The Great Divorce*.p.22

\(^{675}\) Ibid.p.39

\(^{676}\) Bos, ‘”Aristotelianism’ and ‘Platonic’ Dualism in Hellenistic and Early Christian Philosophy and in Gnosticism’, p.273 & Malcolm, ‘*The Cave Revisited*’, pp.65-67
directly impacts whether or not enlightenment will take place. This notion is emphasised when one of the aforementioned spirit escorts tells the ghost he was sent to meet that they must undertake the journey to heaven together because “you will never get there alone”.677 This is the only means by which the ghost can gain the solidity (reality) sufficient for entry to heaven and repeats the idea that a universal concept of what constitutes moral goodness is essential for enlightenment. What constitutes this morality, as argued in this thesis, lies in the practical value of recognition and acceptance of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature.

The role of universal morality here reinforces that there is an expectation that the journey from hell to heaven will result in their enlightenment.678 As Malcolm suggests, this enlightenment stems from moral education, which results when we “recognise the forms of temperance, courage and other moral qualities”.679 In context of The Great Divorce, Hell represents negative universal morals. To journey away from this environment and toward heaven, which is indicative of positive universal morals, enables a choice to be made between rejecting morality and returning to the insubstantial lifestyle previously accustomed to, or accepting the morality that stems from recognising and accepting that reality is dualist in nature. The choice to accept this morality enables the individual to enter heaven and become enlightened.680 The majority of the ghosts in The Great Divorce appear to reject this, while the protagonist shows willingness to accept what his own escort teaches him.681 The ghosts’ rejection, therefore, renders them unable to become enlightened.

Platonic influences can be identified here. Lewis’s statement that “reality is harsh to the feet of the shadows” can be seen as a reflection of the cave parable in that the cave is dominated by insubstantial shadows which the prisoners take to represent reality.682 True reality, however, is ridiculous to the prisoners; because of their chains they are only able to...

677 Lewis, The Great Divorce.pp.29-30
678 Malcolm, 'The Cave Revisited', pp.65-67
679 Ibid.p.62
680 Adams, 'The Great Divorce: An Essay',
681 Ibid.
682 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.p.279 s515
see the shadows and thus the idea that anything else exists behind them is ridiculous to them.\textsuperscript{683} This is reflected in \textit{The Great Divorce} in the ghosts’ rejection of heaven and preference to return to the grey town.\textsuperscript{684}

We can also see correlations between \textit{The Great Divorce} and the Platonic distinction between appearance and reality. As discussed, the statement “reality is harsh to the feet of the shadows” is primarily influenced by Plato’s cave parable.\textsuperscript{685} We can also observe this influence to reflect the distinction between what is real and what only appears to be real. Wriglesworth alludes to this by highlighting that the role of the dream-like structure of \textit{The Great Divorce} signifies that the empirically observable does not always necessarily represent reality and that there may be more to reality than meets the eye.\textsuperscript{686} “But, certainly, like \textit{The Great Divorce}, all of this is merely just a dream, an imaginative legend for the child at heart. There are no such things as unicorns. Or, are there? If the person of Christ has truly absorbed myth into historical reality, we might one day find ourselves on the other side of a Great Story”.\textsuperscript{687} In other words, immediate appearances may not always show what is indicative of reality. I will use the following quotation to elaborate:

Hell is a state of mind – ye never said a truer word. And every state of mind, left to itself, every shutting up of the creature within the dungeon of its own mind – is, in the end, Hell. But heaven is not a state of mind. Heaven is reality itself. All that is fully real is Heavenly.\textsuperscript{688}

When Lewis speaks of Hell being a “state of mind” in comparison to Heaven being “fully real” we can see that this refers to false preconceptions about the nature of reality, thus creating a distinction between appearance and reality. Plato utilises an analogy in order to clarify this concept. In the cave parable Plato describes the distinction between the world of shadows within the cave and the real, light-filled, world outside of the cave.\textsuperscript{689} Prisoners within the cave are bound with chains so they are only able to see the shadows flickering

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{683} Ibid. p.281 s517
  \item \textsuperscript{684} Lewis, \textit{The Great Divorce}.p.21
  \item \textsuperscript{685} Ibid.p.39
  \item \textsuperscript{687} Ibid. p.39
  \item \textsuperscript{688} Lewis, \textit{The Great Divorce}.p.70
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
across the cave wall. As a result they believe that these shadows represent true reality. Of course, the truth is that these are only shadows, created by the light of a fire reflecting against a series of objects and when we are introduced to the world outside of the cave we are introduced to that which represents true reality, which is revealed to be a stark contrast to the world within the cave. When Lewis speaks of the distinction between a state of mind and true reality, therefore, we can identify clearly Platonic influences.

One way in which we can see this at work in The Great Divorce is in the insubstantiality that characterises the ghosts and hell. There is a marked contrast, then, between the nature of the ghosts and the nature of the environment that the bus transports them to. The new environment is solid, durable, colourful and more brightly lit than the grey town that the ghosts are accustomed to. It is clear that this place, which is presented as being the outskirts of heaven, is more “real” than the shadowy, dull and colourless environment of hell; just as for Plato the bright sunlit world outside of the cave is more real than the dark and shadow-filled environment within the cave. Lewis also makes the distinction between reality and appearance by raising the notion of “real commodities”. One of the ghosts arrives with the idea that “some real commodities – anything at all that you could really bite or drink or sit down on” would be highly in demand in hell and since such commodities are available in heaven (because heaven is real where hell is less real), a ghost could journey to heaven to retrieve such commodities and return to hell in order to generate business. Firstly, this highlights the clear lack in hell of that which is necessary to constitute reality. It also reflects the role of universal morality in Lewis’s work. We can see this in the attempt of the ghosts to profit materially from heaven rather than accept heaven itself. In so doing, they negate the possibility of becoming enlightened. This is the

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690 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.p.278 s514
691 Ibid.p.279 s515 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato's Cave', p133
692 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.278-279 ss514-515 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato's Cave', pp.131-133
693 Allred, "'The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce'",
694 Ibid. & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.279-280 s515
695 Lewis, The Great Divorce.p.13
696 Ibid.pp.279-280 s515
697 Allred, "'The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce'",

result of a failure of morality, which occurs in the ghost’s choice to accept only material profit. The choice to accept only materialism, rather than knowledge of true reality, negates morality which, in turn, prevents enlightenment from taking place. This idea is reflected in the ordeal of a ghost who attempts to pick up a small apple found in the outskirts of heaven, a task which is faced with difficulty, in order to take it back to hell. Upon seeing this, attempt, a spirit escort says to the ghost “fool... put it down. You cannot take it back. There is not room for it in Hell. Stay here and learn to eat such apples”.698

Lewis details the mentality of the ghosts. We can observe that they dislike the brightness of the outskirts of heaven. As the bus approaches, the protagonist opens a window only to be rebuked by the other passengers for letting the light in.699 They also display an inordinate amount of fear at the new environment they find themselves in once they depart from the bus.700 They even expect to experience pain and difficulty in their new environment.701 A spirit escort subsequently explains to the ghost he has been assigned to meet that without his aid the journey will be arduous, demanding and impossible to complete.702 This is much like Plato’s cave parable in which the chained prisoners are unable to accept that anything exists beyond the shadow world and they do not contemplate reality until they are confronted with the knowledge by the freed prisoner who returns to the cave, at which point they reject the knowledge.703 As we can see, this lack of ability to accept the existence of that which is not empirically observable results in an inability to become enlightened. As Lewis writes; “if you are interested in the country only for the sake of painting it, you’ll never learn to see the country”.704

Plato’s influence on the concept of an individual returning to a material environment is particularly notable. In the cave parable, Plato explains the situation that the individual

698 Lewis, The Great Divorce.p.49
699 Ibid.p.17
700 Ibid.p.22
702 Lewis, The Great Divorce.p.29
704 Lewis, The Great Divorce.p.84
faces upon returning to the cave after having been liberated and having experienced the reality outside the cave.\textsuperscript{705}

