Die before you Die: The Language of Moral Injury and Healing According to C.S. Lewis, Subaltern, British Army, World War I

JAN STEWART SHULTIS

Jan Shultis, "Die before you Die: The Language of Moral Injury and Healing According to C.S. Lewis, Subaltern, British Army, World War I"

C.S. Lewis is popularly known as a Christian apologist. Less recognized is Lewis's relationship with war, forged while he was an avowed atheist and preceding his body of Christian work. Lewis's theological development is profoundly impacted by his combat experience, and the conceptual language of war a consistent modality in which he writes. Lewis provides a manner of thinking and talking about a specific facet of combat experience – what today might be called "moral injury" – with far-reaching implications.

The first two sections explain the lens through which this project looks at Lewis's work, taking moral injury and the lived experience of war in turn. The third section fits the lens to Lewis's theological development, following Lewis's use of the language of war and correspondingly throwing Lewis's ideas about tripartite humanity into sharp relief. The fourth section looks through that lens into Lewis's work to find what he has to say about moral healing.

This project is unprecedented for its treatment of Lewis's wartime experience as one of relationship with war; careful attention to how Lewis's use of language is shaped by combat; direct extension of Lewis's war-time experience from his non-fiction, to his fiction; extrapolation of Lewis's combat experience to his theological development; application of Lewis's insights to modern questions of combat-related moral injury and healing; and suggestion that one of Lewis's most beloved fictional characters is a direct representation of a fallen soldier close to Lewis. The whole illuminates how moral injury and its effects are felt in significant ways from World War I, onward, and leverages Lewis to address a pressing challenge in the field today – that is, how to conceptualize and talk about the lived experience of moral injury and healing, making words and imagery an aid to chaplaincy care.

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The Language of Moral Injury and Healing According to C.S. Lewis, Subaltern, British Army, World War I

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Abbreviations

AOL	The Allegory of Love
AMR	All My Road Before Me
AOM	The Abolition of Man
BOX	Boxen
CL I	Collected Letters, Volume I: Family Letters, 1905-1931
CL II	Collected Letters, Volume II: Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931-1949
CL III	Collected Letters, Volume III: Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy, 1950-1963
CR	Christian Reflections
DI	The Discarded Image
DY	Dymer
FL	The Four Loves
GD	The Great Divorce
GO	A Grief Observed
HB	The Horse and His Boy
LAL	Letters to an American Lady
LB	The Last Battle
LTM	Letters to Malcolm
LWW	The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe
MC	Mere Christianity
MIR	Miracles: A Preliminary Study
MN	The Magician's Nephew
OSP	Out of the Silent Planet
OW	Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories
PC	Present Concerns
Per.	Perelandra
PR	The Pilgrim's Regress
Pr. Casp.	Prince Caspian
PoP	The Problem of Pain
SC	The Silver Chair
SBJ	Surprised by Joy
SIB	Spirits in Bondage
SIW	Studies in Words
SL	The Screwtape Letters
SLE	Selected Literary Essays
THS	That Hideous Strength
TWHF	Till We Have Faces
WG	The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses
WLN	The World's Last Night and Other Essays

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The best part of a lengthy undertaking is looking back and realizing how many people are vital contributors to something that was never fully your own. Huge, heartfelt “thank you’s” to Michael Ward, Marybeth Baggett, and Jerry Walls, whose voices and support encouraged me to pursue this adventure. “Thank you” to Brian Powers, whose expertise, patience, humor, and keen insights make him the stuff of supervisory legend. “Thank you” to Michael Snape for illuminating facets of this undertaking I would have otherwise missed. “Thank you” to Donna Chang, who bears the title “boss-friend,” for years of encouragement, prayer, and patient accommodation with odd work hours. “Thank you” to Lisa Rollinson and Taylor Smith for their seemingly unending cheerleading. “Thank you” to Keith and Pam, who bore with grace and love the tedium of dissertation-obsessed conversations, and whose support logistically and emotionally ensured this project’s completion. “Thank you” to Kalyn, for being my reason and my joy. “Thank you” to Arda and Leonard, the “Doberman of Dissertations,” for laughter and snuggles. “Thank you” to Carlin, for making the culmination of this grand adventure a time of great happiness.

With respect for and gratitude to all those mentioned, be ever reminded that all mistakes are my own.

For you,
To the part of you that chooses

"Die before you die. There is no chance after."[1]

[1] TWHF, 318.

Introduction

Lieutenant Clive Staples Lewis, subaltern,[1] British Army, World War I, is popularly known as a Christian apologist, beloved by evangelists and celebrated for his fictional *Chronicles of Narnia*. In academic circles, Lewis is remembered as an Oxford don and Cambridge scholar renowned for his work in language and literary criticism, whose thousands of pages of non-fiction constitute a wide array of nimble philosophical conversation even the most studious must approach with focus. It seems fair to say that no matter the genre, Lewis is overwhelmingly associated with Christianity.

Less recognized is Lewis's relationship with war, forged while he was an avowed atheist and preceding the body of Christian work he is more readily identified with. To employ a better-recognized World War II saying, it was an *atheist* in a foxhole who began ruminating on the ideas that later formed into powerful apologetics of the Christian faith.[2] The mature Lewis's theological development is profoundly impacted by his combat experience, and the conceptual language of war a consistent modality in which he writes throughout his life. As his theological beliefs evolve over many years, Lewis provides a manner of thinking and talking about a specific facet of combat experience – what today might be called "moral injury" – with far-reaching implications for people wrestling with inner turmoil and for chaplaincy care.[3] Lewis, a self-described "son of pain" whose "body and soul shall suffer beyond all word or thought,"[4] melds intellectualism with lived experience to not only illuminate the effects of combat on the human soul, but over many decades vividly articulate a potential path toward healing.

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[1] "Subaltern" is a British military term for a junior officer that literally means "subordinate," denoting commissioned officer rank below captain. As the most junior officer rank, a subaltern or second lieutenant in the British infantry in the early twenty-first century led a platoon of approximately 50 men; a platoon was itself comprised of several sections.

[2] The saying "there are no atheists in foxholes," still commonly heard today, is of unknown origin but often attributed to Chaplain William Cummings at the Battle of Bataan during World War II. The phrase was in regular circulation of literature, films, and letters by 1942, entering the public lexicon through use by notables such as American war correspondent Ernie Pyle. It was made even more widely known when employed by United States President Dwight Eisenhower in a 1954 White House broadcast. The less familiar World War I saying "there are no atheists in the trenches" turns up in 1914-1916 coverage of the war in British paper *The Western Times* as direct quotation from soldiers, though various U.K. townships and communities lay claim to ownership of the phrase.

[3] The term "chaplaincy care" is used throughout this project to mean "whole person" care and attention. While in the U.S. the term has an overtly Christian overtone, the same is not true in other countries.

[4] "Ode for New Year's Day," SIB, lines 1 and 9.

Chief among Lewis's present-day utility is a relatability that transcends the chasm of time between the Great War and modern conflicts. While other scholars have and do take a philosophical and/or theological approach to moral injury,[5] Lewis's personal experience of combat places him in select company; Lewis's first-hand experience may serve as a sufficiently strong motivator for fellow combatants to consider his ideas. The pronounced cultural and social implications of his specific war, the Great War, heighten the specificity of Lewis's point of view in a way highly applicable to emerging areas of emphasis in moral injury scholarship. Lewis lived and wrote during the dramatic social and cultural upheaval of early twentieth century Britain, and those struggling with the sociocultural experience of combat-related moral pain may note a distinctive resonance with his work. Lewis can also be considered a bridge, fighting, living, and writing at an almost temporal crossroads in human development.

Lewis stands with only a handful of others in his ability to convey the same concepts both academically and imaginatively.[6] Through his fiction, Lewis illustrates how he sees moral injury and healing playing out in varied scenarios readers from diverse points of view may find easily approachable. "The story which gives us the experience most like the experiences of living is not necessarily the story whose events are most like those in a biography or newspaper,"[7] Lewis attests, and his imaginative works stand as testament. Or, as he explains when writing about the philosophy of partial systems:

> The behaviour of fishes which are being studied in a tank makes a relatively closed system. Now suppose that the tank is shaken by a bomb in the neighbourhood of the laboratory. The behaviour of the fishes will now be no longer fully explicable by what was going on in the tank before the bomb fell…

[5] For more in this vein, consider works by German systematic theologian Jürgen Moltmann, who fought for Germany in World War II and, after surrendering to the British, spent the war years as a prisoner of war; Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf, who studied under Moltmann and extended Moltmann's thoughts to public sectors such as politics and culture; and emerging work by Michael Yandell, an American who fought in Operation Iraqi Freedom and now ministers in the United States.

[6] Likely most readily recognized is J.R.R. Tolkien, a man who was for many years a member of Lewis's closest inner circle. Tolkien fought for several years in World War I, including at the Somme. Tolkien is most well known for his *Lord of the Rings* series, which includes multiple characters critics hypothesize – and Tolkien in some instances openly validates – are embodiments of men he met during the Great War. Lewis and Tolkien are often studied together because of their many similarities and in recognition of their personal relationship.

[7] "Hedonics," PC, 64.

> you must go back to the much larger reality which includes both the tank and the bomb.[8]

Thinking broadly, Lewis can be viewed as circumventing limits in language by employing imaginative illustration, a concept with powerful implication for moral healing.

Thirdly, among the few others who share both his experiences and his gifts, Lewis is a giant for the sheer volume he writes. Though the themes presented in this project could be undertaken through other authors and have commonalities with other philosophers and theologians, studying Lewis provides a unique opportunity to compare personal writings such as diaries and letters with academic pieces and imaginative works. Ultimately, Lewis's varied writings create space for readers from diverse religious or spiritual backgrounds to consider the theological path Lewis charts toward healing, giving Lewis's work a unique utility in extending World War I perspective into the modern field of moral injury.

This project is unprecedented in Lewis scholarship for its treatment of Lewis's wartime experience as one of relationship with war beginning during his military training; careful attention to ways in which Lewis's use of language is shaped by combat; direct extension of specific elements of Lewis's war-time experience as conveyed by his letters, diaries, and non-fiction work, to his fiction; extrapolation of Lewis's combat experience to his theological development, especially his embrace of a tripartite model of humanity; and application of Lewis's lived experience and intellectual insight to modern questions of combat-related moral injury and healing. This project contributes to the field of moral injury by illuminating how moral injury and its effects are felt in significant ways from World War I, onward, and by leveraging Lewis to address a pressing challenge in moral injury and healing – that is, how to talk about it, what words to reach for. Lewis brings to an understanding of moral injury and healing a continuity between fictional and non-fictional illustration not found elsewhere. In so doing, Lewis creates an opportunity to consider what might happen if the complexity of the combat experience is accepted as philosophically continuous – that is, considered as an unbroken whole - and approaches toward healing are correspondingly cohesive. Lewis's conclusions are unabashedly theological and centered on ideas about the nature of humanity, bringing him back into dialogue with other theologians in a meaningful way. There are wonderful books already in

[8] MIR, 96-97.

the world on Lewis and his military service, including biographies presenting Lewis's wartime experiences in varying degrees of detail. A few include snippets of literary analysis based on military service and the Great War.[9] None, however, philosophically conceive of war as something with which one can be in relationship. To start there both enhances understanding of Lewis's lived experience of war and reveals a clear trajectory through his personal, academic, and fictional writings into his theological beliefs. If this project is successful, both scholars and lay fans of Lewis will enjoy illumination of exactly those connections, and those caring for the hurting will come to see Lewis and his words as a valuable and credible source of support, inspiration, and reference in the modern dialogue surrounding moral injury.

Some theological ideas Lewis embraces, and the language he chooses to talk about them, are best understood taking into prominent account his combat experience. Looking through Lewis's lens of war and along[10] his vast body of work reveals war-soaked ideas of what constitutes humanity, how to preserve that humanity, and how to regain humanity individuals, societies, and nations fail to safeguard. Over the course of his lifetime, Lewis's conception of humanity, presented in this project in his own words,[11] becomes a vital part of the apologetic approach for which he is popularly lauded today, and consistently informs how he crafts his fictional characters. Illuminating Lewis's wartime experience, then, also opens avenues for modern Christian apologists to utilize Lewis's writings in increasingly nuanced and refined ways for evangelical purposes, should they be so moved, and for conceptualization of moral injury and healing that can be an asset in chaplaincy care today.

Linking Lewis's ideas of humanity to his experience of combat places his ideas in the realm of what today is called "moral injury," a hopefully practical contribution both to

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[9] See fellow veteran John Bremer's *C.S. Lewis, Poetry, and the Great War 1914-1918* (Bremer served in the British Royal Air Force during World War II); Joseph Loconte's *A Hobbit, A Wardrobe, and a Great War: How J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis Rediscovered Faith, Friendship, and Heroism in the Cataclysm of 1914-1918*; and K.J. Gilchrist's *A Morning After War: C.S. Lewis and WWI*. Other excellent resources include Alister McGrath's *C.S. Lewis: A Life*, George Sayer's *Jack: A Life of C.S. Lewis*, and Don King's *C.S. Lewis, Poet: A Legacy of His Poetic Impulse*. Michael Ward's *After Humanity: A Guide to C.S. Lewis's The Abolition of Man* does a particularly strong job of considering *Abolition* "as, among other things, a mental product of the 'war to end all wars'" (4).

[10] In the 1945 essay "Meditations in a Toolshed," included in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, Lewis writes "looking along the beam, and looking at the beam are very different experiences… one must look both *along* and *at* everything."

[11] A note: Lewis's language is not always what would today be considered "inclusive." In an effort to bring Lewis's thoughts forward to present day in a way beneficial to both male and female combat veterans, while accurately representing his work, in this project the narrative utilizes gender-neutral descriptors while Lewis's quotations retain their original male-centric pronouns.

scholarship and communal efforts to ease individual suffering. Lewis embraces what he calls a "choosing part"[12] in tripartite human nature as explanation not only of the atrocities of combat, but of the trying human condition. Soul, spirit, and body together make individuals human, Lewis finds, but the parts are often warring and at odds, creating tremendous internal discord. Lewis shows combat-related moral injury occurs when the experience of war is perceived to separate individual combatants from humanity as it exists within them and connects to things outside themselves, including the Divine. To Lewis, moral healing occurs through reconnection to humanity by sustained and repeated personal choice.

Lewis places far more emphasis in his body of work on moral healing, than on wounding or incidents that cause wounding. Celebrated Great War soldier poets such as Sigfried Sassoon and Wilfried Owen did not hesitate to push their pens into the subject of mental and spiritual health as influenced by war, directly describing psychological horrors and condemning the powers that sent men to arms. It stands to reason Lewis could have done the same, should he have chosen to. Likewise, he could have immersed himself in unending psychoanalysis, as did many writers of the early twentieth century, given permission by Freud and contemporaries to look endlessly inward.[13] Lewis chooses neither, instead viewing writing as service to others and focusing relentlessly on the power of the spirit, "the choosing part," in man's resiliency. Lewis's path toward healing is one others may find fruitful to emulate.

A. A note on author bias

The chief aim of this project is to connect Lewis's experience of combat, reflections on the same, and theological development by illuminating his use of the language of war, in so doing providing a manner of conceptualizing the lived experience of combat-related moral injury and healing that may have application for religious practitioners today. It is important to note that this project does not assume the burden of defending Lewis's ideas. Rather, this project undertakes an explanation of Lewis's views and corresponding exploration of the combat

[12] Letter of 1944 to Mr. Lyell, CL 2, 632.

[13] See SL, Letter 14, for Lewis's take on causing men to focus inward or outward as tools of the devil or God, respectively. Lewis elaborates on the dichotomy between emphasizing the self or others in *Mere Christianity*'s "The Obstinate Toy Soldiers," among other places.

experience that can be interpreted as formative, then explores the potential implication of his ideas for modern conceptualization of moral injury and healing. Some of the positions presented – including but not limited to Lewis's illustration of a tripartite humanity, and even the way he sees mental pain as affecting the human experience – can be contentious. This project follows the path Lewis charts, demonstrating that Lewis's point of view has utility in refining how to conceptualize and talk about moral injury and healing today.

At this juncture, it is important to recognize and articulate a point of author bias – that is, the personal perspective that modern treatment pathways for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may disservice combat veterans by often working harder to diagnose and quantify, than consider the person before them as a whole being currently in tremendous, nuanced, interlocking pain that by its very nature is not easily parsed apart. Translated to moral injury, this perspective results in the conclusion that combat-related PTSD and moral injury are yoked; while each is distinct in its ability to exist without the other by modern diagnostic standards, healing is optimally effective when PTSD and MI are approached as continuous with each other. The author's personal perspective, born of lived experience in the American combat veteran community and then as the founder of an organization that served thousands of fellows in arms over the course of a decade, is that hurting combatants may be better served by accepting as foundational the extraordinary complexity of the combat experience; emphasizing moral healing rather than moral injury might require acknowledging rather than attempting to untangle such complexities. In short, to the combatant it may not matter whether something can be diagnosed as PTSD or MI, if the lived experience of the person suffering likely encompasses elements of each.