If he had to discriminate between the shadows, in competition with the other prisoners, while he was still blinded and before his eyes got used to the darkness – a process that might take some time – wouldn’t he be likely to make a fool of himself? And they would say that his visit to the upper world had ruined his sight, and that the ascent was not worth even attempting. And if anyone tried to release them and lead them up, they would certainly kill him if they could lay hands on him.\textsuperscript{706}

This is mirrored by \textit{The Great Divorce} in the context that the majority of the ghosts journey to heaven with the intention of returning to hell again.\textsuperscript{707} Also true of both Plato and Lewis is that the attempt to return does not necessarily work. In \textit{The Great Divorce} this is made clear when it is demonstrated that commodities cannot be taken from heaven back to hell.\textsuperscript{708} The reason for this is that it holds materialism as being of greater importance than recognising and accepting the dualist nature of reality, which represents a failure of morality. In the cave parable, also, we can see that the return of the individual to the cave to teach the prisoners what he has discovered is unsuccessful because he is met with ridicule and significant threats to his life.\textsuperscript{709} So too are Lewis’s ghosts faced with the impossibility of bringing real commodities from heaven back down to hell. We can see that Platonism has a clear influence on Lewis here. Of course, the ghosts in \textit{The Great Divorce} show that they are not yet capable of entering heaven and becoming enlightened with their intent being solely to profit from real commodities. The spirit escorts are quick to explain this. It is clear, then, that Lewis views rejection of reality in favour of materialism to signify a failure of morality which has the ramification of preventing enlightenment.\textsuperscript{710}

As discussed in Chapters Four and Six of this thesis, Plato also had a clear influence on Lewis’s concept of time. In Chapter Four I discussed the Platonic influence on the way in which Lewis approaches the role of time in context of both the empirically observable and the incorporeal aspects of reality. As I explained in Chapter Four, Lewis argues that human

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{705} Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.281-282 s517
\bibitem{706} Ibid.pp.281-282 s517
\bibitem{707} Adams, 'The Great Divorce: An Essay', & Allred, "'The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce'";
\bibitem{708} Adams, 'The Great Divorce: An Essay', & Allred, "'The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce'";
\bibitem{709} Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.281-282 s517
\bibitem{710} Adams, 'The Great Divorce: An Essay', Allred, "'The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce'"; & Lewis, \textit{The Great Divorce}.p.49
\end{thebibliography}
beings are subject to the limitation of time; the “moment by moment” way in which it moves, and the developmental flux that subjects people to constant change.\textsuperscript{711} This is contrasted with the state of being “beyond time”. Lewis likens this to God who exists outside of this time-frame limitation, and who is not subject to change. Lewis explains that “every other moment from the beginning of the world is always present for him... He has all eternity in which to listen to the split second of prayer put up by a pilot as his plane crashes into flames”.\textsuperscript{712} God is eternal and not subject to time constraints, whereas human beings are mortal and subject to the limitation of time. As I explained in Chapter Four, this is influenced by Plato’s theory of being and becoming, as are set out in the \textit{Timaeus}.\textsuperscript{713} The sensible aspect of reality is in a state of ‘becoming’, meaning that it has a beginning and an end, and is constantly fluctuating, which is mirrored by Lewis’s conception of what it means to be subjected to time constraints.\textsuperscript{714}

Not only is this connection seen in \textit{Mere Christianity} (as I argued in Chapter Four) but it is also present in \textit{The Great Divorce}. The distinction between heaven and hell that is described sets each place in a very different frame of time. As Lewis states; “time does not work that way when once ye have left the Earth”, along with a spirit escort who says “this moment contains all moments” both of which clearly show a difference in the operation of time in heaven and hell.\textsuperscript{715} Lewis provides an analogy in order to describe the difference between those who are limited by time and those who are not.

I saw a great assembly of gigantic forms all motionless, all in deepest silence, standing forever about a little silver table and looking upon it. And on the table there were little figures like chessmen who went to and fro doing this and that. And I knew that each chessman was the idolum or puppet representative of some of the great presences that stood by. And the acts and motions of each chessman were a moving portrait, a mimicry or pantomime, which delineated the inmost nature of his giant master. And these chessmen are men and women as they appear to themselves and to one another in this world. And the silver table is time. And those who stand and watch are the immortal souls of those same men and women.\textsuperscript{716}

\textsuperscript{711} C.S. Lewis, \textit{Mere Christianity} (San Francisco HarperCollins, 2001).p.167
\textsuperscript{712} Ibid.p.167
\textsuperscript{714} Ibid.pp.715-716 ss27d-28b
\textsuperscript{715} Lewis, \textit{The Great Divorce}.p.109 & 139
\textsuperscript{716} Ibid.p.143
This analogy suggests the difference between the mortality inherent in the material aspect of reality and the eternal nature of the incorporeal and the role that time plays for each. That the chess pieces on the table (the table representing time) are constantly moving "doing this and that" signifies the constant fluctuation and change that is indicative of time constraints and Plato’s state of becoming, as explained previously.\(^{717}\) The table, as said, represents time and the figures who stand at the circumference of the table "forever" are clearly not restrained by time in the same way that the chess pieces are. These figures, additionally, are still. They do not move like the chess pieces do. They simply stand and watch. This lack of movement is indicative of the constancy that is representative of Plato’s state of being.\(^{718}\)

That the chess pieces are miniature representatives of the immortal beings outside of the table suggests that they are essentially imitations of those same beings. In the theory of Forms, that which is found in the sensible world is explained to be an imperfect copy, or imitation, of the perfect archetype.\(^{719}\) Lewis’s analogy clearly embodies this notion.

Lewis explains the necessity that time has for human beings. "Time is the very lens through which ye see – small and clear, as men see through the wrong end of a telescope – something that would otherwise be too big for ye to see at all... ye can see it only through the lens of Time, in a little clear picture, through the inverted telescope",\(^{720}\) This perhaps explains the reason why the ghosts are portrayed as experiencing fear and difficulty when they depart the bus and are met by the spirits who are sent to escort them to heaven. The idea that because of our mortal nature a human being cannot completely attain enlightenment is reminiscent of the Platonic notion that only when physical death occurs can a person become enlightened, as discussed in Chapter Four.

The process of moving from acceptance of only the material to acceptance that reality is dualist in nature is given importance by Lewis, as we can see in the protagonist’s

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\(^{718}\) Ibid.p.9


\(^{720}\) Lewis, *The Great Divorce*.pp.140-141
experiences on the bus. From the outset of *The Great Divorce*, there is an immediate focus on the bus when the protagonist sees that the bus stop is the only part of the town which seems to draw any sort of activity and thus the protagonist is attracted to it. This immediately creates the predisposition toward a journey of some importance. Additionally, the difference between the town (which is grey, dull and lifeless) and the bus and its driver (which are colourful and lit with bright golden light) suggests that because there are such vast differences between the two places then a transformation, journey or process of some significance is required to take place. The journey on the bus itself is taken up with conversations between the protagonist and the other passengers. These conversations highlight the fear and hostility of the ghosts travelling from hell to heaven and their lack of ability to co-operate with one another. In Platonism, the process of accepting that the sensible alone is not indicative of reality also has importance. In the cave parable, Plato describes the process of adjustment as the recently freed prisoner journeys out of the darkened atmosphere within the cave to the sunlit world outside. Also described is the difficulty in gaining understanding and acceptance from the other prisoners, who of course do not believe that anything exists beyond the cave because that is all that they are able to see while they remain chained to the cave wall. There is a clear connection between Lewis and Plato here in that both suggest that there is a process of adjustment in gaining new knowledge, and that this new knowledge is often met with cynicism by those who not yet become enlightened.

Allred argues that another connection between Lewis and Plato can be found in examining their shared preference of trusting reason rather than emotion. Allred states that “like Plato, Lewis distrusted emotion... Lewis uses Platonic concepts in *The Great Divorce* and shows how destructive unreasoned emotion can be by presenting a world of

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721 Adams, 'The Great Divorce: An Essay',
722 Ibid. & Lewis, *The Great Divorce* p.3
723 Adams, 'The Great Divorce: An Essay',
724 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.279-280 ss515-516
725 Ibid.p.281 s517 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato's Cave', p.132
726 Allred, "The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce",
ultimate reality where, in the absence of shadows, final truth can be found”.727 We can see evidence of the destructive nature of emotion in *The Great Divorce* in the hostility displayed in the ghosts and in the fear they feel upon disembarking the bus to continue the journey to heaven.728 In both instances, the emotion displayed by the ghosts prevents them undertaking the journey to heaven. In hell, some of the ghosts become so consumed by their arguments with one another that they fail to board the bus completely and so remain in hell and do not ascend to heaven at all. In the latter instance, the ghosts who have completed the bus journey, and find themselves met by the spirits who are to guide them to heaven, feel such fear and mistrust that their journey is impeded. Some find the solidity and brightness of this new environment to be so terrifying that they get back on the bus to return to hell. Emotion is shown to be problematic in this context because it is reliant on empirical observation which alone is not an accurate depiction of reality. The ghosts’ inability to utilise reason instead of emotion reiterates that they represent the sensible aspect of reality and the moral ramifications associated with rejection of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature, which has the result of impeding their capacity to become enlightened. Indeed, this is the expectation of many of the ghosts in the story; that the occupants of the bus will always return and we can see that the reason for this is their unbridled negative emotion which is indicative of their attachment to the material world that they are accustomed to. It is equally clear that reason is considered to be more appropriate, as we can see when the spirit escorts attempt to explain the situation to the ghosts.729 “You will get something far better. Never fear” says one of the spirits.730 It is clear from this that Lewis reinforces that relinquishment of destructive unbridled emotions, and the employment of reason in its place, is necessary in order to attain the morality that results in enlightenment.731

727 Ibid.
728 Ibid.
729 Ibid.
730 Lewis, *The Great Divorce*p.28
731 Allred, “The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce"
As Allred states, this conception of reason over emotion is inherently Platonic.\textsuperscript{732} In \textit{The Symposium} when Diotima describes the process of movement from a love of bodily beauty to a love of the Form of beauty, she shows an integral aspect of the process to be that of moving away from that which is sense driven and material in nature.\textsuperscript{733} Thus, the Forms are considered to be the only true source of knowledge, which is a reason why physical death is required.\textsuperscript{734} We can see this in \textit{The Great Divorce} where it is only when fear and distrust are replaced by reasoned enquiry (which can be seen in the questions and discussion exchanged by the protagonist and their spirit escort) that the protagonist is able to discover true knowledge of heaven and hell and attain the morality that results in enlightenment.\textsuperscript{735} 

Allred further argues that a connection exists between Plato and Lewis on the subject of imagination.\textsuperscript{736} He acknowledges that despite there being vast differences between Plato's dislike of art and poetry (because they represent imitations and therefore are unable to replicate the real original Form), and Lewis's use of such formats to express his theories, as discussed in Chapter One, there still exists a connection that suggests Lewis to have been influenced by Plato in the writing of \textit{The Great Divorce}.\textsuperscript{737} Central to this claim is Lewis's acknowledgment that for the protagonist, the events in the story turn out to be a dream, thereby showing the protagonist to have received knowledge of the nature of reality purely from the workings of his own mind. Allred argues that Plato's technique of employing allegory in the telling of the cave parable in order to explain the theory of Forms is much the same, stating that "the philosopher's view outside the cave is something that those who only know shadow have never imagined".\textsuperscript{738} The idea that knowledge is imparted through the faculties of the mind is central to this argument, emphasising the importance of the

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\textsuperscript{732} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{733} Plato, \textit{The Symposium}.pp.59-62
\textsuperscript{734} Shirley Law, 'Into the Wardrobe: Imagining and Re-Imagining Narnia', \textit{Metro Magazine}, 147/pp.10-17 (2006) at pp.24-25.
\textsuperscript{735} Allred, "The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce";
\textsuperscript{736} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{737} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{738} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
intelligible. In both cases the individual in question gains knowledge through purely intelligible means. For instance, the protagonist in *The Great Divorce* accesses the intelligible through a dream, while the individual in the cave parable accesses knowledge of the world of Forms through expanding his imagination to allow him to conceive of what lies beyond the shadows and chains in the cave. It is in this way that both Lewis and Plato draw on imagination in referring to the intelligible. That this is shown as the only way to access true knowledge of reality is a factor in both.

In conclusion, *The Great Divorce* has dual importance. As one of the early works Lewis wrote as a Christian, it suggests an overtly Platonic influence much of which can be understood in terms of Plato's cave parable. The role of heaven and hell, additionally, draw attention to Lewis's belief in universal morality. The Platonic influences on the text, furthermore, imply that enlightenment of the human soul through attaining the morality that results from acceptance of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature is a prominent source of this belief, which differs from commonly held views that Lewis's universal morality was a means of proving God's existence.

**Part Two: The Screwtape Letters**

*The Screwtape Letters* acknowledges *The Great Divorce's* use of heaven and hell in illustrating the distinction between rejection and acceptance of the knowledge that reality is dualist in nature and the associated moral connotations. In this text, Lewis makes use of satire and irony in utilising characters based on the demons of hell in order to further illustrate this distinction and the associated universal morality. Positive morality, as such, is shown to directly impact the capacity to become enlightened.

*The Screwtape Letters* is a satirical novel in which a senior demon, Screwtape, writes letters to his nephew, Wormwood, who is a novice demon. In the story, it is clear that the demons have a similar role to that of guardian angels, albeit with a reversed morality.\(^{739}\)

Rather than offer protection and moral guidance that will allow an individual to attain enlightenment, however, the demons offer guidance that will prevent the recipients from attaining enlightenment.\(^740\) In the nature of satire, Lewis’s character Screwtape refers to God as “the Enemy above” and the Devil as “our Father below”.\(^741\) The aim of satire here is to present the sensible aspect of reality as evil in order to reinforce the idea that knowledge of the dualist nature of reality is morally good. As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, the practical value of this knowledge results in morality which allows the person to become enlightened. It is Screwtape’s aim to prevent this by attempting to dupe the recipient of his advice into believing that the sensible aspect of reality is of sole importance.

In this part of the chapter, I will discuss the distinction that Lewis makes between the two aspects of reality in *The Screwtape Letters* and the moral ramifications that this has in potentially preventing enlightenment from taking place. As with *The Great Divorce*, there are moral connotations associated with imagery pertaining to heaven and hell. In *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis also emphasises the dualist nature present in human beings in terms of possessing both “spiritual” and “animalistic” qualities.\(^742\) Lewis likens this to an amphibian and reiterates the claim that reality is dually material and incorporeal in nature. In this part of the chapter, I will discuss these themes in order to further extrapolate that Lewis’s belief in universal morality has Platonic influences (in terms of the capacity of the human being to become enlightened) as well as Christian connotations (Lewis’s adoption of universal morality is often thought to be an attempt to prove God’s existence).

As stated, the first point raised by *The Screwtape Letters* that is pertinent for discussion is that of the distinction between good and evil. As with *The Great Divorce*, these concepts can be understood in terms of acceptance or rejection of the dualist nature of reality and the subsequent consequence that moral evil has in preventing enlightenment from taking place. Throughout the novel, we are confronted by Screwtape who attempts to

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\(^740\) Ibid.