The author's view is not without criticism or opposition, especially in modern societies where the value of scientific and mathematical quantification sometimes seems woven into culture as inherent. It is also true that clinical work tends to reveal PTSD can respond well to drug therapies, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), or Cognitive Processing Therapy (CBT), while MI responds to various approaches to moral repair. These responses imply that PTSD and MI are distinct. Evolution of the field of MI out of PTSD theory, however, suggests relationship. There could be much fruit in a more nuanced conversation about how we measure healing and improvement, or how we do not, as well as by diving into differences between explicitly combat-related and other-caused PTSD and/or MI. To do so,

however, would exceed the scope of this project and dramatically change the emphasis. This project undertakes not to defend Lewis's ideas but to explore them, working to find out what might happen to conceptualization of combat-related MI and how primary emphasis might be granted to moral healing rather than moral injury, if the combat experience in its entirety is considered philosophically continuous.

The personal bias toward accepting PTSD and MI as continuous, coupled with the difficulties of studying a combatant who fought more than a century ago and well before these terms entered the public or clinical lexicon, creates some difficulties in language. In this project, the author uses the terms "pain," "inner pain," "moral pain," and "moral injury" interchangeably. There are multiple motivations for resisting the demand to strictly define these terms. First, Lewis uses words like "pain" and "inner pain" interchangeably, and following suit allows for easier interaction with his work. Second, to look back more than a century and attempt to impose modern terms on Lewis's complex experience strikes the author as anachronistic to a degree that may somewhat discredit the undertaking. Third, allowing the terms to interact is philosophically consistent with the author's previously presented perspective that complex experiences such as are the subject of this project should be approached as continuous. Finally, the potential of this project to be practically useful to those suffering or working in the field today is of paramount importance to the author. Allowing some ambiguity in terminology preserves space for readers whose experience may resonate with Lewis's, but not exactly align, to see a potential path toward healing for themselves in the content of this project. The stated aim of this project is to illuminate a path toward healing. Illumination requires space, and allowing terms to organically interact is one way of creating that space.

B. Organizational overview

Identifying and developing the ways Lewis presents an anthropological model that can be readily applied present day is a multi-disciplinary undertaking. This project attempts to simplify that endeavor through its organization. The first two sections might be thought of as explaining the lens through which this project looks at Lewis's work, taking moral injury and the lived experience of war in turn. The third section fits the lens to some of Lewis's theological beliefs, following Lewis's use of the language of war and correspondingly throwing Lewis's ideas about

humanity into sharp relief. The fourth section looks through that lens into Lewis's work to find what he has to say about moral healing, and how his conclusions might be of benefit to chaplaincy care today.

Each primary section includes historical, philosophical, theological, and Lewisian scholar views. If skillfully executed the cumulative balance should be conclusively acknowledged as true to Lewis and useful to a study of moral injury from multiple vantage points. Sub-sections generally present Lewis's idea, followed by Lewis's experience, how Lewis explains that experience directly through non-fiction writing, and how that experience emerges in his fiction. The opportunity to structure arguments inclusive of lived experience, direct reflection, and imaginative fruition to the scope and breadth presented in this project is further evidence of Lewis's unique value. If successfully achieved, readers should be able to move through the work as a whole or consult specific sections to equal personal satisfaction and utility.

The first section places Lewis in the field of moral injury and analyzes how Lewis's views intersect with prominent modern scholarship, including Jonathan Shay, the Litz group, and others. An organic progression of the topic includes a look at how Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are distinct from moral injury, and mines Lewis's writing to present a portrait of his first-hand experience with one, the other, or both. In this section Lewis's views on just war, including total war, pacifism and patriotism, are brought to the front to illustrate how he interacts with his contemporaries and better illuminate the psychological, theological, and cultural clime in which Lewis wrote. In many ways, Lewis adds nuance to accepted ideas. For example, Lewis validates the unique status of combat-related moral injury among other types of inner pain; Lewis also emphasizes the multi-faceted role of perceived betrayal in the lived experience of moral injury. When Lewis's thoughts diverge from leading modern scholarship, such as surrounding the question of combatants as perpetrators or around his personal reaction to "survivor's guilt," groundwork is laid for presentation in sections three and four of Lewis's theological approach to moral healing. Special attention is paid at the end of this section to *The Problem of Pain*. In that work, Lewis delineates between physical and mental pain; his thoughts about how the two types differ and interact are important to his later thoughts about tripartite humanity. Taken together, in this section a lexicon of pain and war begins to emerge that allows Lewis to interact fruitfully with modern scholarship. Because the terms "moral injury" and "moral healing" develop more than seventy years after Lewis's war,

Lewis's language and imagery must be traced closely to make the case that his ideas can be credibly brought forward to help others hurting today.

The second section curates Lewis's physical experience of war from his personal letters and autobiography, contending that robust awareness of Lewis's own battlefield experience and the formative power of the culture of war is vital to identifying the language and conceptual imagery of war in his writing. Direct lines are drawn from Lewis's non-fiction accounts to his fictional portrayals. Organized thematically, topic areas include Lewis's physical description of his combat experience, including his commentary on his place in the fraternity of arms and on fighting, killing, death, and suicide; Lewis's treatment of special issues strongly associated with World War I in modern memory, such as environmental and animal destruction; Lewis's conclusions about the impact of technological advancement on combatants; and Lewis's thoughts about the enemy. In this section Lewis also shares the effects of war on his sociocultural identity and relationships. Dedicated attention is given to Lewis's bonds with his father and childhood best friend, both of which are profoundly shaped by Lewis's combat experience. Cumulatively, Lewis emerges as a man who knows firsthand the complex ways moral injury, PTSD, or both can contribute to social alienation, isolation, and similar difficulties. War influences how Lewis moves in the world, how he pursues connection with God, and where and how he looks for goodness, beauty, and truth, in ways very much in keeping with how moral injury is understood today. Lewis's journey validates conceptualization of moral injury as damage to relationship and capacity for relationship, and offers specific language and imagery to illustrate the same. Finally, this section takes a close look at how a specific war-related experience – Lewis's prolonged intimate interaction with a close relation who succumbs to inner wounds of war – may have been instrumental in formation of *The Screwtape Letters*, and analyzes how Lewis talks about pain, mental anguish, and madness in his fiction.

The third section articulates Lewis's war-formed philosophical and theological position on the tripartite composition of humanity and applies his trichotomistic model directly to moral injury. In many ways, the early twentieth century in which Lewis lived is something of an intellectual wild west. Then, the rapid pace of cultural evolution forced theologians and philosophers to intersect with emerging fields like psychology and many scientific disciplines, and to do so in a climate of rapidly escalating communicative interconnectedness, against the backdrop of two World Wars. Lewis develops ideas in conversation with his own

contemporaries, theologian philosophers like Karl Barth and Karl Rahner, as well as thinkers such as Augustine, Ireneus, Athanasius, Lactantius, Gregory of Nyssa, Frederich Schleiermacher, Soren Kiergegaard, and Martin Buber, among others. Lewis's experience of war seems to hold at least some degree of explanatory power, however, in how Lewis responds to the work of each of their philosophies, and how he forms his conclusions from many inputs. Lewis comes to believe humanity is comprised of body, soul, and spirit, each with unique function, inseparable from the others, and equally necessary for the human experience. His view is in a theological minority then and now, and this section plumbs Lewis's take on the physical body, soul, and spirit in turn. Then, Lewis's interpretation of physicalism and the Fall are briefly presented, as each informs how Lewis later approaches moral healing. Finally, Lewis's many writings on animalism in combat and the berserker state are held up as expression of what happens when the body, soul, and spirit become sufficiently disoriented as to result in loss of individual control, with direct and linear correlation to combat-related moral injury. In each case, over many years and writings Lewis seems to settle on specific words and phrases that might be useful today in describing the effects of combat on humanity.

The fourth section uncovers explicitly Christian themes in Lewis's conceptualization of moral healing. Lewis emphasizes the importance of language and affirms the utility of religious conceptual vocabulary in conversations about both moral injury and healing. Carefully following how Lewis himself employs the phrase "treaty with reality" and the term "interference" throughout his life illuminates how changes in perceptions of self-control might relate to moral healing. Evolution of his usage signposts Lewis's personal journey through moral injury and healing, from belief in reality as a God-less construct with which a treaty can be struck, to a wholistic state in which one must surrender completely to God, through Christ, to accept redemption. Lewis offers specific ways to progress moral healing, including by reframing relationship with pain and employing the imagination as a tool of reorientation. Lewis's perspective is illuminated by a closer look at how the experience of war shapes his reactions as a literary critic when reading literature of war. This section proceeds to analyze *The Last Battle*, the final book in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, as a fictional illustration of Lewis's ideas of moral healing brought to bear. It culminates with a closer look at Lewis's explanation in his autobiography and *The Great Divorce* of what it means to "die before you die." A key takeaway

is that to Lewis, moral healing might be thought of as restoration of agency through the language of surrender.

The conclusion turns specifically to one of Lewis's most beloved fictional characters, Reepicheep the Mouse in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. For the first time in Lewis scholarship, a case is made that Reepicheep may be a fictional characterization of Sergeant Henry Ayres, who served as Lewis's chief enlisted advisor in the trenches and was killed by the same shell that severely wounded Lewis. If accepted as true, the way Lewis tells Reepicheep's story has implications for combat-related moral injury and healing. The message borne by Reepicheep is one of hope, healing, and relationship with God.

To fellows in arms, may Lewis's lessons in language be received as hopeful and potentially connective. To those who care about the war wounded, including professionals working in moral injury, clergy, community leaders, friends, and families, may an exploration of Lewis's experience in war culture open new paths to understanding, support vital connections to healing, and strengthen chaplaincy care. To any who love Lewis today and those who will, may this study deepen awareness of how and why Lieutenant C.S. Lewis, subaltern, British Army, World War I writes the way that he does, on the subjects he does. May Lewis's most rigorously tested apologetics, those that withstand the charges of war, be extended to inform healing in circumstances far beyond combat.

C. Biographical sketch

Writing in the 1950s, Lewis describes his Great War-era military service in two sentences:

> I passed through the ordinary course of training (a mild affair in those days compared with that of the recent war) and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Somerset Light Infantry, the old XIIIth Foot. I arrived in the front line trenches on my nineteenth birthday (November 1917), saw most of my service in the villages before Arras – Fampoux and Monchy – and was wounded at Mt. Bernenchon, near Lillers, in April 1918.[14]

[14] SBJ, 230.

However concise the overview, Lewis walks a long path with war before developing into a 19-year-old in a trench. Histories and literary compilations from the Great War are often organized by year to trace changes in emotional climate and cultural response, and it is appropriate to do so here. Lewis speaks to the instability inherent in such a progression through a fictional character who remarks, "Haven't you noticed how in our own little war here on earth, there are different phases, and while any one phase is going on people get into the habit of thinking and behaving as it if was going to be permanent? But really the thing is changing under your hands all the time, and neither your assets nor your dangers this year are the same as the year before."[15]

Lewis came of age in an England riding a high wave of commercialism, plunged headlong into an increasingly interdependent Europe cooperatively making great intellectual strides. Technical progress in many fields was celebrated and expected to continue, with corresponding increase in material prosperity. European tensions escalated throughout the early years of the twentieth century, however, as the balance of power seemed to shift on the continent. In summer 1914, Lewis recalls "strange stories began to appear in the papers."[16] Arguably most dramatic of all, on June 28th, 1914, a member of a radical Bosnian Serbian group advocating for freedom from Austro-Hungarian annexation assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, while the Archduke was visiting Sarajevo, Bosnia with his wife. Ferdinand's country declared war on Serbia; Russia mobilized in defense of Serbia and as an opportunity to further their own interests. Diplomatic efforts by multiple European countries ensued. At midnight on August 4th, 1914, after weeks of back and forth demonstrating European progress does not extend to diplomacy, Great Britain officially entered World War I in a display of commitment to upholding international treaty it agreed to years before.[17] The war would not end until November 11th, 1918, after the British dead and wounded numbered approximately 1,724,000; or, five men dead, wounded, or missing for every nine sent

[15] Per., 22. Sun Tzu says something similar in *The Art of War*: "Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions" (61).

[16] SBJ, 159.

[17] For detailed accounting, see John Keegan's *The First World War,* chapter two.

out. The western front in World War I becomes the most costly theatre in which Britain has ever fought, carving a unique place in cultural memory.[18]

Though World War I would remain a primarily rural war, with little material damage to large European cities, the threat of war close to homeland impacted Lewis. In the war's first year popular poetry was patriotic; this is "a professional war with popular backing rather than a truly national war."[19] Lewis's tone of somber regard, however, was established early. In May 1914, Lewis tells his father that a teacher's wit upon Lewis's late return to a classroom "did not exercise itself in my presence. But on the first day, as I am told, he expressed a fear lest I had been 'killed in the war'. Ah, well! These people will soon learn that war is not a subject for joking; so for that shall we too."[20] Still years too young to serve himself, Lewis became the family member of a soldier when England joined the war effort and his brother "Warnie," then a student at Sandhurst Military Academy, shipped off to fight. Concern for his brother remained on Lewis's mind through Warnie's service in World Wars I and II, likely contributing to noticeable increases in the volume and manner in which Lewis writes about war in his personal letters of those periods.

In 1915, a young teenage Lewis increasingly stepped into the role of citizen of a nation at war, as the society around him swirled into a period of great cultural change. The war itself became increasingly nationalistic. German Zeppelin raids began on the English coast and both the Germans and British implemented blockades that would last throughout the war; "the war of armies had become the war of peoples."[21] Words of anger replaced patriotism in increasingly mixed popular poetry.[22] A National Ministry of War was formed in Britain in May 1915, an evolution British historian Lidell Hart calls "one of the most significant landmarks in the transition of the struggle from a 'military' to a 'national' war" and categorizes as "proof of the psychological upheaval of traditions."[23] Though Lewis does not comment on the social or cultural change around him during this time, likely too young to feel compelled to do so, these

[18] Richard Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (London: Harper Collins, 20024), 13-14.

[19] Liddell Hart, *The Real War 1914-1918* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1930), 73.

[20] Letter of 17 May 1914, CL I, 56

[21] Hart, *Real War*, 80.

[22] For robust discussion of the evolution of poetic themes and tone during each year of the Great War, as well as an in-depth look at C.S. Lewis's work, see John Bremer's *C.S. Lewis, Poetry, and the Great War*.

[23] Hart, *Real War*, 141.

subjects emerge with regularity in his mature writing. Overlapping the war years, Lewis's narrative poem *Dymer*, for example, begun in 1916 and published after numerous iterations in 1925, takes ideas of civility and civilization as major themes.

As World War I continued, impacts on Lewis's daily life persisted. In his letters of 1914-1916 Lewis records nights of air raids, reacts to newspaper coverage of the fighting and politics, and notes instances of people in his social sphere in England returning wounded from the front. Lewis became a boy mindful of the threat of U-boats in his travels across the English Channel between home and boarding school each term. The first time Lewis directly mentions the toll of the war is in a letter of 1916 to his father, where he writes, "things look a little brighter at the front now, though I am afraid it will need many such successes to bring the business to an end."[24] Far more pleasant travels occur when Lewis's brother, Warnie, then serving in France, "becomes a figure that at rare intervals appears unpredicted on leave, in all the glory of a young officer, with what then seemed unlimited wealth at his command, and whisks me off to Ireland."[25]

Politics directly intersected Lewis's life in years 1916-1917, as he approaches his eighteenth birthday and awaits news of service eligibility regulations for young Irish men his age. As Lewis "began to foresee that it would probably last till I reached military age, I was compelled to make a decision which the law had taken out of the hands of the English boys of my own age; for in Ireland we had no conscription."[26] Lewis experienced additional political turmoil in the form of Irish unrest moving ever closer to his family home in Ireland. Lewis had to make decisions about which conflict to serve in, when, and how. These decisions constituted his first deliberate choices about identity, and likely have a significant role in formation of his later ideas about moral injury and healing.

After choosing to enter the British Army, Lewis was quick to attempt to establish boundaries between himself and the war he had not yet personally seen. The way in which he did so suggests some level of awareness of potential for both physical and inner pain related to combat. Lewis steadfastly decided to "[say] 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.

[24] Letter of 21 Jul 1916, CL I, 218.
[25] SBJ, 183.
[26] SBJ, 194.

You may have my body, but not my mind. I will take part in battles but not read about them.'"[27] Lewis avoided reading or seeking further news about the war, saying he "can hardly regret having escaped the appalling waste of time and spirit which would have been involved in reading the war news or taking more than an artificial and formal part in conversations about the war" because "to fear and hope intensely on shaky evidence, is surely an ill use of the mind."[28] Lewis's response was shared by others; both historians and poets writing during and between the World Wars consistently remarked on perceived shaping of the British press for political aims. Lewis's emphasis on protecting his mind, however, is unique in its ferocity, and indicates where and on what Lewis placed high value as he headed to war.

Much of the local news in 1917 was of a logistical nature, as the German U-boat campaign began to have profound impact. Prior to mid-1917, Britain managed to maintain peacetime levels of food imports,[29] but the fact remained that if cut off, the island would starve in only three months.[30] Britain was slower than Germany to realize the scale of munition supply required for a war of attrition, and since 1915, reporters led public outcry about lack of shells and other supplies on the line. The public was aware that lack of preparation for war was costing the lives of their loved ones, and heavy social charges were brought by the British people against their government.[31] Lewis and his family, friends, and neighbors were by then subject to rationing. While British end strength remained strong, thanks to conscription laws of 1916 compelling service for the first time in British history, other Allied forces were in turmoil. The French, for example, confronted a series of mutinies by soldiers unwilling to be used as machine gun fodder that would require comprehensive change in their leadership at the highest levels to resolve over the course of that year. The British assumed increasing responsibility for manning the war.

Instituting conscription, a revolution unique to Britain during World War I among other continental powers that already possessed systems of universal service, constituted a culturally pivotal experience for a British soldier in the Great War. Hart calls the adoption of conscription a "revolution, not an evolution," that brought "the truth of the new warfare of peoples… home to

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[27] SBJ, 194-195.
[28] SBJ, 195.
[29] John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 318.
[30] Hart, *Real War*, 45.
[31] Hart, *Real War*, 127-128.

the civilian population."[32] Conscription dramatically changed the class makeup of the British fighting force, though post-war the British Army would return to its gentleman-class officer composition. Overall, the British Army retained an extraordinary level of diversity, with widely varying rules and common practices at the unit level. Some soldiers fighting later in the war noted that as a result of heavy losses and conscripted replacements, the close-knit bonds of the officer ranks, comprised at the beginning of the war of public school men from similar backgrounds and areas, gave way to some degree to an impersonal war, no longer sparking the same great identification with regiment or battalion as when the war was young.[33] Lewis reacted distinctly to the changes, chronicling in his letters and post-war diary a marked evolution in the way he thought about the men around him resultant of exposure to a wider swath of humanity during World War I.

Lewis entered officer training in Oxford on June 8, 1917, having voluntarily decided to don a British uniform.[34] "Kitchener's Army," as the wave of citizen volunteers who formed the first national army of Britain were known, could not feed the need for manpower, and 1917 saw the highest demand of the war for new officers.[35] By now, poets were writing of suicide in the trenches, what faces looked like when lungs froth with poison gases, and how it felt to be used like an animal by one's own government; during these years names well known today, such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, penned some of their most vivid works. Lewis would later write that all was "mud, blood, flood."[36]

During training, Lewis sought an outlet in what he calls a "strangely productive mood" of "scribbling verse."[37] He planned to use his pre-war leave to gather his work and submit it to a publisher so "after that, if the fates decide to kill me at the front, I shall enjoy a 9 days immortality while friends who know nothing about poetry imagine that I must have been a genius."[38] The collection of poems became *Metrical Meditations of a Cod*, which after the war came to public life as *Spirits in Bondage*. Later Lewis would describe *Spirits in Bondage* as having "none of the fighting element," though he supposes "it has some indirect bearing on the

[32] Hart, *Real War*, 69.
[33] Charles Messenger, *Call-to-Arms: The British Army 1914-18* (London: Cassell, 2005), 154.
[34] Entry of 8 Jun 1922, AMR, 61.
[35] Messenger, *Call*, 502.
[36] PR, 37.
[37] Letter of 10 Jun 1917 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 321.
[38] Letter of 10 Jun 1917 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 321.

war."[39] It is clear to a more mature reader, however, that the then-teenage-Lewis used writing as an outlet for the war experience. The collection is full of repeated mentions of Satan and pain, imagery of men turning into animals in the face of violence, and battlefield depictions. It includes several pieces specifically titled for war.

By fall of 1917, the British Army was overextended and in dire need of men. Lewis was hurriedly shipped out near the conclusion of his planned training period, arriving at the western front of France on his nineteenth birthday and officially entering on November 29th 1917 what he later refers to as "the unskilled butchery of the first German war."[40] Lewis took his part in the rhythm of war as a young officer in the trenches near Arras, France, interspersing sleepless days and nights of fighting and patrols with additional training behind the front lines. He received specialized training in bombing, remarking that "the work, involving a good deal of chemical and mechanical questions, is not of the sort my brain takes to readily."[41]

In February 1918, Lewis fell ill with Pyrexia unknown origin, also referred to in World War I records as "P.U.O.," and most commonly in literature as "trench fever." Lewis explains trench fever as "merely a high temperature arising from the general irregularity of life at the front."[42] "Irregularity" is an understatement. The disease, similar to typhus and proven in spring 1918 to have been conveyed by lice, mystified doctors as late as that date in its ability to mutate. First manifesting early in the war, the 1914 strains of trench fever soon gave way to far more virulent strains, like the one that affected Lewis. He was removed from the line to hospital in LeTreport, France for three weeks, during which he penned some of the poems later included in *Spirits in Bondage*. Lewis sums up his impression of the trenches when he tells his father being hospitalized with trench fever "is a more natural and easy kind of danger than that of the front… there is always the rest, the unaccustomed comforts, and at the end the possibility of leave."[43]

Lewis recovered and rejoined his battalion on 28 February, then in Fampoux. Back in Britain, the National War Ministry appointed it's first "Director of Propaganda in Enemy

[39] Letter of 13 Oct 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 405-406.

[40] SBJ, 158.

[41] Letter of 4 Jan 1918 to his father, CL I, 351-2.

[42] 16 Feb 1918 letter to his father, CL I, 356. Trench life flies directly in the face of Sun Tzu's teaching "If you are careful of your men, and camp on hard ground, the army will be free from disease of every kind, and this will spell victory" (*The Art of War*, 81).

[43] 22 Feb 1918 letter to his father, CL I, 361.

Countries."[44] As spring progresses, the Germans launched their Spring Offensive, a final attempt to defeat the Allies on the western front before American troops reinforced them. Near Arras, where Lewis was stationed, the Germans engaged in heavy shelling of the British forces. Field Marshal Douglas Haig, Commander of the British Expeditionary Force, issued a general order warning that with "backs to the wall… each one of us must fight on to the end."[45] The German effort resulted in the Allies giving up ground as their lines broke again and again. Men who had been on the front for years described it as an experience of "sheer endurance."[46]

On April 15, 1918, fighting at Mount Bernechon during the Battle of Arras, Lewis was wounded by a British shell that fell short and did kill two men important to Lewis. Fellow subaltern Laurence Johnson, Lewis's closest friend on the line and a symbol of all that Lewis hopes would survive war, died. So, too, did Sergeant Harry Ayres, Lewis's second-in-command in his section, whom I later argue Lewis immortalizes as the fictional warrior character Reepicheep in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Lewis, still alive, crawled back to stretcher bearers. He was transported to an aid station on the line and survived an agonizing journey through a series of field, mobile, and military hospitals. From his clearing station at the front, Lewis was evacuated to an Etaples hospital, one of many such establishments in the sector, some of which were comprised only of temporary huts. Lewis was there when Etaples, which also served as a training base and clearing depot for troops headed down the line, was heavily bombed by the Germans in an air raid, resulting in hundreds of dead and injured among the hospitalized and medical staff. Nearly two months after he arrived, Lewis was sent to a hospital in London. There he recuperated and awaited orders to return to the front, against a backdrop of continued Irish unrest and now-raging Spanish Flu.

Orders to return to the front never came, and Lewis was demobilized after the armistice on November 11th, 1918. He reunited with his father and brother December 27th 1918 at their Irish home in Little Lea, an area of Strandtown near Belfast, Warnie having also survived the war. Lewis then returned to England. He began studies at Oxford on January 13th, 1919, the same place where he entered the military less than two years prior. None of the men Lewis met in

[44] Hart, *Real War*, 319.
[45] Holmes, *Tommy*, 67.
[46] Holmes, *Tommy*, 514.

training, with whom he hoped to attend Oxford as fellow students after the war, survive to enter Oxford with him.

In the decades following the Armistice, known to history as the "interwar period," Lewis developed philosophies of war. Others share Lewis's post-war shift toward what British General Adrian Carton de Wiart describes as "retrospection." Carton de Wiart served in the Boer War, First World War, and Second World War, sustaining dozens of major and minor wounds and earning the highest decorations.[47] The General, who was born in Belgium and died in Ireland, observes:

> Far and away the most interesting and important lesson I had learned was on men. War is a great leveler; it shows the man as he really is, not as he would like to be, nor as he would like you to think he is. It shows him stripped, with his greatness mixed with pathetic fears and weaknesses, and though there were disappointments they were more than cancelled out by pleasant surprises of the little men who, suddenly, became larger than life.[48]

Lewis comes to agree with the idea that war is an environment that reveals man's most unfiltered nature. Lewis's own experience of war will inform theological development of his later ideas about the composition of humanity. Throughout his life Lewis reaches for the language of war to describe and illustrate what he believes to be the nature of humanity, allowing the language of war to permeate his fictional illustrations of the same. Lewis comes to describe, for a few tantalizing examples, "unfairness" as "wounding him like barbed wire;"[49] one character as uttering another's name "again; and then, like a minute gun… perhaps a hundred times;"[50] and to write of faces "as easy to read as that of a man in a shelter when a bomb is coming."[51] During World War II, Lewis served in the home guard and as a social figurehead,

[47] Carton de Wiart commanded three infantry battalions and a brigade during World War I. He fought in the most ferocious circumstances of the war, incurring injuries in all. Carton de Wiart was shot in the skull and ankle at the Somme, through the hip at Passchendaele, through the leg at Cambrai, and in the ear at Arras. His autobiography, *Happy Odyssey*, features a foreword by Winston Churchill and is most often quoted in the public lexicon for Carton de Wiart's assertion therein that he "quite enjoyed" World War I.

[48] Carton de Wiart, *Happy Odyssey*.

[49] Per., 103.

[50] Per., 105.

[51] Per., 117.

broadcasting talks, writing letters, and teaching classes meant to encourage and support, including to Royal Air Force flyers.

Though Lewis did not leave journals from the Front or an autobiographical account of his war years – which he laments, saying "One never reads a printed diary without wishing to be a diarist oneself. What would I not give for a diary of my days in France."[52] - it is possible to piece together a compelling portrayal of his war-time experience. Lewis's account of his inner experience of war bears distinctive marks of what today might be called "moral injury." Linking Lewis to moral injury in those terms is admittedly anachronistic, but to do so does not render his lived experience of war any less true. While placing Lewis in the historical cultural context of his times is vital to grasping his ideas, for this undertaking the supreme value of Lewis's body of work is precisely its potential to transcend specific time periods. This project holds up one war and one man – subaltern Clive Staples Lewis, British Army, World War I - as an example of something arguably common to the human experience of war, with implications for the broader human experience of moral pain.

Though unique, this project is not an attempt to refute or replace Lewis scholarship already in the world, but "accentuate[s] rather than change[s] the character of Lewis as is generally known."[53] It is important to be clear on this point because to suggest something drafted by a combat veteran, about a combat veteran, is of inherently highest or higher value is to continue a precedent harmful to today's military community – that is, the idea that only like understands like. Such a bias isolates warfighters, hampering healing that occurs when notions of separateness are replaced by connection. Likewise Lewis, a staunch advocate of universal moral values, is unlikely to have agreed with it.[54] A *certain type* of understanding is possible only when like examines like. Acknowledging the importance of both objective reality and subjective human interpretation is an approach true to Lewis. Because the primary focus is what Lewis's experience of war, reflections on it, and theological outgrowth can illuminate about moral injury and potential paths toward healing, this project does not necessitate the reader bring any threshold of historical knowledge about World War I to it, to understand the arguments within.

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[52] Letter of 27 Apr 1924 to his father, CL I, 626.

[53] Walter Hooper, "Introduction," LAL, vi.

[54] In most general terms, the moral argument is the idea that all people recognize some things as being "right" or "wrong" within broadly similar parameters, in keeping with a universally known and accepted moral code. This code must come from somewhere; the best philosophical explanation is that the moral code comes from a creator God. Lewis writes and teaches on universal moral values throughout his life.

Most generally, this project is acceptance of an offer Lewis himself makes – to serve as a source of insight into the lived experience of war. "When I see you face to face I will tell you any war impressions quite freely *at your request*," Lewis tells a childhood friend who did not serve. "It is very proper that you should make use of me if you ever happen to want to know how certain things feel."[55] This undertaking makes just such use of Lewis. In so doing, Lt. Clive Staples Lewis, subaltern, British Army, World War I, is established as a man of war, who speaks in the language of war, of lessons learned about humanity through war, whose theological constructs are directly shaped by war, and whose ideas have value to present-day discussions of combat-related moral injury and healing, including chaplaincy care.

D. Methodology

The primary source throughout is Lewis himself. Available from Lewis's pen are more than 3,000 pages of personal letters spanning years as a boy at boarding school to the weeks near his death; his post-war diary of the 1920s; a 1950s autobiography intended to account for the story of his conversion to Christianity; hundreds of scholarly essays and transcripts of class lectures; several full-length academic works in philology, literary criticism, and philosophy; radio broadcasts and sermons published as books and essays; more than a hundred poems, some penned during the Great War; dozens of fictional short stories; and more than a dozen full-length fictional works. Lewis's personal accounts of war and the impacts of war are most prolifically found in his letters. The philosophical and theological conclusions drawn from and shaped by his experience of war are most readily articulated in his public addresses and some academic works. The most intimate illustrations of both lived experience of war and the consequences of that experience are found in his fiction. For ease of reading, Lewis's works are cited using abbreviations and foregoing repeated listing of his name.

This project treats all first-person sources as equally credible and informative; Lewis, after all, is the authority on his own experiences and reflections. While to approach all writings as equally credible and informative might be seen as naïve, as was previously established, the

[55] Letter of 23 May 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 371.

purpose of this project is to explore Lewis's ideas and the ramifications on conceptualization of combat-related moral injury of doing so. To explore rather than defend or criticize requires trusting his presentation and assessments of himself; the value of Lewis's body of work in this context lies in its ability to illuminate a journey, rather than the infallibility of any singular account. In this way Lewis's reflections on his own experiences are of equal credibility and value. The undertaking also considers Lewis's entire body of work rather than prioritizing any particular period, because narrative accounts of combat are extremely difficult to organize. Events are often experienced as isolated fragments, as snippets of images, sounds, and feelings rather than as a cohesive singular memory.[56] Of the writing that results from such experiences, Lewis himself explains, "The real theme may be, and perhaps usually is, something that has no sequence in it, something other than a process and much more like a state or quality."[57] Lewis also says, "everything in [a] story should arise from the whole cast of the author's mind."[58] It is appropriate, then, to look across Lewis's lifetime for information.

Lewis cannot, however, credibly validate his own ideas. Other sources are needed to give Lewis's lived experience proper context and to bring his ideas forward to present day in an effective way. There is a significant challenge in identifying the most useful sources from which to talk about the lived experience of war. Luckily, Lewis himself suggests a method. "Every age has its own outlook," Lewis teaches. "It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books."[59] Also, as Lewis says, "where learning makes free commerce between ages there is always the danger that the characteristic errors of one may be corrected by the characteristic truths of another."[60]The

[56] Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 40.

[57] "Stories," OW, 27.

[58] "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," OW, 51.

[59] "Introduction" to Athanasius's *On the Incarnation*, trans. Sister Penelope Lawson (England: Pantianos Classics, 1944), 6. Writing explicitly of theological works, Lewis explains, "A new book is still on its trial and the amateur is not in a position to judge it. It has to be tested against the great body of Christian thought down the ages, and all its hidden implications (often unsuspected by the author himself) have to be brought to light" (5).