\(^742\) Bos, ’Aristotelianism’ and ’Platonic’ Dualism in Hellenistic and Early Christian Philosophy and in Gnosticism’, p.273
coach a novice demon, Wormwood, in the ways of appropriately influencing a human being so that they are prevented attaining enlightenment.\textsuperscript{743} Screwtape gives Wormwood advice of this nature; “The Enemy will be working from the centre outwards, gradually bringing more and more of the patient’s conduct under the new standard, and may reach his behaviour to the old lady at any moment. You want to get in first”.\textsuperscript{744} The significant theme here is that of utilising the moral evil inherent in materialism to restrict the person’s capacity to recognise the true nature of reality.\textsuperscript{745} We have seen in \textit{The Great Divorce} that Lewis perceives hell to be representative of this materialism. In keeping with this, we see Screwtape in \textit{The Screwtape Letters} focus his advice to Wormwood on the ways in which it is possible to exaggerate the importance of materialism for the human being they are attempting to influence (referred to in the novel as “the patient”).\textsuperscript{746} Thus Lewis reinforces the connection between materialism and moral evil.

Considering that knowledge of the true nature of reality directly impacts the moral goodness of the person in question, and considering the importance of this morality for attaining enlightenment, we can ascertain that a sole focus on the material aspect of reality is morally question from the idea of “fallenness” that is present in \textit{The Screwtape Letters}.\textsuperscript{747} Lewis refers to Screwtape and Wormwood as fallen, which is in opposition to enlightenment.\textsuperscript{748} Also present in this notion is the idea that the fallen individual must have originally been in possession of knowledge of the true nature of reality themselves. This, then, raises the concept of corruptibility and the importance of this knowledge having a practical value in order to constitute morality. In Plato’s cave parable we see that among the prisoners in the cave, one is able to attain freedom from their bonds and proceed on the journey out of the cave.\textsuperscript{749} After completing this journey, the individual returns to the cave at which point he is treated with scorn by the other prisoners and ridiculed for his

\textsuperscript{744} Harwood, ‘Lewis’s Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God’, \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{745} Jenkyns, ‘Faith and Fantasy’, p.36
\textsuperscript{746} Harwood, ‘Lewis’s Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God’, \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{747} Harwood, ‘Lewis’s Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God’, \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{748} Plato, ‘The Simile of the Cave’.p.279 s515 & Wright, ‘The Origin of Plato’s Cave’, p.132
statements concerning what lies outside of the cave and that true reality lies in that environment rather than the shadows within the cave.\textsuperscript{750} This scorn represents the influence of one's peers, which is clearly also embodied by the role Screwtape takes in attempting to influence “the patient”. Screwtape clearly feels contempt for morality which is shown in his referring to God as “the Enemy”. We can observe this contempt to have a role for both Lewis and Plato. Screwtape's contempt for that which is morally good is a factor influencing the “patient's” capacity to become enlightened, and likewise in Plato the way in which the prisoners in the cave ridicule their compatriot who has just returned from the world outside the cave.\textsuperscript{751} This ridicule influences the capacity of the individual to become enlightened.

If he had to discriminate between the shadows, in competition with the other prisoners, while he was still blinded and before his eyes got used to the darkness – a process that might take some time – wouldn't he be likely to make a fool of himself? And they would say that his visit to the upper world had ruined his sight, and that the ascent was not worth even attempting. And if anyone tried to release them and lead them up, they would certainly kill him if they could lay hands on him.\textsuperscript{752} These influences are clearly corrupting and lead to the enhancement of the imperfection that are inherent in the material aspect of reality. As such, it constitutes a significant impediment in the human's capacity to become enlightened. Thus we can see that the extrapolation of evil in \textit{The Screwtape Letters} depicts the ramifications of negative morality with respect to preventing enlightenment from taking place.\textsuperscript{753} This supports the claim that Lewis's interpretation of moral absolutes has its influence in Plato. Plato's influence suggests that Lewis's universal morality has the goal of aiding the ability to become enlightened. As stated previously, we can understand this to mean that recognition of the dualist nature of reality, and the practical value of this knowledge, constitutes moral goodness, and hence is central to the capacity to become enlightened.\textsuperscript{754} As Folks points out, morality appears to have a transformative quality in the thoughts of Lewis.\textsuperscript{755}

\textsuperscript{750} Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave', pp.280-281 ss516-517
\textsuperscript{751} Ibid. p.281 ss517
\textsuperscript{752} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{753} Harwood, 'Lewis's Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God',
\textsuperscript{755} Ibid. p.111
We can engender further understanding of the connection between moral evil and materialism, and the consequence this has in preventing enlightenment, by examining the influence of Plato’s cave parable which utilises imagery of bonds in association with the sensible. Harwood suggests that “for Lewis, evil is everything but liberating. Because in reality evil is confining, it is like a cage in which the preoccupation with the self molds itself as a prison”. We can see that this idea corresponds with the claim that moral evil prevents enlightenment from taking place. It is also clear that a preoccupation with that which is morally evil in nature is what creates this impediment. This is shown in Plato’s cave parable in which we are presented with imagery depicting individuals who are bound in a prison-like environment. Because of these bonds, the individuals are prevented from moving out of the cave; in other words they are prevented from attaining enlightenment. For Plato we can also see that moral connotations are present. The imagery of the sunlight offers a representation of light and dark which traditionally represent good and bad, respectively. We can see that the environment within the cave is less desirable than being outside the cave, which is also represented by the concept that the individuals are chained. During the journey out of the cave that is undertaken by a prisoner who becomes freed, the imagery of light is reinforced as the freed prisoner’s eyesight must now adjust to the new presence of light. It is also made clear that once this adjustment has been made then the individual will be able to see true reality (embodied by the environment outside the cave). So we can see that there are moral concepts associated with the Platonic concepts of the sensible and the Forms, with the former being morally evil and the latter being morally good. We can also see that because the individuals within the cave believe that the shadows on the wall are indicative of true reality, they have effectively become chained by this

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756 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.p.278 s514
757 Harwood, 'Lewis’s Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God',
758 Ibid.
759 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.278-279 ss514-515 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato’s Cave', p.131
760 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.278-279 ss514-515 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato’s Cave', pp.131-133
761 Wright, 'The Origin of Plato’s Cave', p.132
762 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.279-280 ss515-516 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato’s Cave', p.132
763 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave'.pp.279-280 ss515-516 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato’s Cave', pp.132-133
erroneous belief and, as such, are restricted to that environment.\textsuperscript{764} Lewis utilises the character of Screwtape to demonstrate how these “chains” can be created.

As argued previously, that which is material in nature is presented as constituting moral evil.\textsuperscript{765} What Lewis highlights here is that the blinkeredness that results from an unwavering focus on the sensible aspect of reality has the effect of removing the capacity for recognising the dualist nature of reality. Frequently, Screwtape’s advice to Wormwood centres on emphasising this focus on the sensible for the patient.\textsuperscript{766} Screwtape, however, is very particular about the way in which this must be approached. He tells Wormwood “don’t waste time trying to make him think that materialism is true! Make him think that it is strong, or stark, or courageous – that it is the philosophy of the future”.\textsuperscript{767} This manifests Lewis’s supposition that a preoccupation with the materialism alone is insufficient in preventing enlightenment. For this to happen the materialism must have negative practical value, and as with\textit{ The Great Divorce} Lewis uses emotion as an example of this. It is also why Lewis emphasises the importance of reason rather than unbridled emotion and we can see that the same theme is accentuated in\textit{ The Screwtape Letters}.