[60] SL, 81.

importance of classical sources is a recurrent theme in Lewis's teaching and one that will be embraced here.[61]

For present purposes, from a wide swath of military history three books emerge as useful in presenting classical accounts of philosophies of war: *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, written or compiled sometime in the first or second century B.C. and considered the earliest known treatise on military science; *On War*, written by Prussian Clausewitz in the early 1800's and published posthumously in 1832; and *Thoughts on War*, published in 1944 by British scholar Liddell Hart. Hart is worth discussing in greater detail because his approach to the study of World War I is often criticized by British historians. Hart can be considered, as strongly worded by noted British historian Richard Holmes, "the archpriest of the argument that there must have been a better way."[62] The question is then immediately raised of whether prominently including Hart is to look inaccurately at the culture in which Lewis lived and wrote. Hart and Lewis do, however, share significant philosophical perspectives, and employing Hart clarifies Lewis in productive ways. For instance, Hart and Lewis share a desire to present the mental, emotional, and spiritual effects of war. Lewis does so diffusely and largely through his fiction; Hart stands in very select company for the magnitude of attention he grants these same topics in his books and essays. Hart is also noteworthy for the primacy his works are given in military studies courses at American war colleges today. Allowing Hart a place at the table, then, is valuable in drawing forward early twentieth century experiences into recognizable modern conversation in the United States. Leveraging Hart also creates potential for enhanced understanding of Lewis's cultural experience by American military audiences, who may benefit from Lewis's ideas of moral healing as the United States continues to wrestle with the role of government in moral injury and healing.

Looking more narrowly at World War I, again a staggering array of accounts makes necessary a word about sourcing. A vast amount of twentieth century interpretive writing about

[61] Lewis is not the only mind to advocate for a return to the classics. Jonathan Shay, a late twenty-first century psychiatrist who turns to Homer to better understand moral injury, is a useful example. It is interesting to note, however, that while Shay's work is heralded as pivotal in the field and the foundation of much of what is today thought about moral injury, it did not spawn substantial imitators in its penchant for classical literature. Apart from the odd academic essay that occasionally considers a writing of Sophocles or Euripides in greater detail, there is no evidence of a wide-spread desire to mine the classics for information about war's effects on man. The exception is in the war colleges of the United States and England, but texts are there primarily considered more for historical and strategic value than as primers for the study of combat-related moral injury. Lewis reveals there is much room to deepen understanding of combat-related moral injury through more concentrated reading of the classics.

[62] Holmes, *Tommy*, xx.

World War I is now considered outdated. As concisely stated by Holmes, the British Army in World War I "was an army of extraordinary diversity, and resists any attempt to superimpose easy generalizations upon it."[63] Recognizing that an attempt to create historical clarity would detract from the primary aim – a fruitful, practical exploration of theological ideas related to moral injury and healing - no attempt is made here at comprehensive historical presentation of the Great War. Rather, broad historical information is culled from established sources, and enough information about dates, locales, and politics presented to bring readers from diverse scholarly backgrounds onto the same plane for discussion of combat-related moral injury and healing. To avoid a caricatured, inaccurate impression of Lewis and his experience, most effort is expended to leverage the work of British historians tightly focused on British officers fighting on the ground in World War I. Limited thoughts about the philosophy of history and historicity – that is, the way in which one consciously approaches historical study, through which mechanisms and with what aims – simmer into the narrative to unite classical and World War I texts.

From a literary perspective, additional memories of the Great War are employed in the form of Lewis's contemporaries, male poets and writers with infantry combat experience in the British Army on the western front, whose psychological stability apart from any combat-related trauma is not in question.[64] Again, no attempt is made at a comprehensive representation of the tens of thousands of pieces of writing, or more, that emerge from the trenches. Novels, stories, poems, essays, letters, memoirs, and diary entries are employed with equal weight. Literary survey ranges across battle lines and includes German writers.

Some historians object to the strong influence of literature in shaping modern memory of World War I. "By studying the war as literature," offers Holmes, "we do not simply colour our view of the past and make it all but impossible to teach the war as history. We go on to tint our picture of the present and our image of the future too."[65] Literary accounts are important here, however, because they reveal Lewis in the context of his peers. So, too, are literary accounts appropriate to the present subject - while a historical focus would demand emphasis on sources

[63] Holmes, *Tommy*, 223.

[64] This qualifier excludes poets such as Ivor Gurney, for example, who is included nearly without fail in World War I literary surveys. Gurney's lifelong history of mental health struggles, however, make sorting his combat experience through his work a highly subjective, potentially confusing endeavor.

[65] Holmes, *Tommy*, xviii.

closest to the date of events as they occurred, a study of moral injury is concerned with progression of sentiment over a prolonged period of time. Thus Lewis's thoughts and those of his peers about discrete topics decades post-war can be as vital as those same thoughts recorded during the war. Ideas related to moral injury gain significance, in fact, when considered and illustrated over a span of time.

A handful of minor decisions lash vision for this undertaking with Lewis's own. When selecting sources, pains were taken to locate Lewis's original words in their entirety. The *Collected Letters* as edited by Walter Hooper, for example, are referenced instead of the *Letters of C.S Lewis,* originally compiled as part of a biography by Warnie Lewis and shortened as such.[66] Combatants are referred to by male pronouns, by no means an attempt to minimize or overlook the contributions of women to war efforts, but a technical decision to support narrative flow. Though the author is a woman who served in war, she, too, employs male pronouns and the generic "man" when describing humanity, to preserve tonal consistency with Lewis. Presentation of Lewis's thoughts on Christianity adhere to his 'mere Christian' approach. Lewis is concerned primarily with an ecumenically Christian identity, noting "You will not learn from me whether you ought to become an Anglican, a Methodist, a Presbyterian, or a Roman Catholic. The omission is intentional... the discussion of these disputed points has no tendency at all to bring an outsider into the Christian fold… we are much more likely to deter him from entering any Christian communion than to draw him into our own."[67] Scripture is taken from the King James Bible, the translation Lewis personally studied.[68] Themes are traced through Lewis's body of work chronologically in the order he writes or presents, to the best of common knowledge, rather than the order in which works are published. Historical context and additional references are most commonly found in the footnotes.

With methods in mind, then, further up and further in we go.[69]

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[66] Editor Walter Hooper notes "none of the family letters quoted in *Letters of C.S. Lewis* is complete" ("Introduction," CL I, viii).

[67] MC, viii – ix.

[68] For Lewis's thoughts on the merits of various Biblical translations, see his 1947 essay "Modern Translations of the Bible" in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*.

[69] In the conclusion of *The Last Battle*, the final book in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, characters are welcomed into heaven by the most well-known warrior of the series, Reepicheep the Mouse. "Welcome, in the Lion's name," Reepicheep greets them at golden gates. "Come further up and further in." Roonwit the Centaur leads the charge of characters toward heaven with similar language, crying "Further in and higher up!" (176). Aslan himself then encourages those moving toward heaven, shouting "Come further in! Come further up!" (181). And in the final legs

of their flight, everyone from Farsight the Eagle to Jewel the Unicorn shout “Don’t stop. Further up and further in!” (198). They went, to untold happiness, and so shall we (203).

1. Lewis on Moral Injury

"Curse God the most High… come then and curse the Lord,"[70] "a red God… a phantom called the Good."[71] "Nature, the Mighty Mother… the battle's filth and strain, the widow's empty pain, the sea to smother your breath, the bomb, the falling death."[72]

- *C.S. Lewis, assorted war-time poems published in 1919*

"What should the great Lord know of it… do you think he ever hears the wail of hearts he has broken, the sound of human ill?"[73] "How could it go on, love, if he knew of laughter and tears?"[74] "Four thousand years of toil and hope and thought… thou hast made as naught… the earth grew black with wrong, our hope was crushed and silenced was our song."[75] "No hope is in the dawn, and no delight."[76]

- *C.S. Lewis, assorted war-time poems published in 1919*

"Such, then, was my position: to care for almost nothing… and to believe in nothing but atoms and evolution and military service."[77]

– C.S. Lewis, recalling the early 1920s

[70] "De Profundis," SIB, lines 3 and 13.
[71] "Ode for New Year's Day," SIB, lines 27 and 32.
[72] "Satan Speaks," SIB, lines 1, 5-8.
[73] "Ode for New Year's Day," SIB, lines 39-40.
[74] Ibid., line 42.
[75] "De Profundis," SIB, lines 4-11.
[76] "Apology," SIB, final line.
[77] SBJ, 211-214.

Empirical research, even when interdisciplinary, has yet to agree upon a finite definition of "moral injury." Significant debate continues over whether those words are even the most accurate to describe a particular type of inner pain that can have dramatic, prolonged implications. Lewis writes long before the term becomes an established part of academic, church, or popular lexicon, but his resonance with what today is called "moral injury" is striking. This section presents prominent concepts in the moral injury field and allows Lewis to interact freely, highlighting areas of convergence and divergence; the latter is important to later understanding of how and why Lewis's approach to moral healing may contribute to modern thoughts in a practical way. Lewis's writings about inner pain are granted specific focus, laying groundwork for the following analysis of Lewis's model of humanity and better equipping readers of his work to readily identify the language of war within.

1.1 An introduction to moral injury

The term "moral injury" is rooted in war, though it has since been extrapolated to other instances of inner wounding. The phrase was pressed into use by psychologist Jonathan Shay in the 1990s, who employed it to describe suffering observed in American Vietnam veterans in his care.[78] Another Vietnam veteran, U.S. Marine Corps officer Camillo "Mac" Bica, now a philosopher working in issues of ethics, morality, and warfare, reports using the term "moral injury" in his personal journals from those same jungles many years earlier. Apart from linguistic origin, what matters most is the echoed suggestion between scholar and combat veteran that the two words, joined together, hit on the lived experience and effects of war in a valuable way. Intellectual and experiential accord makes the term a fitting vehicle through which to allow Lewis's work to intersect modern research. Like the veterans Shay writes about, Lewis freely acknowledges the potential of war to cause inner pain, confiding in a friend after World War I that he is "worried by what goes on inside me: my imagination seems to have died."[79]

[78] Shay published *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* in 1994 and *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* in 2002.

[79] Letter of 25 Sep 1920 to Leo Baker, CL I, 507.

Considered distinct from other types of internal wounding, such as post-traumatic stress (PTS) or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Shay describes moral injury as meeting all three of the following criteria:

> A betrayal of what's right, by someone who holds legitimate authority, in a high stakes situation.[80]

Shay's definition might be thought of in plain language as describing what happens when difficult circumstances or experiences cause individuals to conclude the world is not as they thought it to be, as they think it should be. Ideas about what "should" be vary in scope from how individuals treat one another, to the perceived value of life placed by nation-states or by others, to the nature of the Divine in the face of extreme earthly pain.

The moral injury field remains in the throes of great debate over how far to expand the scope of qualifying experiences. In recent years what began as an effort to conceptualize combat-related pain with no other attributable cause has been extended to more varied types of harm, including rape and sexual assault survivors, frontline healthcare workers, and victims of violent crime, among others. There is an increasing popular push to study "secondary moral injury," thought of as harm generated in spouses or family members by virtue of their proximity to someone morally injured. Even in the "war" sector, modern consensus has widened the scope of moral injury beyond people sometimes called "trigger pullers," or those directly responsible for applying violence, to those in noncombat roles, such as chaplains, military engineers, photographers, medical practitioners, mortuary officials, and similar, contending non-combatants can also be affected by betrayal, failure to act, harm witnessed or heard of, or the graphic nature of some of what they encounter.[81]

The moral injury field also remains entrenched in the question of what moral injury *is*, and the most fruitful way(s) to think and talk about it. Clinical psychotherapist Edward Tick contends moral injury is best understood as an identity disorder that "affects personality on the deepest levels."[82] Scholar Joseph McDonald, along with many others, considers moral injury in

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[80] Jonathan Shay, "Moral Injury" in *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 31, no. 2 (2014): 182–191. https://doi-org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/10.1037/a0036090.

[81] Justin Snyder, "'Blood, Guts, and Gore Galore': Bodies, Moral Pollution, and Combat Trauma" in *Symbolic Interaction* (2014). https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.116.

[82] Tick, *War and the Soul*, 5.

relational terms.[83] Joseph Currier hones in on moral injury and healing as they relate to meaning making.[84] Lewis incorporates and can be seen as resonant with these scholars and many others. Lewis, however, is unique in the way he conceptualizes the lived experience of moral injury and healing in his fictional writing. Lewis is most focused on what combat-related moral injury and healing is *like*, giving his perspective a particular type of utility to both the suffering seeking evidence of understanding and those engaged in chaplaincy care.

1.2 Lewis on Post Traumatic Stress

Discussions of combat-related moral injury are often closely yoked to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); the latter tends to be more familiar to the civilian public.[85] Classical warrior cultures from the Vikings Lewis loved, to the Greeks, Romans, and indigenous groups the world over, make no attempt to delineate between what is today known as "moral injury" and what is called "PTSD," instead accepting that violence impacts man in a myriad of intertwined ways. Lewis agrees a classical approach to anything – that is, considering humanity in a wholistic manner – is more appropriate than indulging in the modern scientific ambition to vivisect,[86] or, attempting to categorize complexities, including human beings, into discrete categories and components. As Lewis says, "We murder to dissect."[87] It is unlikely Lewis would

[83] See McDonald's introduction to *Exploring Moral Injury in Sacred Texts* and his contribution to *Moral Injury: A Guidebook for Understanding and Engagement*, among other works.

[84] Joseph Currier has published numerous articles on meaning-making and authored works such as *Trauma, Meaning, and Spirituality: Translating Research into Clinical Practice,* contributed to volumes such as *Moral Injury: A Guidebook for Understanding and Engagement*, and edited volumes such as *Addressing Moral Injury in Clinical Practice*.

[85] In their foreword to *War and Moral Injury: A Reader*, William Nash and Christina Acampora share that the diagnostic criteria that first appeared for PTSD in the DSM-III in 1980 were formed from a list of symptoms and features common to individuals suffering from post-Vietnam syndrome and rape trauma syndrome. Features thought to be specific to one condition or the other were discarded. Nash and Acampora suggest the "disappointing performance of talking treatments for PTSD may be traced to the narrow conception of PTSD as a disorder of fear and brain fear circuitry" (xxv).

[86] Lewis scholars and fans will recognize the word "vivisect" as reference to *The Abolition of Man* and *That Hideous Strength*.

[87] FL, 22.

have offered a distinction between combat-related PTSD and MI, instead considering them as philosophically continuous aspects of the overwhelming experience of war.[88]

The U.S. Department of Defense does not formally recognize moral injury, nor is "moral injury" included as a diagnosable condition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition – Text Revision (DSM-V TR), a publication of the American Psychiatric Association. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), however, describes moral injury in their public-facing educational materials this way:

> Moral injury can occur in reaction to a traumatic event in which deeply held morals or values are violated. The resulting distress may lead to PTSD, depression, and other disorders in which feelings such as guilt, shame, betrayal and anger are predominant, although these feelings may occur in the absence of a formal disorder.[89]

The VA seems to suggest moral injury can, in some circumstances, be the root cause of clinically diagnosable disorders such as PTSD. Symptoms of moral injury can be similar to those of PTSD, including but not limited to feelings of "loss of soul," often described as a sort of emotional and cognitive "deadness;" pervasive helplessness and despair that can become so profound as to lead to suicide; obsessive thoughts; cyclic anxiety and depression; insomnia; memory failure; diminished use of language; deep dissociation; self-loathing; rage; destructive fantasies and self-destructive tendencies, including self-handicapping behaviors; anti-social behaviors; and inability to trust. Associated physical symptoms often include changes in sensory perception of sound and sight, tremors, spasticity, amnesia, and other physical manifestations of extreme prolonged anxiety.[90]

A careful reading of Lewis's letters reveals he struggled with physical and mental symptoms following World War I that fit the criteria of PTSD, moral injury, or both. In a November 1918 letter to his father written while still convalescing from a shell wound, Lewis follows a description of his current physical condition by saying post-war "on the nerves there

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[88] For more, see the section "A note on author bias," in the 'Introduction' of this project.

[89] Definition is accessible through the VA's website at www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/moral_injury.asp

[90] See the VA's description of symptomology at Definition is accessible through the VA's website at www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/moral_injury.asp, as well as the entries for "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder" and "Post Traumatic Stress" in the DSM-V TR.

are two effects."[91] Though Lewis then attests these symptoms "will probably go with some quiet and rest,"[92] the lines that follow, in which Lewis presumably describes those effects, are redacted. The redaction is significant. In the 1930s, Lewis and his brother undertake a multi-year process of compiling the thousands of family letters that become known as the "Lewis Papers." The papers are remarkably candid, and a valuable component of what makes a study like this one possible. Within them, only three redactions are readily found – a June 9, 1919 comment in a letter between Lewis and his brother about the nature of "what is wrong" with their father;[93] what appears to be a curse word written by Lewis in a letter of Apr 15, 1928;[94] and what is reasonably assumed to be a more detailed description of Lewis's post-war turmoil in the November 17, 1918 letter from Lewis to his father.[95] Redaction of Lewis's symptoms seems to validate the assertion that Lewis and his brother, who also fought in World War I and then in World War II, are attuned to considerations of war-related inner pain. Lewis's father confirms his son's distress in a letter to the War Office petitioning for Lewis's promised pension, noting both the physical effects of Lewis's shell wounds and "shock he suffers from a distressing weakness which need not be described here in detail."[96]

Though it is impossible to deduce with any finality the significance of the redacted passage from his letter in which Lewis may have written directly about his own symptoms,

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[91] Letter of 17 Nov 1918 to his father, CL I, 417.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Letter of 9 Jun 1919 to his brother, CL I, 455.