The way in which materialism prevents enlightenment is also reflected in Plato’s cave parable. The prisoners in the parable believe the shadows on the wall to be real when in fact they are not.\textsuperscript{768} This has similarities to advice that Screwtape gives to Wormwood when they discuss a situation between the patient and his mother that is unfavourable to the demons. Screwtape advises Wormwood to accentuate the patient’s beliefs in certain imagined negative traits that his mother has in the effort to make him believe that those traits represent reality.\textsuperscript{769} The significance of Screwtape’s advice here lies in the distinction between believing an appearance to be real when in fact that appearance is not indicative of reality at all. We can see this concept in the cave parable. The chains that keep the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{765} Harwood, ’Lewis’s Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God’,
\textsuperscript{766} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{767} Lewis, The Screwtape Letters.pp.11-12
\textsuperscript{768} Plato, ’The Simile of the Cave’.p.279 s515 & Wright, ’The Origin of Plato’s Cave’, pp.131-133
\textsuperscript{769} Lewis, The Screwtape Letters.pp.21-22
\end{flushleft}
prisoners bound in the cave are primarily the result of the belief in the reality of that which is only an appearance and is not indicative of true knowledge. The belief that a falsehood contains truth, then, inhibits our ability to recognise true knowledge and thus the bonds are created and the individuals in the cave become prisoners. The importance of the ability to distinguish between the appearance and reality in this context lies in the capacity of an individual to become enlightened. Screwtape, then, as an agent of evil, seeks to prevent this by reinforcing the patient’s belief that his mother embodies certain traits that in fact do not represent her at all. The more that Screwtape can reinforce the patient’s belief, the less likely he is able to distinguish between appearance and reality and therefore will not be able to attain enlightenment. From this we can see how materialism can be taken to constitute negative morality and how this impacts the capacity to become enlightened. We can observe, then, that in *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis utilises a satirical approach in order to reinforce the importance of not accepting that materialism is solely indicative of reality.

In keeping with this, Screwtape discusses the act of prayer with Wormwood and the importance of maintaining the patient’s focus on praying to a material thing, rather than the maker of the thing (a crucifix for example). For Screwtape, the patient cannot maintain a connection to God while placing his adulation in a material thing. Through this, Lewis emphasises the idea that a sole focus on the material aspect of reality will have the ultimate consequence of preventing enlightenment. In furtherance of this, Screwtape advises Wormwood to convince the patient that reality is solely material, sensible, in nature and to prevent the patient from questioning what is meant by “real.” “You will find that you have been strengthening in your patient the fatal habit of attending to universal issues and withdrawing his attention from the stream of immediate sense experiences. Your business

770 Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave', p.279 s515 & Wright, 'The Origin of Plato's Cave', p.133
773 Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, p.27
774 Harwood, 'Lewis's Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God',
775 Ibid.
is to fix his attention on the stream. Teach him to call it ‘real life’ and don’t let him ask what he means by ‘real’.". The question of what constitutes reality is central to this statement. It is clear that universal morality has particular importance here, seeing as Screwtape acknowledges this. The lack of morality inherent in his rejection of this knowledge, however, drives him to convince the patient that this is not indicative of reality and in so doing prevent him from attaining enlightenment. This concept can be observed in Plato’s *Timaeus* in which Plato extensively discusses the distinction between that which is solely sensible in nature and the Forms. The ramifications of failing to recognise this distinction lie can be evidenced in the associated states of perfection and imperfection, in addition to the ability to recognise true knowledge of the nature of reality. Lewis seeks to depict this distinction through Screwtape. The negative moral connotations implied in Screwtape’s character, which are shown in association with that which is sensible or material in nature, clearly emphasise the imperfection that Plato states is associated with the sensible.

Here we must return our attention to Lewis’s promotion of human nature as dually material and “spiritual”, which gives rise to his description of human beings as “amphibians”. "Humans are amphibians – half spirit and half animal... as spirits they belong to the eternal world, but as animals they inhabit time". This recognition is important in showing that a sole focus on the material aspect of reality is detrimental to human beings, owing to the dualism inherent in their own nature. This signifies that true knowledge of what constitutes reality is central to our capacity to attain enlightenment. The context in which Lewis’s statement is given, namely that the patient is under the influence of Screwtape and Wormwood, might be taken to signify the contention that we, as human beings, tend to recognise our physical needs above all else. Of course, Screwtape’s first

777 Ibid.p.12
779 Plato, "Timaeus".p.716 ss27d-28b
780 Harwood, 'Lewis’s Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God',
781 Bos, "Aristotelianism' and 'Platonic' Dualism in Hellenistic and Early Christian Philosophy and in Gnosticism", p.273
782 Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*.p.44
inclination is to enhance the patient's recognition of his physical needs in furtherance of this end, thus preventing the patient from attaining enlightenment. The significance of this is to remind human beings of the importance of recognising the true nature of reality for the reason that this is to allow us to become enlightenment.\textsuperscript{783}

As discussed previously, Screwtape actively seeks to prevent this recognition by reinforcing in the patient that which constitutes material reality and convincing the patient of its importance.\textsuperscript{784} In Platonism this results in the prevention of recognition of the Forms.\textsuperscript{785} Lewis seeks to change this point of view by promoting acceptance of the dualist nature inherent in reality and in the human beings who inhabit this reality.\textsuperscript{786} That we are dually comprised of both the material and the “spiritual” also implies that our capacity to attain enlightenment is not solely vested in our ability to recognise the incorporeal aspect of reality but that the material aspect of our nature, and of reality, is also of importance. That is, both are equally necessary. This is an early iteration of the idea that appears in the post-conversion Lewis: that recognition of this dualist nature requires practical value in order to be constituted as morally good. Should our focus on one aspect of reality outweigh the other in our thinking, then, our ability to become enlightened becomes limited. This risk is shown when Screwtape encourages Wormwood to enhance the importance of the sensible in the patient’s thinking and behaviour.\textsuperscript{787} The importance of recognising the dual nature of reality is also evident in Lewis’s statement that human nature is also dually comprised of the incorporeal (the “spiritual”) and the material. “As spirits they belong to the eternal world. But as animals they inhabit time”.\textsuperscript{788} The significance of the role of time is further discussed in Chapter’s Four and Six in addition to part one of this Chapter.

\textsuperscript{783} Bos, "Aristotelianism' and 'Platonic' Dualism in Hellenistic and Early Christian Philosophy and in Gnosticism', p.273
\textsuperscript{784} Harwood, 'Lewis's Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God',
\textsuperscript{786} Bos, "Aristotelianism' and 'Platonic' Dualism in Hellenistic and Early Christian Philosophy and in Gnosticism', p.273
\textsuperscript{787} Harwood, 'Lewis's Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God',
\textsuperscript{788} Lewis, \textit{The Screwtape Letters}.p.44
Once again, we can observe the inclusion of reason and emotion. Another tactic employed by Screwtape in seeking to prevent the patient's enlightenment is shown in advice given in which Wormwood is cautioned against invoking use of reason in the patient. Screwtape explains the purpose of this is that reason will supposedly allow the patient to return to the "Enemy". This reference associates reason with God for the purposes of reinforcing moral goodness. This can also be taken to be an allusion to what Plato refers to as intelligible. This association is reinforced in the inclusion of God in the example, as God primarily represents the incorporeal as opposed to the material (in the respect that such a being is not observable with the five human senses. God cannot be seen or touched for example). To this end, Screwtape implies that a focus on purely sense-based experienced is preferable in their attempts to limit the patient’s capacity to become enlightened. This is reinforced in the cave parable in which the ability of individuals to leave the sensible reality that is embodied by their cave environment is restricted.

As stated previously, the connection between reason and the intelligible suggests that emotion is characteristic of the sensible. In this context, then, too much emotion might have the result of limiting the capacity to become enlightened. Allred makes similar observations with respect to the role of emotion and reason in The Great Divorce. As can be expected, it is Screwtape’s intention to use this knowledge to his advantage in attempting to prevent the enlightenment of the patient. For instance, Screwtape informs Wormwood that once reason takes on an important role in life for the individual “they become much less dependent on emotion and therefore harder to tempt”.

**Conclusion**

This chapter extrapolates the Platonic influences that are central to contextualising the claim that morality is derived from the practical value inherent in knowledge of the dual

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790 Murphy, 'Back to the Cave', pp. 211-212
791 Murphy pp. 211-212 & Plato, 'The Simile of the Cave' p. 279 s515
792 Allred, "The Platonic Foundation of the Great Divorce",
793 Harwood, 'Lewis's Screwtape Letters: The Ascetic Devil and the Aesthetic God',
794 Lewis, The Screwtape Letters. p. 18
material and incorporeal nature of reality. Furthermore, we can see that this claim has particular value in revealing an underlying influence on Lewis’s belief in universal morality. Moral goodness and badness, or evilness, fundamentally has its basis the acceptance or rejection of the knowledge of the dualist nature of reality, with acceptance also requiring practical value to constitute morality (as discussed in Chapters Five and Six). The Platonic foundation of this claim, subsequently, suggests that enlightenment of the human soul is an important result of this morality. Thus, we can understand Platonic enlightenment to be as equally important an influence on Lewis’s belief in universal morality as proving God’s existence is.
Chapter Eight – Final Impressions

In this chapter I will discuss the ways in which Lewis's essays reflect the central claim of this thesis. An examination of these essays allows me to present the argument of this thesis in a concise manner. Through this, the importance of the claim concerning Plato’s influence on Lewis will be supported by showing that the essays also indicate that human enlightenment is a prominent motivation behind Lewis's belief in universal morality. In addition, I will also discuss the contemporary relevance of this claim due to Lewis's intention of writing as a "layman", as stipulated in *Mere Christianity.*

Part One: The Essays of C.S. Lewis

Two of Lewis's essays, "Transposition" and "The Poison of Subjectivism", together have the benefit for this thesis of summarising the arguments presented in this thesis that morality is constituted of recognition and acceptance of the dualist nature of reality and that this has significance in showing that the motivation behind Lewis's belief in universal morality is enlightenment of the human soul and his need to prove God's existence.

Yancey notes the presence of this theme in his article "Hearing the World in a Higher Key", in which he questions his motives for believing in the existence of an "unseen world" when there is no tangible proof to reinforce such a belief. Yancey credits Lewis's essay "Transposition" as having aided him make this determination. Yancey quotes Lewis in explaining that "Transposition" develops the contrast between "two worlds"; one which is defined as being natural in origin, and one which is spiritual in origin. Both Lewis and Yancey raise the issue of a continuity problem between the two "worlds" and with the notion that the spiritual “reappears” in the natural.

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797 Ibid. p.25
This relationship between the natural and the spiritual reflects the claim that reality is dualist in nature. Lewis clearly refers to two distinct states, one denoting the empirical world and the other denoting that which is incorporeal. We can see this in his description of the two “worlds” as denoting the spiritual and the natural. Lewis describes this as referring to “our original question about Spirit and Nature, God and Man”. The “spiritual”, or “God”, clearly refers that which is distinct from the workings of the material aspect of reality. Natural, then, or “the Man”, refers to that which is natural for a biological sentient human being. In other words it refers to that which is empirically observable. Plato describes this as “sensible” because the biological aspect of reality consists of that which is observable with the five senses. Plato’s influence on Lewis’s claim that reality dually consists of the natural and the spiritual (or the empirically observable and the incorporeal) can clearly be observed.

In his discussion, Lewis refers to higher and lower levels within the natural “world” and between the natural and spiritual “worlds”. In Chapter Five of this thesis I discussed the relationship between higher and lower levels in the context of love and the importance of this for my central claim. In “Transposition”, Lewis discusses the problems inherent in the distinction between the spiritual and the natural, particularly the difficulty that arises in recognising this distinction. He cites romantic relationships as an example, explaining that since the end result is usually the same physical act, there can be difficulty in distinguishing between love and lust. There is clearly a difference between the two, For Lewis. Lust, according to Lewis, refers to physical desire; whereas love refers to the spirituality inherent in the romantic relationship. In this context, there is a contrast between the natural and the spiritual, though, as Lewis points out, making the distinction is problematic. For, “when all is said and done they usually end in what is, physically, the same

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800 Lewis, ‘Transposition’.p.64
801 Ibid.p.56
802 Ibid.
803 Ibid.pp.56-57
act”, thus Lewis presents us with a problem, in that the natural and the spiritual have converged and distinguishing between the two is no longer straightforward.\footnote{Ibid.}

We can see this problem arise in Plato’s cave parable. The prisoners chained within the cave cannot see the fire and the objects behind them, and thus believe the shadows cast on the walls to represent reality. When a prisoner is freed and discovers the true nature of reality, however, the remaining prisoners become hostile, unable to accept that the environment in the cave does not represent the full extent of their reality; that the images on the cave walls are only shadows. The violent reaction of the other prisoners to this truth reinforces the notion of conflict in being able to distinguish between the sensible aspect of reality and the Forms; something Lewis points out in raising the problem of distinguishing between the natural and the spiritual.

Lewis utilises similar imagery to illustrate the same meaning.\footnote{Ibid. pp.68-69} He tells of a woman who has been confined to a dungeon in which she has raised a son.\footnote{Ibid.} The son grows up knowing nothing about the nature of reality aside from the sparse environment within the dungeon, since he is unable to see and experience those things that exist beyond the dungeon walls.\footnote{Ibid.} In order to counter this, the woman draws her son pictures of the world outside the dungeon.\footnote{Ibid.} Her son, however, cannot comprehend or accept that which his mother attempts to show him through her drawings.\footnote{Ibid.} In fact, the opposite occurs. As he grows up, he comes to believe that the world outside the dungeon is literally composed of lines drawn in pencil, as with his mother’s drawings.\footnote{Ibid.} We can see from this that there are clear parallels with Plato’s cave parable. Both Lewis and Plato feature individuals that have been imprisoned. The boy in Lewis’s analogy comes to believe that pencil drawings are literally indicative of reality, just as the prisoners in Plato’s cave come to believe that the shadows on the walls represent reality (with both the pencil drawings and the shadows

\footnote{Ibid.}
indicating a lack of substance and thus being incapable of representing reality). In both instances, also, there is conflict when the individuals are confronted with the truth about the nature of reality. Lewis sums this problem up in “The Weight of Glory”: “The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them... for they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited”.811

In the essay “The Poison of Subjectivism” Lewis discusses morality and the role of reason. He immediately demonstrates his predisposition toward taking up Platonism in acknowledging that the validity of reason stems from Platonism. In this essay, Lewis discusses the validity of moral values and questions their origins. He raises the question of assuming the validity of one’s own reason “in the fashion of Plato”. Lewis creates the foundations for his discussion by introducing the distinction between truth, reality, and practical outcomes, and utilises science as his example.812 The purpose Lewis attributes to “practical reason” is that of the judgment of good and evil, and he formulates his argument on the basis of determining the origin of human moral values. Immediately the central claim of this thesis can be observed in that the post-conversion Lewis held that knowledge of the dualist nature of reality must have practical value in order to constitute morality. His reliance on reason, additionally, indicates the connection that the intelligible has to the incorporeal aspect of reality.

In “The Poison of Subjectivism” Lewis makes the distinction between subjective and objective reason, claiming that subjectivity is not an appropriate basis for moral values. On this subject, Lewis writes that

> Until modern times no thinker of the first rank ever doubted that our judgements of value were rational judgements or that what they discovered was objective. It was taken for granted that in temptation passion was opposed, not to some sentiment, but to reason. Thus Plato thought.813

813 Ibid.p.250
By this he means that philosophical and theological thinkers assume their reason to denote objective reality and that what they deduce represents truth concerning the nature of objective reality. Further to this, Lewis observed a contrast between this thinking and "modern" thinking, asserting that "modern" contemporary thinking has its basis in personal sentiment.\textsuperscript{814} By this we can understand that Lewis is referring to personal opinions that are based only on what can be experienced empirically with the five senses, and that opinion of this sort does not constitute morality. He asserts that it is important to distinguishing between moral values that are determined by community sentiment and moral values that are determined by the Law of Nature. Lewis claims that the former will "certainly end our species (and, in my view, damn our souls)" and cites the Third Reich as an example of the effects of community sentiment.\textsuperscript{815} In this context, we can understand that Lewis saw the values of the German community during World War II were based on values appropriated by the Nazi regime. So we can see that moral values formed on the basis of sentiments felt within a community can have highly detrimental consequences and, following this, Lewis asserts that morality is not something that can be changed at will.\textsuperscript{816} He writes that “unless the measuring rod is independent of the things measured, we can do no measuring”.\textsuperscript{817}