[94] Letter of 24 Apr 1928 to his brother, CL I, 756.

[95] Walter Hooper, Lewis's personal secretary toward the end of his life and curator of his papers and publications after his death, describes the process of compiling the "Lewis Papers," from which most of Lewis's publicly available letters are drawn: "When Albert Lewis died, Jack and… Warnie… found their father had preserved masses of family papers going back to 1850. The papers were moved to Oxford, and Warnie spent much of 1933-1935 copying them… Both brothers added valuable editorial notes along the way, and the papers were bound into 11 volumes… now widely referred to as the 'Lewis Papers'" (Walter Hooper, "Introduction" to CL I, viii.) Unfortunately, other papers were lost. Of letters in custody of their recipients, it is known that Arthur Greeves, the best friend of Lewis's youth and a lifelong friend, made illegible passages of letters in which a young Lewis writes about various sexual fantasies. In 1936 Lewis burnt the originals of the Lewis Papers, for unknown reasons. Warnie, in a drunken bent, burnt more papers on the occasion of Lewis's death in 1964. Later in his own life, Arthur Greeves burnt several pages in which Lewis discusses what is assumed to be an array of personal difficulties, including at least some related to combat experience (Letter of 3 Apr 1930 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 888). In a note related to his fiction, Lewis makes an interesting comment about burning letters in *Till We Have Faces*, which may or may not have autobiographical components – when Orual goes to Psyche's room to "put everything in it as it had been before all our sorrows began," she finds "some verses in Greek which seemed to be a hymn to the god of the Mountain. These I burned. I did not choose that any of that part of her should remain" (207). The fictional passage could reflect as least some of Lewis's motivation in destroying the letters that he does.

[96] As quoted in K.J. Gilchrist's *A Morning After War*, 140.

Lewis and Warnie retain for public consumption additional descriptions that fit the parameters of PTSD, moral injury, or both. Post-war Lewis startles at loud noises, especially fireworks and gunfire,[97] a reaction consistent with symptoms of hyperarousal. Lewis describes "the first time I had heard a gun fired since I left France" as an "odd" sensation that "seemed much louder and more sinister and generally unpleasant than I had expected."[98] Lewis's suffers nightmares "or rather the same nightmare over and over again,"[99] and writes of "sleeplessness…depression and nervousness (including nightmares) at nights."[100] In addition to the recurrent nightmares, Lewis often describes in his diary of the 1920s singular nights of restlessness such as this one - "a bad, feverish night – all full of confused dreams and no good from my sleep."[101] Though Lewis does not typically record his most graphic dreams, he offers an example in this diary entry from April 27, 1923:

> I dreamed first that I was sitting in the dusk on Magdalen Bridge and there met Jenkin: then I went up a hill with a party of people. On the top of the hill stood a window – no house, a window standing alone, and in the sashes of the window a sheep and a wolf were caught together and the wolf was eating the sheep. The wolf then disappeared from my dream and one of my friends began to cut up the sheep which screamed like a human being but did not bleed. Afterwards we proceeded to eat it.[102]

Decades later, Lewis remains troubled by his dreams and effects that linger into waking hours. In a 1940 letter, for example, Lewis relays to his brother "it is one of those days when the night has left one dazed. I had two unpleasant dreams – one in which I was a Tommy acting as batman to Bleiban, and another in which I was puzzled by a terror spreading through a large crowd of which I was a member."[103] Lewis mentions "loathsome dreams" as late as 1963, in some of the last correspondence of his life.[104] Many of his dreams include the wolf imagery Lewis freely associates with war in his poetry and fiction.

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[97] See letters of 29 June 1919 (458) and April 1925 (640) to his father, CL I.
[98] Letter of Apr 1925 to his father, CL I, 640.
[99] Letter of 17 Nov 1918 to his father, CL I, 417-418.
[100] Letter of 30 Mar 1927 to his father, CL I, 678.
[101] Entry of 7 Sep 1922, AMR, 139.
[102] Entry of 25 Apr 1923, AMR, 311.
[103] Letter of 17 Mar 1940 to his brother, CL II, 363.
[104] Letter of 6 July 1963, LAL, 127.

Lewis also suffers regular headaches of undetermined origin that seem to have both physical and emotional components governing their periodicity. Hardly a month passes in Lewis's complete diary of 1922-1927 without mention of a headache of some kind. In those diary entries, Lewis consistently records headaches on days of emotional distress, such as the anniversary of his wounding at Mt. Bernechon;[105] throughout the extremely stressful period with fellow combat veteran Doc Asks described in the section entitled "Lewis, 'The Doc,' and *The Screwtape Letters*;" and at the threat of another world war. One example, as described in his diary entry of October 6, 1922, reads:

> This whole day is overshadowed by the news in the evening papers. Our negotiations with the Turks have broken down and I cannot for the life of me see how a war can be avoided. Miss Featherstone has heard from some big wig that such a war would involve taking on all Islam and that conscription would be applied at once – not that that matters much, for I suppose one would have to go anyway. Late to bed, with a headache.[106]

Lewis also mentions consistent headaches without specific possible emotional triggers, such as "the short lived headache which comes so often when I am out."[107]

Lewis draws at least one direct link between the emotions of combat and a corresponding physical response. To him, the "prosaic fright that a man suffers in a war"[108] is something like suffocation or smothering. Lewis describes feeling smothered or suffocated at multiple points throughout his life, sometimes linked to a nexus and sometimes what seems to reflect more general underlying anxiety. In a diary entry of 1922, for example, Lewis writes, "I said I had lately been suffering from *timor mortis conturbat me* ['the fear of death is troubling me', the refrain from William Dunbar's poem 'Lament for the Makaris']: Jenkin was in the same state – the suffocating feeling."[109] Jenkin is a friend of Lewis's who also served in World War I, so Lewis's note that Jenkin also felt as he did – "the suffocating feeling" – is significant in identifying a shared response. No specific cause is described. Lewis records a similar reaction again on December 14th 1922, upon visiting Christ Church Cathedral to attend a confirmation: "I

[105] Entry of 15 Apr 1922, AMR, 27.
[106] Entry of 6 Oct 1922, AMR, 152.
[107] Entry of 25 Mar 1923, AMR, 299.
[108] OSP, 25.
[109] Entry of 21 Nov 1922, AMR, 188.

don't know why I found it very uncomfortable – gave me a sort of suffocating feeling and nervous."[110] Lewis grants the same experience of emotional suffocation to the fictional character Jill in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In a single book in the series, *The Silver Chair*, Jill expresses a fear of smothering and feelings of suffocation in at least four places, including in "twisty passages and dark places underground, or even nearly underground" that may readily recall imagery of trenches.[111] In the same work Lewis tells readers, "The darkness was so complete that it made no difference at all whether you had your eyes open or shut. There was no noise. And that was the very worst moment Jill had ever known in her life;"[112] "Jill felt she was being smothered;"[113] "… each cave was lower than the last, till the very thought of the weight and depth of the earth above you was suffocating."[114] No matter where she goes, Jill feels a persistent "general smotheriness of the earth."[115] Lewis's "suffocating feeling" may be familiar to people struggling with the anxiety that is often part of the lived experience of moral injury, PTSD, or both.

Post-war, Lewis often succumbs to wildly vacillating emotions, another behavior consistent with modern understanding of both PTSD and moral injury. Lewis's temper is well documented by his friends, who recall "unexpected outbursts, not unlike volcanic eruptions."[116] They describe "something explosive in him, part of his great powers of mind and spirit, strongly controlled, but also potentially alarming."[117] An eminent professor who met Lewis once characterizes him as "a very good man, to whom goodness did not come easily."[118] Lewis largely concurs with their assessments, though the third party assessment tend to give primacy to outbursts that appear overwhelmingly angry, while Lewis himself writes more about depression. "I woke up late this morning in such a state of misery and depression as I never remember to have had," Lewis writes. "There was no apparent reason. Really rather ridiculous – found myself in tears; for the first time for many a long day, while dressing. I concealed this as well as I could

[110] AMR, 203.
[111] SC, 99.
[112] SC, 138.
[113] SC, 143.
[114] SC, 146.
[115] SC, 223.
[116] Baker, "Near the Beginning" in *Remembering C.S. Lewis*, 67.
[117] Derek Brewer, "The Tutor: A Portrait" in *Remembering C.S. Lewis*, 146.
[118] Derek Brewer, "The Tutor: A Portrait" in *Remembering C.S. Lewis*, 147.

and it passed after breakfast.[119] On various other occasions, for unattributed reasons Lewis describes losing his temper[120] or conversely, how hard he works to keep it;[121] remarks on feeling "very spiritless and stupid;"[122] and notes waking with "a sense of panic."[123]

Lewis records symptoms consistent with PTSD, moral injury, or both throughout his life. Lewis relays an escalation of near-crippling anxiety, coupled with dramatic increase in mentions of his own Great War memories, both when his brother is stationed in China during the early 1930s and as World War II begins. Lewis relives parts of his own combat experience as a result of thinking about his brother, and those reminisces seem to interfere with daily life until Warnie comes home safely. One example of many includes this passage from a letter to his brother during that time:

> Anxiety is of all troubles the one that lends itself least to description… it is impossible from here to form any idea of the only aspect of the thing that concerns me: viz: the actual and probable distance between [you] and the firing. The result is that my fancy plays me every kind of trick. At one time I feel as if the danger was very slight and begin reckoning when your first account of the troubles will reach us: at another I am – exceedingly depressed. All the news is of the sort that one re-interprets over and over, again with new results in each new mood. A beastly state of affairs.[124]

Lewis seems unable to escape his feelings of anxiety, depression, and fixation on his brother's status. The following week Lewis writes to Warnie, "In fact I have two unpleasantly contrasted pictures in my mind. One 'features' [us] with packs and sticks de-training into the sudden stillness of the moors of Parkmore: the other is of [you] with an eye cocked skyward, just in the old French manner, curse it, and ducking at the old *Who-o-o-o-p – Bang*!"[125] The overall impression formed through Lewis's own words, is of a man whose daily life is markedly

[119] Entry of 18 Jun 1922, AMR, 69.
[120] Entry of 30 Jun 1922, AMR, 79.
[121] Entry of 17-25 Mar 1924, AMR, 407.
[122] Entry of 3 Jan 1923, AMR, 225.
[123] Entry of 7 Jan 1923, AMR, 229.
[124] Letter of 15 Feb 1932 letter to his brother, CL II, 45-46.
[125] Letter of 21 Feb 1932 to his brother, CL II, 48.

impacted by his combat experience throughout his life in complex, intertwined ways. "Faces of men in torture," Lewis summarizes, "from my mind they will not go away."[126]

1.3 Combat-related moral injury as unique

The type of inner turmoil Lewis describes is closely linked to the specific experience of combat. Combat-related moral injury warrants focused attention because war stands apart in its scope, scale, and the repeated exposure of combatants to potentially morally injurious scenarios. As such, combat has potential to "prove" things other circumstances of moral injury do not, readily lending itself to sweeping conclusions about the nature of humanity and the world. Whether a tribal action or a world war, armed conflict other than mercenary campaigns is conducted against a backdrop of political will of nations that tacitly approves the moral framework of a conflict. In such a construct, multiple groups or layers of people must endorse decision-making that leads to death of individuals. So many people play a part in the chain of events that culminate in a 19-year-old from Ireland manning a gun in the trenches of France, for instance, that same 19-year-old can defensibly internalize their experience in questions like Lewis's own: "Are all efforts made for the world as utterly barren in results as the terrible effort of this war has undoubtedly proved?"[127] Or, as Lewis writes in the war-time poem "Apology":

> … can it be good
> To think of glory now, when all is done,
> And all our labour underneath the sun
> Has brought us to this – not the thing we would?[128]

In quantitative research, repeated exposure to dramatic events at short intervals over sustained periods of time creates neurological and behavioral differences between combat veterans and survivors of other types of hardship consistently observed by trauma researchers but not yet fully understood. Psychiatrist Bessel Van der Kolk, for example, reports that the brains of trauma-

[126] *Dymer*, Canto IV, stanza 31.
[127] Letter of 25 July 1920 to his father, CL I, 500.
[128] "Apology", SIB, lines 13-20.

affected combat veterans do not respond to pharmaceuticals in the same way as patients seeking treatment for trauma incurred under different circumstances. Van der Kolk notes of a specific study:

> Prozac worked significantly better than the placebo for the patients from the Trauma Clinic. They slept more soundly; they had more control over their emotions and were less preoccupied with the past than those who received a sugar pill. Surprisingly, however, the Prozac had no effect at all on the combat veterans at the VA – their PTSD symptoms were unchanged. These results have held true for most subsequent pharmacological studies on veterans: While a few have shown modest improvements, most have not benefited at all. I have never been able to explain this.[129]

From varied perspectives, then, it is justifiable to treat combat-related moral injury as distinct. Though this project focuses on combat-related moral injury, Lewis's conclusions may be clearly and readily extrapolated to inner pain brought on by other sources. "The ultimate value for us of any revolution, war, or famine," says Lewis, leading with war but alluding to commonalities between the inner effects of trauma, "lies in the individual anguish, treachery, hatred, rage, and despair which it may produce."[130]

1.4 Lewis on just war, total war, pacificism, and patriotism

The practical question of whether war can be defended in light of the great harm it causes, including combat-related moral injury in participants, is one that continues to occupy philosophers, theologians, strategists, and combatants today. Lewis consistently acknowledges war to be a great evil, while asserting its inevitability and potential to ultimately create peace. Lewis emphasizes the importance of a measured approach to patriotism, standing decisively against pacifism while advocating for limited war. "The doctrine that war is always a greater evil seems to imply a materialist ethic, a belief that death and pain are the greatest evils. But I do not think they are," Lewis summarizes. "Of course war is a very great evil. But that is not the

[129] Van der Kolk, *Body*, 35.
[130] "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," WLN, 73.

question. The question is whether war is the greatest evil in the world, so that any state of affairs which might result from submission is certainly preferable."[131]

"Just war" is a term first used by Aristotle in the fourth century BCE and in Christian theology ascribed to Augustine of Hippo. It offers what the name suggests – philosophical defense of combat under certain conditions and for specific reasons that simultaneously acknowledges both the horrors and seeming inherent tendency of mankind to wage war. Just war tradition is highly varied and nuanced, with many interpretations. Lewis often directly quotes Augustine throughout his academic work, and Lewis's conclusions about just war tend to echo many of Augustine's. In Augustine's argument, "the desired end of war"[132] is to restore, preserve, or regain order and peace. War is a means, and the threat of war a mechanism for sustaining peace. War is justified, when a sovereign authority authorizes discriminate, proportional force to right wrongs and protect the innocent. Augustine, whose view is as nuanced as any other, sees the fallen state of the human soul that leads to war as reflective of original sin. As such, war is both unavoidable and terrible. "And so everyone who reflects with sorrow on such grievous evils, in all their horror and cruelty, must acknowledge the misery of them."[133] Or, as Croesus says in Herodotus' *Histories,* which Lewis read many times: "No one is so foolish as to prefer war to peace, as in peace sons bury their fathers, while in war fathers bury their sons."[134]

Lewis's fundamentally Augustinian take on war as a mechanism for peace and his own time in the trenches keep him from ever falling into glorification of war. Lewis carefully provides full portraits of fictional characters, depicting anguish, doubt, loss, trials, and moments of seeming cowardice in his warriors. There is blood and pain in their stories. Far from glorifying war, Lewis's warrior characters humanize it, whether the combatants in question are human or not. It is difficult to find a Lewis work that does not include a candid warrior character who displays varied emotions and reactions, from the English "patient" who dies in a bombing raid, saved by grace, and escapes Screwtape and Wormwood's devilish plans in *The Screwtape Letters*; to Dr. Ransom as Pendragon in *That Hideous Strength*; Bardia in *Till We Have Faces*;

[131] "Why I am not a Pacifist," WG, 77-78.
[132] Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIX, Chapter 12.
[133] Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIV, Chapter 7.
[134] Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.87

Peter, Reepicheep, Bree the calvary horse, and others in *The Chronicles of Narnia;* even Narnia's Christ figure, Aslan himself.

Lewis is unapologetic about fighting for victory, attesting victory is "the proper reward of battle as marriage is the proper reward of love. The proper rewards are not simply tacked on to the activity for which they are given, but are the activity itself in consummation."[135] Lewis's sanction of battle extends into his fictional character development. Aslan, for example, is a Christ figure more violent than the Christ of Scriptures. Aslan literally teaches the Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve how to fight and command troops, as Lewis narrates thus:

> During the first part of the journey Aslan explained to Peter his plan of campaign. 'As soon as she has finished her business in these parts,' he said, 'the Witch and her crew will almost certainly fall back to her House and prepare for a siege. You may or may not be able to cut her off and prevent her from reaching it.' He then went on to outline two plans of battle – one for fighting the Witch and her people in the wood and another for assaulting her castle. And all the time he was advising Peter how to conduct the operations, saying things like 'You must put your Centaurs in such and such a place,' or 'You must post scouts to see that she doesn't do so-and-so'.[136]

Aslan's actions are not unique. Glenstorm, a centaur-shaped embodiment of wisdom and courage in the final book in Narnia, follows in the paw prints of Aslan, giving strategic and tactical advice to other creatures about how to win battles. To cite one example, "'Those who run first do not always run last,' said the Centaur. 'And why should we let the enemy choose our position instead of choosing it ourselves? Let us find a strong place.'"[137]

Lewis's warriors fight in hopes of avoiding future war, and on behalf of the defenseless. They fight for Augustine's peace. But they do fight, and they fight hard. Lewis is clear that when he talks about war, he is talking about physical violence waged by one side against another. Sometimes Lewis seems to go out of his way to drive home the point that war is something tactile, something *real*, though Lewis offers recurrent glimpses into the non-physical ramifications of combat and pens a nearly entirely psychological war in the 1930s *Perelandra*.

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[135] "The Weight of Glory" in WG, 27.
[136] LWW, 146.
[137] PC, 90.

Lewis seems to find the physicality of war necessary to emphasize. "It never enters their heads," Lewis writes, "that it might be a real war with real casualties,"[138] in which "quite ordinary people were to do the fighting."[139]

Once one decides to fight, Lewis does not find the experience necessarily at odds with Christianity. Lewis's reflections are a mix of personal experience, philological extrapolation, and theological conclusions that merge in passages like this one:

> It is, therefore, in my opinion, perfectly right for a Christian judge to sentence a man to death or a Christian soldier to kill an enemy. I have always thought so, ever since I became a Christian, and long before the war, and I still think so now that we are at peace. It is no good quoting 'Thou shalt not kill'. There are two Greek words: the ordinary word to *kill* and the word to *murder*. And when Christ quotes that commandment He uses the *murder* one in all three accounts, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And I am told there is the same distinction in Hebrew. All killing is not murder any more than all sexual intercourse is adultery. When soldiers came to St John the Baptist asking what to do, he never remotely suggested that they ought to leave the army; nor did Christ when He met a Roman sergeant-major - what they called a centurion. The idea of the knight – the Christian in arms for the defense of a good cause – is one of the great Christian ideas… We may kill if necessary, but we must not hate and enjoy hating… even while we kill and punish we must try to feel about the enemy as we feel about ourselves… That is what is meant in the Bible by loving him: wishing his good, not feeling fond of him nor saying he is nice when he is not.[140]

Lewis calls Christianity "a fighting religion,"[141] and believes the joyful heart of the Christian need not be expunged in violent circumstances. "War is a dreadful thing, and I can respect an honest pacifist, though I think he is entirely mistaken," Lewis muses on the air in the World War II broadcasts that become *Mere Christianity*:

> What I cannot understand is this sort of semi-pacifism you get nowadays which gives people the idea that though you have to fight, you ought to do it with a long face and as if you were ashamed of it. It is that feeling that robs lots of

[138] THS, 39.
[139] Per., 21.
[140] MC, 119-120.
[141] MC, 37.

> magnificent young Christians in the Services of something they have a right to, something which is the natural accompaniment of courage – a kind of gaiety and wholeheartedness.[142]

In later broadcasts, Lewis extends the thought to posit conduct in warfare carries potential for Christian witness. Lewis says:

> A man is much more certain that he ought not to murder prisoners or bomb civilians than he ever can be about the justice of a war. It is perhaps here that 'conscientious objection' ought to begin. I feel certain that one Christian airman shot for refusing to bomb enemy civilians would be a more effective martyr (in the etymological sense of the word) than a hundred Christians in jail for refusing to join the army.[143]

It is clear that Lewis not only condones war waged under certain circumstances, he sees within it potential for individuals to have experiences that ultimately lead them closer to God. Lewis insists, however, upon open dialogue about Christianity and war. "If ever the book which I am not going to write is written it must be the full confession by Christendom of Christendom's specific contribution to the sum of human cruelty and treachery," Lewis says. "Large areas of 'the World' will not hear us till we have publicly disowned much of our past. Why should they? We have shouted the name of Christ and enacted the service of Moloch."[144]

> Lewis summarizes his endorsement of war thus:

> You cannot do *simply* good to *simply* Man; you must do this or that good to this or that man. And if you do *this* good, you can't at the same time do that; and if you do it to *these* men, you can't also do it to *those*. Hence from the outset the law of beneficence involves not doing some good to some men at some times… and this in fact most often means helping A at the expense of B, who drowns while you pull A onboard. And sooner or later, it involves helping A by actually doing some degree of violence to B. But when B is up to mischief against A, you must either do nothing (which disobeys the intuition) or you must help one against the

[142] MC, 119.
[143] "The Conditions for a Just War" in *God in the Dock*, Letter 1.
[144] FL, 38.
[147] MN, 67. The Queen defends the killing as a "reason of State."
[148] HB, 214.
[149] TWHF, 34.

> other. And certainly no one's conscience tells him to help B, the guilty. It remains, therefore, to help A… if the argument is not to end in an anti-Pacifist conclusion, one or other of two stopping places must be selected. You must either say that violence to B is lawful only if it stops short of killing, or else that killing of individuals is indeed lawful but the mass killing of a war is not.[150]

Though the philosophical conclusion may be of limited practical help to those suffering from combat-related moral injury today, and is not particularly well crafted in traditional just war theory, the illustration illuminates how deeply Lewis thinks about questions of just war and human behavior. It is reasonable to suppose Lewis's topics of musing may stem from his own questions.

Discussion of pacifism raged between the two World Wars, as combatants, communities, and nations still reeling from the First quickly face the looming threat of the Second. Lewis is consistent in his condemnation of pacifism, while cautioning about the dangers of unfiltered pacifism or patriotism. Lewis's non-fiction remarks against pacifism tend to be philosophical rather than personal, centered on the responsibilities of individuals in their proper place in society relative to the powers that declare war. "The question," Lewis summarizes:

> …is whether to serve in the wars at the command of a civil society to which we belong is a wicked action, or an action morally indifferent, or an action morally obligatory. In asking how to decide this question, we are raising a much more general question: how do we decide what is good or evil?[151]

Lewis ultimately concludes that when it concerns warfare, individuals do not decide "what is good or evil," but that "every moral judgment involves facts, intuition, and reasoning, and, if we are wise enough to be humble, it will involve some regard for authority as well."[152] In other words, individuals must delegate some level of moral authority in declaring warfare to those with greater knowledge and a higher vantage point. "It would be absurd," Lewis attests, "to give to

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[150] "Why I am not a Pacifist," WG, 75-76.

[151] "Why I am not a Pacifist," WG, 64.

[152] "Why I am not a Pacifist," WG, 71-72. Lewis's views were shared by other combatants. As Leiutenant H.E.L. Mellersh is quoted in John Lewis-Stempel's *Six Weeks*: "I and my like entered the war expecting an heroic adventure and believing implicitly in the rightness of our cause; we ended greatly disillusioned as to the nature of the adventure, but still believing that our cause was right and we had not fought in vain" (8).

the private citizen the *same* right and duty of deciding the justice of a given war which rests on governments."[153] He elaborates:

> I don't deserve a share in governing a hen-roost, much less a nation. Nor do most people – all the people who believe advertisements, and think in catchwords and spread rumours. The real reason for democracy is just the reverse. Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows… I don't think the old authority in kings, priests, husbands, and fathers, and the old obedience in subjects, laymen, wives, and sons, as in itself a degrading or evil thing at all. I think it was intrinsically as good and beautiful as the nakedness of Adam and Eve.[154]

The primary relationship with authority is, in the case of war, one's relationship with their country. Lewis views the role of the state as one of supporting her people's good. "A husband and wife chatting over a fire, a couple of friends having a game of darts in a pub, a man reading a book in his own room or digging in his own garden – that is what the State is there for," Lewis says. "Unless they are helping to increase and prolong and protect such moments, all the laws, parliaments, armies, courts, police, economics, etc., are simply a waste of time."[155] Lewis sees the extent to which wars are a defensible use of time as illuminated by history:

> The main relevant fact admitted by all parties is that war is very disagreeable. The main contention urged as fact by Pacifists would be that wars always do more harm than good. How is one to find out whether this is true? It belongs to a class of historical generalisations which involve a comparison between the actual consequences of some actual event and a consequence which might have followed if that event had not occurred…both opinions are merely speculative… that wars do no good is then so far from being a fact that it hardly ranks as a historical opinion…how are we to decide whether the total effect would have been better or worse if Europe had submitted to Germany in 1914?... If a Germanised Europe in 1914 would have been an evil, then the war which prevented that evil was, so far, justified…it seems to me that history is full of useful wars as well as of useless wars.[156]

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[153] "Conditions for a Just War" in *God in the Dock*, Letter 1.
[154] "Equality," PC, 7-8.
[155] MC, 199.
[156] "Why I am not a Pacifist," WG, 73-74.

The conviction that moral decisions are inherently binary and made from set options, such as declaring participation in war always right or always wrong, is one Lewis sees as opening the doorway to all kinds of evil. Lewis reminds audiences that "moral decisions do not admit of mathematical certainty,"[157] "welcome[ing] about equally refutation or development"[158] of his thoughts. He explores the theme at length in *The Screwtape Letters*, where devils spend many pages debating whether there are more likely to win a human soul "by making him an extreme patriot or an ardent pacifist,"[159] concluding that "all extremes except extreme devotion to [God] are to be encouraged."[160] Lewis frames the path through the errors of dogmatic patriotism and pacifism as one of repeated return to personal sphere of influence in practical ways. "I think the best results are obtained by people who work quietly away at limited objectives," Lewis says. "I think the art of life consists in tackling each immediate evil as well as we can. To avert or postpone one particular war by wise policy, or to render one particular campaign shorter by strength and skill or less terrible by mercy to the conquered and the civilians is more useful than all the proposals for universal peace that have ever been made."[161]

With specific regard to England during the World Wars, national identity is often forefront in Lewis's remarks against pacifism, a pattern made all the more interesting given Lewis's choice to fight in the British Army instead of remaining at home in his native Ireland. "We are proud that our own country has more than once stood against the world," Lewis declares in his introduction to a translation of the classical text *On the Incarnation*. "Athanasius did the same."[162] "To this day the vision of the world which comes most naturally to me is one in which 'we two' or 'we few' (and in a sense 'we happy few') stand together against something larger and stronger," Lewis muses in his later autobiography. "England's position in 1940 was to me no surprise; it was the sort of thing that I always expect."[163] There are echoes of Plato, known to have influenced Lewis philosophically, in this loyalty to state. Lewis includes a quote from

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[157] "Why I am not a Pacifist," WG, 90.

[158] "The Conditions for a Just War," letter of May 1939 in response to E.L. Mascall's "The Christian and the Next War" in *Theology* (Vol. XXXVIII, January 1939), included as 'Letter 1' in *God in the Dock*.

[159] SL, 14.

[160] SL, 20.

[161] "Why I am not a Pacifist," WG, 79.

[162] "Introduction" to *On the Incarnation*, 10.

[163] SBJ, 38.

Plato's *Crito* in his own *The Abolition of Man*, asking "Has it escaped you that, in the eyes of gods and good men, your native land deserves from you more honour, worship, and reverence than your mother and father and all your ancestors?... That, if you cannot persuade it to alter its mind you must obey it in all quietness, whether it binds you or beats you or sends you to a war where you may get wounds or death?"[164]

A critic might be tempted to dismiss Lewis's view of war and authority as limited by the Edwardian social constraints of his day, standards that undeniably frown upon eschewing perceived social duty, including the call to arms. Or, a critic might suggest Lewis clings to love of country and defense of war as a mechanism to limit his personal pain at participation. Or, that Lewis's deference to authority is a shirking of his own democratic obligation to critically examine those around him at all stations. Lewis's can be a difficult position for modern readers to relate to, considering a commonality to modern societies' tendency to place ultimate emphasis on the self. In a self-focused schema, what is "just" is determined solely by individuals and the individual perspective by virtue of them being individuals, rather than by position, training, or expertise. Lewis's thoughts on war are, by contrast, rooted in a social structure of which a component is deference to authority established by some socially accepted means. Defending one perspective over the other is not a primary point of this conversation about combat-related moral injury, but highlighting the divide may help present-day readers more easily relate to Lewis's point of view.

Somewhat related to conceptions of social order, Lewis also explores the role of women in battle. Lewis arms women in many of his works, even making the lead character of *Till We Have Faces* a warrior queen. He both suggests and says outright there is something unnatural about it, however. The warrior queen, Orual, is deeply internally corrupted and hides in war, where she is treated more like a man than a woman. Even in that work the implication that only cowards would hide behind a woman remains clear. "I'll believe now that he would hide behind a woman in a battle,"[165] Lewis writes as a slur against cowardice. The theme continues in Narnia when Prince Rilian bemoans, "This is the greatest shame and sorrow that could have fallen on us… we have sent a brave lady into the hands of enemies and stayed behind in safety."[166] In *The*

[164] Plato, *Crito*, 51a-b, as quoted by Lewis in "Appendix: Illustrations of the Tao" in *The Abolition of Man*, 90.

[165] TWHF, 78.

[166] SC, 216.

Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe, Lewis says simply and clearly, "battles are ugly when women fight."[167]

To Lewis and his contemporaries, questions of who should fight, when, and how are inquiries with practical implications. Having fought in the Great War, should war break out again, as Lewis believed would occur, would he fight? The question is so pressing that as early as 1923 it flares between Lewis and his friends, in a substantial enough way that Lewis records the conversations in his diary of the time. Lewis shares the following example from an exchange with his friend, Coghill:

> I found out that he had served in Salonika: that he was Irish and came from near Cork. He had had the appalling experience of being caught by an Irish mob, threatened with lynching, let go, called back again, stood up and pointed at with revolvers, and finally released. He said it was much more terrifying that any war experience… He said (just like Barfield) that he felt it his duty to be a 'conchy' if there was another war, but admitted that he had not the courage. I said yes – unless there was something really worth fighting for. He said the only thing he would fight for was the Monarchy, adding 'I don't mean the Windsor family.' I said I didn't care twopence about monarchy – the only real issue was civilization against barbarism. He agreed, but thought with Hobbes that civilization and monarchy went together. He returned abruptly to the duty of being a conchy: at all costs we must get rid of the bloodthirst and have more Christianity.[168]

Though Lewis's patriotic friends outnumber the objectors, it is worth noting that among Lewis's circle of acquaintances, friends, and colleagues, reactions to the threat of another World War and commitment to it are mixed. "Farquharson approached me with some solemnity," Lewis records, "and asked if I would enter my name in a list of people who would serve in the next war. I replied at once 'That depends Sir on who it is against and what it is about.'"[169]Dialogue is frequent and takes place in personal language. Lewis exists not in an unthinking set, but one that questions and debates.

As much as he relies on reasoned argument to support his conclusion that war can be just, Lewis longs for a world without war enough to imagine and write about it. In the following

[167] LWW, 109.
[168] Entry of February 4, 1923, AMR, 254.
[169] Entry of 29 February 1923, AMR, 389-90.

exchange between Dr. Ransom and an alien creature in *Out of the Silent Planet*, Lewis pushes home to readers how deeply ingrained the idea of war is in our collective human psyches:

> The war-like nature of their preparations [for the hunt] suggested many questions to Ransom. He knew no word for war, but he managed to make Hyoi understand what he wanted to know. Did seroni and hrossa and pfifltriggi ever go out like this, with weapons, against each other?
>
> 'What for?' asked Hyoi.
>
> It was difficult to explain. 'If both wanted one thing and neither would give it,' said Ransom, 'would the other at last come with force? Would they say, give it or we kill you?'
>
> 'What sort of thing?'
>
> 'Well – food, perhaps.'
>
> 'If the other hnau wanted food, why should we not give it to them? We often do.'
>
> 'But how if we had not enough food for ourselves?'
>
> 'But Maleldil will not stop the plants growing.'
>
> 'Hyou, if you had more and more young, would Maleldil broaden the handramit and make enough plants for them all?'
>
> 'The seroni know that sort of thing. But why should we have more young?'
>
> Ransom found this difficult.

In the vignette, Lewis illustrates a human whose vocabulary is locked in ideas of force, including the presupposition of violent means, despite having consistently displayed a penchant for peace until this point in the story. The necessity and unavoidability of violence are to Ransom philosophically and linguistically *a priori*, whether he is able to identify his stance at the time or not. Ransom's limited view is in sharp contrast to Hyoi's faith in a supreme Being that will provide for all.