Further to this, he writes that “our ideas of the good may change, but they cannot change either for better or the worse if there is no absolute and immutable good to which they can approximate or from which they can recede”.\textsuperscript{818} Here Lewis’s belief in universal morality can be observed. From this, we can see that Lewis establishes the absolute immutable good as being a necessary standard against which morality should be measured. We can also clearly see Plato’s influence on Lewis’s argument here. Lewis draws attention to the distinction between moral values which are determined on the basis of temporal, empirical experience and moral values, which are determined on the basis of the archetypal Form, the “absolute”. Lewis refers to moral values that have their basis in sentiment to be

\textsuperscript{814} Ibid.p.250
\textsuperscript{815} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{816} Ibid.pp.250-251
\textsuperscript{817} Ibid.p.250
\textsuperscript{818} Ibid.p.253
subjective, as opposed to the objective reason in which they should have their basis. We can see from the above quotation that the distinction between objective and subjective reason reflects the claim that reality is dually comprised of the empirical and the incorporeal and that morality has its basis in recognition of this reality.

Plato’s influence on this can also be observed in that Lewis also makes the distinction between the sensible and the Form in constituting reality. The sensible is limited to that which is empirically observable and thus views of reality that have their basis in the sensible carry the same ramifications that Lewis draws attention to in discussing the failure of moral values that are determined by human sentiment rather than objective reason. Lewis’s opinion of this subject is clearly expressed in the following:

...He will no longer doubt that there is such a thing as the Law of Nature. There are, of course, differences... But the pretences that are presented with a mere chaos – that no outline of universally accepted value shows through – is simply false and should be contradicted in season and out of season wherever it is met.819

It is clear from this that Lewis subscribes to universal morality and that this morality is constituted by the recognition and acceptance that reality is dualist in nature. Failure to recognise this dualism indicates a failure of morality.

Lewis concludes “The Poison of Subjectivism” with another reference to Plato, writing that “it might be permissible to lay down two negations: that God neither obeys nor creates the moral law. The good is uncreated; it never could have been otherwise; it has in it no shadow of contingency; it lies, as Plato said, on the other side of existence”.820 This supports the contention that a belief in universal morality remained important for Lewis. Furthermore, Plato’s influence indicates that the purpose of this belief was not solely an attempt on Lewis’s part to prove God’s existent, but that it indicates the enlightenment of human beings is also an important motivation. That the conclusion of this morality is enlightenment has been argued throughout this thesis. Furthermore, Lewis’s statement that “the good is uncreated; it never could have been otherwise” refers to the notion of the incorporeal aspect of reality as being eternal and unchanging, having no point of origin or

819 Ibid.p.254
820 Ibid.p.256
end, which is why a recognition of this aspect of reality in addition to the empirically observable aspect of reality constitutes such a fundamental point of origin for determining moral values for Lewis.

**Part Two: Contemporary Value**

C.S. Lewis's works have remained popular reading for the more than fifty years since the time of their publication. Despite the changing societal ideals and values, these books still prove to be popular. *The Chronicles of Narnia* have been transposed into hit movies and a wealth of material has been generated as a result. The popularity of the *Chronicles* continues to generate new interest in the author responsible for them, both by Lewis enthusiasts and the general public. Because of this popularity, Lewis's work has the capacity to convey messages and meaning to a wide variety of readers.

One such example of the contemporary value of Lewis's claim is politics. *Mere Christianity* features a chapter entitled “The Law of Human Nature” which concludes with the following quote:

> These, then, are the two points I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.\(^\text{821}\)

This statement closely correlates with Plato's statement that "good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws",\(^\text{822}\) The correlation between these two statements is even acknowledged in *Mere Christianity* in which Plato's statement is quoted in the section concerning Lewis's chapter "The Law of Human Nature". This correlation shows the influence of universal morality on contemporary society.

The rules governing society, however, are often not limited that which is officially written and ratified. Lewis's belief in universal morality indicates that all people have a basic

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understanding of the difference between good and bad. Though specific values are often subject to variation, the fact remains that all people have a sense of morality and of what it means to be a good person. In an essay titled “On Punishment: A Reply by C.S. Lewis” (which was itself a reply to criticisms of a previous essay by Lewis) he writes that “we ‘see’ what is ‘right’ at once, because the proposed action falls under a rule. But second-order questions can be answered only on ‘utilitarian’ principles. Since ‘right’ means ‘agreeable to the rules’ it is senseless to ask if the rules themselves are ‘right’; we can only ask if they are useful”.823 We can observe the distinction here between legally sanctioned rules and laws and the universally recognised morality that is found in all societies.

The presence of this morality, in addition to the laws and rules created by society, also gives rise to an expectation as to the way in which people should behave in society. This returns us to the quotation from Lewis in which he suggests that “human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it”. Universal morality here means that despite the existence of ratified laws, people tend to behave in a manner that will be acceptable to the moral conscience of society. Lewis's assertion that people cannot “get rid of” the idea that they must behave in a specific manner suggests that there is a great deal of importance placed on behaving in such a way as reflects morality even if that means breaking the officially sanctioned laws and rules. Plato confirms this in saying that, as previously quoted, “good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly”. Plato’s statement emphasises that people who clearly recognise this universal morality do not need laws to instruct on what behaviours are morally good and bad.

Lewis's statement further extrapolates issues associated with behavioural expectations, both universally and legally constructed. Lewis writes (as quoted above) “secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it”. Plato reinforces this in stating (as quoted above) “bad people will find a way

around the laws”. A quotation from Lewis’s essay “The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment” repeats this idea. In the following quotation, Lewis discusses the manner in which judges determine what sentences to apply to those who have been convicted of a crime:

…the judge who did it was a person trained in jurisprudence; trained, that is in a science which deals with rights and duties, and which, in origin at least, was consciously accepting guidance from the Law of Nature, and from Scripture. We must admit that in the actual penal code of most countries at most times these high originals were so much modified by local custom, class interests, and utilitarian concessions, as to be very imperatively recognizable. But the code was never in principle, and not always in fact, beyond the control of the conscience of the society. And when... actual punishments conflicted too violently with the moral sense of the community, juries refused to convict and reform was finally brought about.824

This statement highlights the importance of the universal morality that pervades society and suggests that this morality influences the political and legal responses to issues that face the members of those societies. This also supplies a reason for the acknowledgement by both Lewis and Plato that people sometimes flout rules despite their knowledge of what those rules are. This is reinforced by the statement previously quoted, “when... actual punishments conflicted too violently with the moral sense of the community, juries refused to convict and reform was finally brought about”. Thus we can assert that one of the reasons why people might choose to flout laws is that those laws conflict with universal morality in such a manner as render following them impossible. As such, an individual in this situation might then view universal morality as having greater importance than the laws.

Lewis’s approach to materialism also has contemporary relevance. As discussed in Chapter Two, Lewis deliberately employs negative imagery in Spirits in Bondage in order to highlight the consequences that flow from human beings placing sole importance on the material aspect of reality.825 Lewis’s stance on this issue is made very clear. Acceptance only of the material aspect of reality cannot constitute reality. The poem “Satan Speaks” is an example of this, when Lewis uses satanic imagery to produce a negative moral association with materialism. Lewis concludes the poem with the following line; “whither the mammoth

went this creature too shall go". It is clear from this what Lewis thinks of materialism and materialistic people. The reference to what became of the mammoth is a clear reference to extinction and, by suggesting that human beings face the same end, Lewis claims that the materialist exploits of human beings will result in our own extinction. This can be contrasted with the importance that Lewis also placed on the recognition and acceptance of the "spiritual" or incorporeal aspect of reality for morality. From this we can draw the following conclusion: that Lewis views materialism as destroying humanity.