Lewis directly links his position on just war to theological views and commentary on individual responsibility in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In *The Magician's Nephew*, the creation of Narnia is marked by Creator Aslan's narration that "before the new, clean world I gave you is seven hours old, a force of evil has already entered it; waked and brought hither by this son of Adam… Evil come of that evil… I will see to it that the worst falls upon myself… as Adam's race has done the harm, Adam's race shall help heal it.'" Aslan then charges the first human king and queen of Narnia to "rule and name all these creatures, and do justice among them, and protect them from their enemies when enemies arise. And enemies will arise, for there is an evil Witch in this world.'" Aslan demands to know of the new king, "'if enemies came against the land (for enemies will rise) and there was a war, would you be the first in the charge and the last in the retreat?'"[170] In this tableau, Lewis departs from Scripture in immediately and directly linking the Fall to the human impulse to war. The impulse is sanctioned by Aslan, Lewis's Christ-figure. Lewis's answer to the direct question of whether he will serve is a clear "yes." "It's only sense that one should die for many," he says. "It happens in every battle."[171]

Lewis's remarks suggest a resonance between the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of soldiers that is criticized by many today as yoking religion and war in ways ultimately harmful to individuals, in large part because to do so casts an unfiltered glamour over the cause of war and limits candid post-war exploration of experiences like moral injury. Lewis, however, sees all duties as inherently religious, including the call to war. While his opinion does not negate concern about linking religion and war, it does perhaps soften the connection in practically meaningful ways. Lewis summarizes his sentiments in a public World War II address:

> I believe our cause to be, as human causes go, very righteous, and I therefore believe it to be a duty to participate in this war. And every duty is a religious duty, and our obligation to perform every duty is therefore absolute. Thus we may have a duty to rescue a drowning man and, perhaps, if we live on a dangerous coast, to learn lifesaving so as to be ready for any drowning man when he turns up. It may be our duty to lose our own lives in saving him. But if anyone devoted himself to lifesaving in the sense of giving it his total attention – so that he though and spoke of nothing else and demanded the cessation of all other human activities until everyone had learned to swim – he would be a monomaniac. The rescue of

[170] MN, 149-152.
[171] TWHF, 70.

> drowning me is, then, a duty worth dying for, but not worth living for. It seems to me that all political duties (among which I include military duties) are of this kind. A man may have to die for our country, but no man must, in any exclusive sense, live for his country. He who surrenders himself without reservation to the temporal claims of a nation, or a party, or a class is rendering to Caesar that which, of all things, most emphatically belongs to God: himself.[172]

Overall, Lewis is careful to consider war philosophically and theologically. He is openly critical of unthinking adherence to irrational sentiment associated with war, including unbridled patriotism, or patriotism without action. "I am inclined to think that the sort of love for a man's country which is worked up by beer and brass bands will not lead him to do much harm (or much good) for her sake," Lewis writes. "It will probably be fully discharged by ordering another drink and joining in the chorus."[173] Lewis also acknowledges "that the motives on which most men act, and which they dignify by the names of patriotism or duty to humanity, [are] mere products of the animal organism, varying according to the behaviour pattern of different communities."[174] "That erotic love and love of one's country may thus attempt to 'become gods' is generally recognized,"[175] Lewis summarizes. "There is no need to labour M. de Rougemont's maxim; we all know now that this love becomes a demon when it becomes a god. Some begin to suspect that it is never anything but a demon. But then they have to reject half the high poetry and half the heroic action our race has ever achieved. We cannot keep even Christ's lament over Jerusalem. He too exhibits love for His country."[176]

1.5 Lewis interacts with Jonathan Shay

Though Lewis ultimately concludes war can be justified and nowhere expresses regret for his own participation in it, over the course of his life Lewis devotes a great deal of creative effort to conveying the complexities and intricacies of the lived experience of war, including

[172] "Learning in War-Time," WG, 52-53.
[173] TFL, 9.
[174] THS, 292.
[175] TFL, 8.
[176] TFL, 28.

presentation of inner turmoil and pain. Much of what Lewis conveys would appropriately fall in the realm of what today is called "moral injury." Many modern explorations of moral injury begin with Jonathan Shay, in recognition of Shay's foundational contribution to the field as it exists today. To do so is appropriate to Lewis, because Lewis's intellectual reflections and lived experience validate many of Shay's assertions. Shay's work is founded largely on themes drawn forward from Homer, whose eight century B.C. *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are among the earliest examples of combat-related inner turmoil. Across two volumes – the first, *Achilles in Vietnam*, published in 1994, and the second, *Odysseus in America*, published in 2002 – Shay presents the inner effects of war as a battle for the will of the combatant, juxtaposing readings of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as true accounts of war with narratives from the American Vietnam veterans Shay meets in his practice.

Lewis's lived experience aligns with many of Shay's ideas about moral injury. Shay highlights the loss of meaning and agency he observes in many of those he treats and believes are suffering from moral injury. Lewis and Shay converge on loss of agency as a key consideration of moral injury. Shay continues to assert that war is a deformation of character and a breach of social trust. Lewis wrestles with these ideas through his writing over many years, though ultimately Lewis does not give those ideas the primacy Shay does. Lewis and Shay also share an affinity for Homer. "One imaginative moment seems now to matter more than the realities that followed," Lewis recalls of his Great War experience. "It was the first bullet I heard – so far from me that it 'whined' like a journalist's or a peace-time poet's bullet. At that moment there was something not exactly like fear, much less like indifference: a little quavering signal that said, 'This is War. This is what Homer wrote about.'"[177]

Lewis diverges from Shay in emphasis on where and how to pursue moral healing. Shay concludes moral healing takes place through communalization of pain, naming of trauma, and construction of a personal narrative, and convincingly presents Homer's work as classical evidence of the same. Lewis does not explicitly address communalization, defined by Shay as "being able safely to tell the story to someone who is listening and who can be trusted to retell it truthfully to others in the community;"[178] Shay clarifies that "two people (no matter how well

[177] SBJ, 240.
[178] Shay, *Achilles*, 4.

trained, well meaning, and caring one of them is) is not a community."[179] Perhaps Lewis feels no need to do so, living in a place and time where entire nations are mobilized for war. It stands to reason the cultural construct of a society at war may create opportunities for communalization as part of regular interpersonal interaction, and there are many accounts of Lewis seeking out friends with whom to share war stories. It is also possible to consider writing for public consumption about war, such as Lewis does, likewise his persistent striving for optimal language to truthfully convey the experience of war, as some sort of attempt at communalization. Lewis's behaviors seem to validate Shay's ideas about moral healing, and Lewis's body of work in no way refutes Shay. Lewis, however, grants primacy to a far more individual and internalized path toward moral healing rooted in personal choice, as is presented in great detail in forthcoming sections.

Overall, Lewis's war-time experience falls within Shay's parameters of moral injury. To concisely illustrate how, Lewis repeatedly employs imagery of slavery and bondage to describe the nature of military service, referring to the Great War as a "waste" throughout his life, "a time unpleasantly and wastefully spent."[180] While Lewis ultimately concedes legitimate authority of the nation-state to declare war and demand participation in it, saying his experience of army life falls largely into what he intellectually expects,[181] he writes in words of frustration and anger about how the army treats its wounded, wishing "the adoring public could know what a few of these 'kind workers for our wounded' are really like."[182] Post-war, Lewis rails against the incompetence of "treacherous and dishonest bureaucracy," saying "they are trying to cheat me altogether"[183] out of pension for his wounds. Lewis uses the word "dishonesty" again in a March 1919 letter to his father from the hospital: "The [letter from the British government] which promises that I shall not be called up for further service except in the case of another emergency in the present war was very pleasing to me – not that I set any value on their promise, but it would be nice to be able to show their dishonesty in print if they tried to trick me again."[184] Lewis records the deaths of every member of his intimate group of friends during the Great War and seemingly continual loss of lesser-known acquaintances, many of whom with which he

[179] Shay, *Odysseus*, 4.
[180] Letter of 8 Dec 1918 to his father, CL I, 420.
[181] See the chapter "Guns and Good Company," SBJ, 223-240.
[182] Letter of 5 Mar 1919 to his father, CL I, 442.
[183] Letter of 23 Feb 1919 to his father, CL I, 436.
[184] Letter of 5 Mar 1919 to Arthur Lewis, CL I, 442-443.

hoped to share post-war life. Directly related to theological development, Lewis spends more than a decade chronicling a sense of betrayal from books and music. The belief that "books and music" are the only "real things" in the human experience, of high value and sources of wisdom and truth, holds for Lewis the force of religious conviction when he joins the military, and quickly crumbles in the face of combat. Lewis writes of feeling betrayed by his father, who fails to visit while Lewis is recuperating from wounds incurred during a shell explosion, despite Lewis begging for weeks from his hospital bed. He records feelings of social and relational isolation from any who did not serve. While the "legitimate authority" in this sampling differs in each scenario, all meet Shay's "high stakes" criteria, whether those stakes are personal belief in the meaning of life or Lewis's reactions to threatened physical death.

Lewis's experience also resonates with Shay's prompt to think of inner pain as like an injury – that is, something that occurs at or over an identifiable period of time, such as a war, with clear delineation of the state before and after. As early as military training, Lewis begins referring to his pre-war experiences as "the dear old days" when he was free to read, write, and create.[185] After a night at the theatre in June 1918 during hospital convalescence, Lewis remarks he "had thrills and delights of the real old sort, I have felt as I felt five years ago."[186] As Lewis takes in civilian society from his post-war vantage point, "Even to go to Waterloo was an adventure full of memories, and every station that I passed on the way down seemed to clear away another layer of the time that passed and bring me back to the old life."[187] The "old days" become increasingly difficult for Lewis to access. After a few months at the front, he freely admits "one feels so cut off at times."[188] When shell wounds force him from the front line and into the hospital, Lewis becomes decisive in his sentiments. "Indeed my life is rapidly becoming divided into two periods," Lewis declares, "one including all the time before we got into the battle of Arras, the other ever since. Already last year seems a long, long way off."[189]

[185] Letter of 8 July 1917 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 323.
[186] Letter of 17 June 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 381.
[187] Letter of 20 June 1918 to his father, CL I, 384-385.
[188] Letter of 2 Feb 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 353.
[189] Letter of 3 Nov 1918 to his father, CL I, 414.

1.6 Lewis, Litz, and combatants as perpetrators

The Homer Lewis and Shay are drawn to writes far more about the harm his heroes suffer than pain they cause. Thus rises a prominent question unique to the combat-related moral injury field – that is, how, if at all, inflicting harm contributes to the lived experience of moral injury. Combat-related moral injury is complex because men at arms operate not only at the threat of death and mayhem, they also cause it. "Combatant" means to kill, and wound others. In 2009 American clinician-researchers Brett Litz and William Nash, working from the VA with a larger team, extended Shay's synopsis to describe a morally injured party as a perpetrator, not only a victim, of injurious circumstances. Noticing combat veterans tend to be plagued by things they did as much as things done to them, this group of researchers re-tooled the definition of moral injury as:

> The lasting psychological, biological, spiritual, behavioral, and social impact of perpetrating, failing to prevent, or bearing witness to acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations… Moral injury involves an act of transgression that creates dissonance and conflict because it violates assumptions and beliefs about right and wrong and personal goodness.[190]

Lewis's relationship to Litz is less clear than Lewis to Shay, though Shay finds the Litz expansion a complement to his seminal work. The Litz definition differs from Shay's own "primarily in the 'who' of the violator," observes Shay. "In their definition the violator is the self, whereas in mine the violator is a powerholder."[191] The distinction is an important one in the lived experience of war, or at least it is for Lewis. Lewis seems to acknowledge the complexities of war that the Litz definition strives to address, writing of "despairing faces: as if the people they belonged to had done dreadful things and also suffered dreadful things."[192] Nowhere, however, does Lewis express guilt or remorse for his battlefield actions or extend perpetration of

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[190] Brett T. Litz, Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William P. Nash, Caroline Silva, and Shira Maguen. "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans: A preliminary model and intervention strategy." *Clinical Psychology Review* 29, no. 8 (2009): 697-698, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.07.003. It is worth noting that Nash is a psychiatrist who saw combat with the U.S. Marines in Iraq, including during the Battle of Fallujah in 2004.

[191] Shay, "Moral Injury," 182–191.

[192] MN, 52-53.

guilt and shame to combat, though he readily discusses guilt in both fiction and non-fiction and it is reasonable to conclude Lewis would extend discussion of guilt to combat if he felt it justified.

At the heart of determining whether a combatant acts as perpetrator is the related question of agency; that is, feelings of being in control and in charge of one's own life, with some ability to shape circumstances. Lewis demonstrates awareness of the power of agency to preserve well-being in fictional illustrations like this one, of Dr. Ransom in The Ransom Trilogy:

> He felt remarkably well, though greatly chastened in mind. The silent, purple half-light of the woods spread all around him as it had spread on the first day… but everything else was changed. He looked back on that time as on a nightmare, on his own mood at that time as a sort of sickness. Then all had been whimpering, unanalyzed, self-nourishing, self-consuming dismay. Now, in the clear light of an accepted duty, he felt fear indeed, but with it a sober confidence in himself and in the world, and even an element of pleasure. It was the difference between a landsman in a sinking ship and a horseman on a bolting horse: either may be killed, but the horseman is an agent as well as a patient.[193]

In Lewis's portrayal, feelings of control can be sufficiently strong or weak to affect a human's entire outlook. Lewis also points to "accept[ing] duty" as a pivotal moment in regaining sense of agency. By definition, a volunteer soldier has willingly ascribed personal agency to an external source – in Lewis's case, the British army, and the people and regulations within its structure. Lewis chooses to don a uniform during wartime. He does not join a military, which then becomes embroiled in war. He joins *to* go to war. Considering his framework, it is difficult to identify a path to a worldview in which Lewis then sees his own actions within that war as unjust. "I have," Lewis concisely concludes, "no sympathy with the modern view that killing or being killed is *simpliciter* a great evil."[194]

Though later examination of Lewis's poetry and fiction will reveal numerous instances of Lewis describing himself as a "wolf," and expressing despair at his own and humanity's actions in war, the jump to guilt at pain caused remains missing.[195] Whether Lewis avoids the guilt the

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[193] OSP, 87.

[194] Letter of 17 Jan 1940 to Dom Bede Griffiths, CL II, 327.

[195] In the moral injury field today, mentions of a "wolf" often brings to mind the work of David Grossman, who identifies the "wolf" personality as one with very strong, specific character traits (Grossman splits combatants into one of three categories – wolf, sheep, or sheep-dog). Grossman spoke widely to the American military

Litz group associates with a perpetrator aspect of moral injury due to his clear belief in the value of giving agency to military command, or whether he reinforces his beliefs as a mechanism for avoiding this type of moral injury, or resultant of some other motive entirely, the subject of "combatant as guilty perpetrator" is not one that readily presents itself in Lewis's work. Lewis remains, then, more closely aligned with Shay than the Litz group when pulled forward into modern dialogue.

1.7 Lewis on betrayal

There is growing schism in the moral injury field as clinicians appear to increasingly embrace the Litz definition at the expense of Shay's. Favoritism of Litz may inadvertently silence the idea that moral injury could involve feelings of betrayal, in turn circumventing tough questions about what combatants feel betrayed *by* and the inevitable answers related to politics, culture, and religion. Questions surrounding betrayal can have moral, logistical, or political consequence to the answers, especially in modern first world countries that provide financial, medical, or other benefits to combat veterans following their service. But failure to consider the role of betrayal also has consequences. Lewis believes societies must not "turn away from the consideration of the real nature of the affair because the horror of its elements excites repugnance."[196]

In his body of work Lewis speaks primarily of betrayal by government and society and only rarely by his specific leaders, which matters. The quality and competence of British leadership in the first war remains bitterly contested as a matter of cultural and communal memory. Some historians, such as American John Keegan, attest nearly all the commanders of World War I were considered great men in their time.[197] Others, such as the previously introduced Liddell Hart, promote a negative view, attesting:

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throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s, and continues to lecture and write today. It is important to note that Lewis, however, was nearly a century removed from Grossman's ideas and does not employ wolf imagery in a manner that implies either perpetrator guilt nor a fatalistic embrace of wartime violence.

[196] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans J.J. Graham (Hertfordshire, Great Britain: Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 1997), 6.

[197] Keegan, *First*, 311.