The negative moral associations of materialism for Lewis can be identified from the subject matter of the poem itself. Imagery associated with Satan reiterates the negative moral associations with devilry. We can understand that Satan is in opposition to God. God, we know, is the epitome of good and represents the incorporeal aspect of reality. Satan, on the other hand, is the epitome of evil. We know that Lewis holds that acceptance of the incorporeal aspect of reality in addition to the material aspect of reality constitutes morality. We also know that Lewis views immorality as occurring when there is a failure to recognise this dualism and when materialism alone is viewed as constituting reality. It is this imagery that reiterates Lewis's position that materialism is detrimental to the spiritual welfare of humanity (as was discussed in Chapter Three).

The moral consequences that arise when the material is considered as solely constituting reality has contemporary relevance. We can observe this in reactions to the continual development of technology. Australia's mining companies can be used as an example of how materialism results in immorality. The need for fossil fuels means that mining companies have resorted to mining land that has significance to the Australian Aborigines. This has sparked a considerable amount of controversy among the Australian public. The building of a gas plant at James Price Point in Broome, and to searches for gas and oil near Ningaloo Reef are examples of this. The concern being that the materialistic motivation to mine fossil fuels will cause irreparable environmental damage in these areas in the event that there is a problem in the drilling process. The truth or falsehood of these

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826 Ibid.p.22
specific claims will not be commented on, save to say that these are examples of contemporary situations in which materialistic pursuits have created moral concern.

As we can see, what Lewis warned readers of in *Spirits in Bondage* still remains of concern in contemporary society. A demonstrated lack of morals in a given situation, such as that which is described above, suggests a lack of concern for the welfare of others and this becomes even more entrenched with the introduction of such technological advances as the internet, which depersonalises communication between people with its general lack of face to face communication. Thus, there continues to be a divide between acknowledging only the material and accepting the "spiritual" or incorporeal aspect of reality in contemporary society. Lewis views this as being to our detriment, primarily because it will prevent us from becoming enlightened, and according to *The Symposium*, and Lewis, this is for our moral and spiritual well-being since Diotima makes it clear that the Forms are superior to material instance. In the poem “French Nocturne” Lewis describes how materialism alone comprises immorality, implying that it makes us “vulgar” or “brutish”.827

Platonism teaches that the material should not have greater importance than the incorporeal. Viewing the material as solely indicative of reality is detrimental to morality and thus the ability to attain enlightenment is compromised. Lewis’s writing style and contemporary popularity means that his portrayal of this theory retains relevance for contemporary society.

Lewis’s claim can also be observed in the contemporary approach to religion. As with Lewis’s own era, and as with Plato, a belief in the existence of an aspect of reality which has no basis in matter that, incorporeal or otherwise not empirically observable) continues to have prominence today. With the growth of Earth’s population there has also been a growth in acknowledgement of the diversity of cultures and, as such, there is a diversity of religious and spiritual beliefs, which often creates debate over the way in which social issues should be approached.

827 Ibid. p.4
In Plato's *Symposium* Diotima asks, using beauty as an example, "so what should we imagine it would be like... if someone could see beauty itself, absolute, pure, unmixed, not cluttered up with human flesh and colours and a great mass of mortal rubbish, but if he could catch sight of divine beauty itself, in its single form?". Lewis's own religious beliefs can be understood to be pivotal to his belief that morality is comprised of the practical value of the recognition and acceptance that reality is dualist nature. As such, he conveys the same sentiment as indicated by Diotima. That this belief differed from that which Lewis held prior to conversion to Christianity (which held that knowledge of the dualist nature of reality alone constituted morality) indicates that spiritual beliefs were central to his understanding of morality.

In contemporary society, the continued development and presence of technology might have had the consequences as discussed with respect to materialism, but the growth in population and diversity has also had the result of cementing the importance of accepting and respecting diversity of religious beliefs. Lewis's written style, furthermore, makes his particular views on religion appropriate for the public, which we can observe in *Mere Christianity*, parts of which were originally written specifically for broadcast during World War Two and were thus intended for the general population, the "layman". Furthermore, the importance that is placed on religious belief repeats the idea that the incorporeal aspect of reality, in addition to the material, remains of contemporary importance in contributing to morality.

The fact that Lewis's works are still popular reading in contemporary society shows that his theories continue to be of significant value. This puts his claim that morality results from the practical value of recognition that reality is dualist in nature directly in the public eye. As such, Lewis's popular works have become an effective medium for promoting meaning and morals, such as is evidenced by the central claim I make in this thesis.

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Conclusion

In summation, an exploration of Plato’s theory of forms, and its links to virtue theory alongside C.S. Lewis’s popular works reveal strong Platonic influences on Lewis’s works. Lewis is commonly known for his Christianity. My research suggests that Lewis underwent a conversion experience, the vehicle for which is Platonism. Plato’s idea that sensible reality cannot be trusted and that true reality can only be observed through introspection by the intelligible mind is linked to his virtue theory, which holds that indulging in the sensible illusion of reality is akin to materialistic greed and causes a deviation away from virtuous acts. Plato holds that committing virtuous acts leads to knowledge of the form of virtue, and the capacity for the ascension of the soul.

Lewis’s works reflect these principles and are presented by Lewis in story form or analogy in order to present his ideas, in keeping with Plato’s capacity for “myth-making”. Prior to his conversion, my research suggests Lewis to have struggled with accepting concepts of theism and Platonism, which is evident in his pre-conversion published texts *Spirits in Bondage – A Cycle of Lyrics* and *Dymer* in addition to his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*. Much of this struggle was sparked by his experiences in World War One. As shown in my research, Platonism influenced Lewis’s movement away from this struggle.

Following acceptance of Platonism, Lewis subsequently converted to Christianity. I have shown that as a result of these two influences, Lewis was a Christian Platonist, mirroring a similar conversion experienced by Augustine, which I used as a comparison to characterise Lewis’s Christian Platonism. I was then able to explore the ways in which Christian Platonism manifests in Lewis’s popular post-conversion works.

After conversion, I determined that a practical element is incorporated into Lewis’s line of argumentation. This led to the finding that Lewis repeats the Platonic recognition of the distinction between the sensible and the real as the basis for practical action. It can be clearly seen that Lewis disparages self-centred materialistic actions, and contends that all actions must reflect righteousness. This also mirrors Plato’s idea that one must do right even if one is wronged, as can be seen through Socrates’ refusal to escape his death in *Crito*. 
These views show that Platonism had a significant influence on Lewis, both prior to conversion and continuing after conversion. That Lewis struggles with Platonic concepts prior to conversion indicates their continued influence on his mindset as he attempts to come to terms with them. Acceptance of Platonism and theism and subsequent conversion to Christianity was the means by which Lewis overcame his struggles and developed a system of universal morality, which is upheld throughout his popular works, which were written and published post conversion.

Further, establishing Lewis as a Christian Platonist and reinforcing the positive practical value in committing virtuous acts and the consequences of indulging in self-centred materialistic behaviour. These consequences are emphasised in an effort to encourage readers to develop their own sense of morality.

Subscribing to materialism represents a failure to recognise that reality is actually dually material and intelligible in nature. Lewis goes to considerable lengths to present materialism as being universally immoral. It appears to be important to Lewis to show the distinction between recognition of a dualist reality as being universally moral and recognition only of materialism as representing immorality.

Further to this, Lewis extensively draws on his Christian Platonic context in referring to the concept of enlightenment, or ascension, of the human soul. This mirrors Plato’s concept of true reality only being observable through introspection by the intelligible mind in addition to the Christian concept of reaching heaven after living a virtuous life.

Platonism clearly had a significant influence on Lewis, both in his struggles to accept theistic concepts prior to conversion and his continued establishing of those concepts in works written after his conversion. The influence of Platonism on Lewis’s developing Christianity led to his development as a Christian Platonist.
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