> To throw away men's lives where there is no reasonable chance of advantage is criminal. In the heat of battle, mistakes in the command are inevitable and amply excusable. But the real indictment of leadership arises when attacks that are inherently vain are ordered merely because if they could succeed they would be useful. For such 'manslaughter,' whether it springs from ignorance, a false conception of war, or a want of moral courage, commanders should be held accountable to the nation.[198]

Still others, such as British historian Richard Holmes, point out that the politicians who perpetuated and supported continuation of a World War have to date faced far less scrutiny than the generals, and deserve their day in historical court.[199] Poets and historians alike continue to plumb issues related to cultural memory, itself an attempt to "get it right" now and avoid further betrayal of those who have been let down before. For present purposes it is perhaps best to simply acknowledge the perception of betrayal as important in the lived experience of moral injury and insist upon its inclusion in definitions that resonate with combatants as true.

Lewis is clear one of the primary feelings he struggles with in his post-war years *is* perceived betrayal. In addition to considerations previously presented - a sense of betrayal from books and music, his father, the military medical system, and the British government[200] - in the years during and following World War I Lewis writes plainly of military service as "toil under arbitrary masters, injustice and humiliation, which is what we fear from slavery."[201] Note Lewis's use of the words "fear" and "slavery," and corresponding suggestion that military service is a form of social fear realized. Shay arrives at "slavery" through Homer, concluding "it is the world of war itself that creates conditions that add up to captivity and enslavement."[202] Shay presents the role of the soldier in this paradigm as "a captive, but unlike other forms of captivity, the role of his captor is continuously shared by the enemy and the soldier's own army."[203] Lewis's contemporary and fellow Inkling, J.R.R. Tolkien, makes tonally similar remarks. "One has indeed personally to come under the shadow of war to feel its full

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[198] Hart, *Real War*, 185.
[199] Holmes, *Tommy*, 104.
[200] See the subsection "Lewis on betrayal."
[201] Letter of 8 May 1939 to Dom Bede Griffiths, CL II, 258.
[202] Shay, *Achilles*, 37.
[203] Shay, *Achilles*, 36.

oppression,"[204] attests Tolkien in his foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien's employment of the term "full oppression" is reminiscent of the theme of enslavement voiced by both Lewis and Shay. As years pass, Lewis continues to affirm the force of his sentiment. "Seven out of every ten men who served in the last war, emerged from it hating the regular army much more than they hated the Germans," Lewis expounds in 1944. "Now that I know more (both about hatred and about the army) I look back with horror at my own state of mind at the moment when I was demobilized. I am afraid I regarded a Brass Hat [senior military official] and a Military Policeman as creatures quite outside the human family."[205]

Through illustrations over two decades of writing, Lewis repeatedly portrays combatants reacting to implicit betrayal by the nation-state. Lewis resonates here with scholar Mary Catherine McDonald, who in 2017 published an essay entitled "Haunted by a Different Ghost: Re-thinking Moral Injury." In that piece, McDonald urges clinicians and practitioners working in the field of moral injury to consider those suffering may not be feeling pain associated with a specific event, but rather wrestling with the larger spectre of an amoral world. Lewis fictionalizes betrayal by leadership in a character sketch included in the 1944 essay "Private Bates," employing the character John Bates from Shakespeare's *Henry V* for what Lewis says is a "special reason – not a literary one."[206] Against the backdrop of one Private Bates's curse-riddled conversation with his fellows about the war policies and promises made to soldiers by a fictional King, Lewis writes:

> It would be a pity to leave the scene without noticing that there was another solider present, Private Court. He said nothing. He is there for the very purpose of saying nothing. No front line conversation would be complete without that silent figure. He says nothing. He knows there is no good in saying anything. He stopped saying things years ago when the war was young and when his illusions were shattered: perhaps after the first promise of leave was broken, perhaps when he discovered that the state of the French army was quite different from what he had been led to expect, perhaps when, in the midst of a headlong retreat, he came across a newspaper which said we were advancing.[207]

[204] J.R. Tolkien, "Introduction," *The Fellowship of the Ring*, xi.
[205] "Blimpophobia," PC, 46.
[206] "Private Bates," PC, 51.
[207] "Private Bates," PC, 53.

In a single paragraph, Lewis paints a personal picture of betrayal by government, leaders, and propaganda. "When the war was young" suggests the war has become long, has become old, that the experiences of Private Bates and Court are not unique and that, given time, Court's way will be proven valid. Despite that foresight, there Court sits. He is of low rank, interchangeable with others like him, still willing to fight, but silenced in the face of "illusions [that] were shattered." Note the mechanisms that silence Court – it is not bullets or violence that render him mute, but ideas of country wounded by the "ought to be." Private Court is an embodiment of the lived experience of combat-related moral injury.

In the same span of years, Lewis offers another war-related illustration of betrayal through a fictional ghost. In *The Great Divorce*, Lewis crafts a Ghost character. Presented in a purgatory-like space after death, The Ghost has opportunity to make choices that will either keep him where he is, similar choices to those he made during his earthly life, or to make new choices that lead to redemption and heaven. The Ghost responds to attempts to persuade thus:

> 'I know all about that,' said the Ghost. 'Same old lie… they told me in the nursery that if I were good I'd be happy. And they told me at school that Latin would get easier as I went on… And all through two wars what didn't they say about the good time coming if only I'd be a brave boy and go on being shot at?... Didn't we find that both sides in all the wars were run by the same Armament Firms?... obviously the last thing they want is to end their so-called 'war'. The whole game depends on keeping it going.'[208]

Lewis-as-narrator responds to the Ghost in first person, writing "this account of the matter struck me as uncomfortably plausible."[209] The conclusion that economic motivations fuel wars and deaths appears elsewhere in Lewis's writing. In an earlier fictional work from the 1930s, Lewis remarks on the first taste of fruit from another world, "it was like the discovery of a totally new genus of pleasures, something unheard of among men… for one draught of this on earth wars would be fought and nations betrayed."[210] Lewis seems to find both plausible and unsavory the statement that economic gains fuel wars that bring men to their deaths. As World War II begins, Lewis says:

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[208] GD, 54-5.
[209] GD, 55.
[210] Per., 37.

> I quite agree that one of the worst features of this war is the spectral feeling of all having happened before. As Dyson said 'When you read the headlines (French advance – British steamship sunk) you feel as if you'd had a delightful dream during the last war and woken up to find it still going on'. But perhaps the better view is the Frenchman's 'Well, that was a good armistice!' If one could only hibernate. More and more sleep seems to me the best thing – short of waking up and finding yourself safely dead and not quite damned.[211]

Lewis writes only a few months later of "the nausea of taking upon long disused limbs a harness laid aside, one supposed forever, many years ago," referring to the buildup to World War II as "such a mass of lies that perhaps one should take no notice of anything."[212] One who "takes no notice of anything" as a result of a "mass of lies" certainly meets the criteria of moral injury. While Lewis freely acknowledges the difficulty of moving beyond emotions that imprison and bind, sustained effort is resultant of personal choice, a key facet of Lewis's ideas surrounding moral healing. As Lewis's writing on betrayal reveals, the choice to move toward healing is a persistent one made time after time, over time. The temptation is always there to remain as silent as Private Court, locked in purgatory like the Ghost.[213]

1.8 Lewis on "survivor's guilt"

Guilt, especially "survivor's guilt," is another prominent area where Lewis diverges from Litz. The topic is largely unaddressed by Lewis. Originally developed to describe complex emotions of those who survived the Holocaust when their loved ones did not, today "survivor's guilt" is categorized in the current fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V TR) as a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder.[214] Survivor's

[211] Letter of 18 Sep 1939 to Warnie Lewis, CL II, 278.

[212] Letter of 18 Dec 1939 to Warnie Lewis, CL II, 304-305. Lewis here refers specifically to German news broadcasts.

[213] Those looking to tie the concept of "haunting" to modern research might consider Mary Catherine McDonald's "Haunted by a Different Ghost: Re-thinking Moral Injury," *Essays in Philosophy* Vol. 18, Iss. 2 (2017): 1-16. https://doi.org/10.7710/1526-0569.1581.

[214] Murray, et al. "Survivor Guilt: A Cognitive Approach." *Cognitive Behaviour Therapist* 14, no. 28 (2021). https://doi:10.1017/S1754470X21000246.

guilt can result in deep questions about justice, including and especially the rightness and goodness of the Divine, an individual's place in the world, and the extent to which outcomes can be controlled or having meaning. An often-disproportionate sense of responsibility can create deeply felt questions of personal identity, as survivors may begin to wonder if they are the "sort" of person who allows a particular set of negative consequences to happen to someone else. Over time sufferers of survivor's guilt can become markedly disenchanted with life in general, making it increasingly difficult to glimpse or imagine the good. The dead remain dead, and guilt felt by the living can be so profound as to lead to suicide.[215] The weighty military culture of accountability makes it difficult to imagine how one might leave combat exposure *without* feelings of guilt, including over incidents that did not result in death but perhaps in physical, mental, or spiritual injury of one's comrades in arms; in this sense Litz's definition seems insightful.

Guilt is a response Lewis discusses openly throughout his life, which calls into sharp relief his lack of specific commentary about survivor's guilt. In his autobiography, for example, Lewis presents the death of his mother, when he was aged eight, and corresponding emotional distance from this father with the observation "the sight of adult misery and adult terror has an effect on children which is merely paralysing and alienating. Perhaps it was our fault. Perhaps if we had been better children we might have lightened our father's sufferings at this time. We certainly did not."[216] Lewis reflects on an early erotic attraction to a dancing mistress by saying "I may as well say here that the feeling of guilt, save where a moral offence happened also to break the code of honor or had consequences which excited my pity, was a thing which at that time I hardly know. It took me as long to acquire inhibitions as others (they say) have taken to get rid of them."[217] Over time, Lewis finds guilt has a rightful place, concluding "All men alike stand condemned, not by alien codes of ethics, but by their own, and all men therefore are

[215] Haas Hendin, "Suicide and guilt as manifestations of PTSD in Vietnam combat veterans" in *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 148, no. 5 (1991): 586. https://doi.org/ 10.1176/ajp.148.5.586. There is some connection here with the work of scholars such as Caty Caruth, who studies literary analysis and literary representation of trauma, exploring how the nature of trauma may exceed personal articulation and broader linguistic representation. The school of thought embodied by Caruth, which centers on how trauma affects memory and identity, is a modern extension of Freud.

[216] SJB, 21.

[217] SBJ, 83.

conscious of guilt."[218] Though Lewis's conceptions of guilt evolve over his lifetime, testament to the attention he grants the topic, nowhere does survivor's guilt definitely emerge.

Two pieces of writing, one non-fiction and one fictional, bring Lewis closest to what might be considered discussions of survivor's guilt, though neither are further developed in his letters, diary, or autobiography. In the first, an essay in *Catholic Art Quarterly*'s Christmas 1959 publication, Lewis writes about the nature and experience of doing good works, and traces development of sociocultural ideas about what constitutes a good work. "If you make bad swords," Lewis offers as example, "then at best the warriors will come back and thrash you; at worst, they won't come back at all, for the enemy will have killed them, and your village will be burned and you yourself enslaved or knocked on the head."[219] In the Ransom Trilogy, lead character Dr. Ransom holds his dying friend of another species, killed by a man-made weapon that world had never seen. Ransom says "It is through me that this has happened… I should have told you..." Lewis then describes Ransom's speech "d[ying] away into the inarticulate. He did not know the words for 'forgive,' or 'shame,' or 'fault,' hardly the world for 'sorry'. He could only stare into [his] distorted face in speechless guilt."[220] The Ransom passage clearly points toward moral injury, but the extrapolation to survivor's guilt is less clear. Overall, it is fair to conclude that while Lewis seems to have sufficient familiarity with survivor's guilt in himself or those around him to write compellingly about the experience of it, survivor's guilt does not form a primary part of his personal experience of war. In bringing Lewis forward into modern dialogue, then, it remains defensible to conclude Lewis would align more closely with Shay's interpretation of the idea of betrayal of social trust in combat-related moral injury, than with the Litz group's emphasis on perpetration, a determination that may prove a useful starting point for providers of clinical or chaplaincy care who feel compelled to build upon this project.

1.9 The mental health landscape surrounding Lewis

[218] PoP, 11.
[219] "Good Work and Good Works," WLN, 78.
[220] OSP, 82.

Lewis's decision to avoid direct discussion of some elements of the inner experience of war may have been reactionary to the time and cultural climate in which he lived. Lewis went to and returned from war during the advent of psychology as known today. New ideas were sweeping Europe and America, permeating enemy lines. This was the era of Sigmund Freud, flag bearer of a still-present western cultural obsession with the subconscious, and Wilhelm Wundt, father of the academic discipline of psychology that is essentially a German innovation.[221] The result was pervasive sociocultural turmoil surrounding the role of the individual, needs of society, and importance of the self, all against continuous debate about the meaning of words. Though these topics were somewhat subsumed in the initial fervor of the Great War, by the time Lewis arrived at the trenches they were again robustly emerging in the public dialogue, now in connection with conversations about World War I. Lewis wrote often and clearly on what he saw as the appropriate role of psychology as a field, including its functions, shortcomings, and dangers. Lewis's personal views on mental pain underwent a dramatic shift as a result of his experience of war and warrant closer attention to cohesively frame his ideas surrounding moral healing.

In early twentieth century Britain, conversations about the inner effects of war on combatants vacillated significantly, reflected lack of clarity about what to call it. Hypotheses about mental turmoil caused by war circulated physicians, clergy, and politicians in terms like "fright," "war neurosis," and "neurasthenia." Journalists wrote increasingly frequently of cases of "hysterical blindness," "deaf paralysis," "soldier's heart," "battle fatigue," and "wounds of consciousness." Medical charts bear notes like "N.Y.D.N." for "Not Yet Diagnosed [Nervous]."[222] Combatants wielding pens wrote of "strange hells within the minds war made"[223]

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[221] Wilhelm Wundt founded the first psychological experimental laboratory in Leipzig in 1879. He later wrote *The Psychologies of Nations*, where he argues Germany's underlying social philosophies are superior to those of England and France. Before the Great War, it was an accepted part of European education for budding psychologists to spend time in Germany, learning from the culture attributed with creation of the field. It is widely agreed that the First World War marks a turning point in academic psychology, establishing it as a field with practical purpose and one distinct from philosophy. Germany embraced the idea of psychological advancement during the Great War. Psychologists were heavily leveraged by the Berlin War Ministry before and during the war, for everything from development of aptitude tests to place soldiers in optimal roles, to helping the civilian public adapt to restricted diets brought upon by the British blockade. Other nations quickly followed suit. In America, for example, by 1917 prominent psychologists busily adapted the German and French aptitude tests for soldiers, over iterations ushering in the concept of IQ testing as is known today.

[222] Bogacz, *War Neurosis and Cultural Change*, 244.

[223] Ivor Gurney, "Strange Hells," included in *Collected Poems*, edited by P.J. Kavanagh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

and "men whose minds the Dead have ravished."[224] "Shell-shock," coined in early 1915 by Dr. Charles Myers,[225] emerged as the term most readily recognized today.[226] Referring to concussions caused by exploding shells, initially thought to be the root cause of the suite of symptoms, as early as 1916 newspapers began relying heavily on imagery of the shell-shocked soldier to capture rapidly worsening opinions about the state and purpose of the war. The term "shell-shock" fell into disrepute by World War II, forever assigning it a place alongside the Great War in modern memory.

As a nation, Britain's practical knowledge and experience of combat-related mental distress was limited when the Great War began. Though unrivaled in sea power and entering into war with a body of professional soldiers trained from vast and unparalleled experience, Britain had little to no infrastructure in place to treat inner wounds of war; nor did the French or the Germans. The Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) was trained to deal with a small, professional fighting force, and did not immediately recognize the need for specialists. The medical story of World War I is one of discovering needs as they emerged and attempting to develop solutions during war-time, in areas spanning surgery, dentistry, abdominal trauma expert, and mental health. Specific to shell-shock, in the early months the War Office prohibited establishment of neurological units, fearing they would attract soldiers lacking courage and that permission to suffer nerves might cause such sentiment to infect entire units.[227] Then, too, did the later years of World War I see many men of questionable physical and mental fitness admitted to the army to feed the need for manpower; company commanders on the line regularly reported these groups of men as most susceptible to shell-shock.[228]

What followed was a crash course in mental health triage. Between 1916 and 1918, twenty-one neurological centers were established in Britain dedicated to men suffering acute mental strain and neurological conditions, seven for officers and fourteen for other ranks. Casualty clearing stations were stood up in France specifically for cases of war neurosis.[229]

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[224] Wilfred Owen in the 1917 poem "Mental Cases."

[225] Medical journal *The Lancet* featured the term in a piece by Dr. Charles Myers, Royal Army Medical Corps, who wrote to document a range of severe symptoms afflicting soldiers, including anxiety, nightmares, and impaired sensory perception following close exposure to exploding shells.

[226] Bogacz, *War Neurosis*, 234.

[227] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 291.

[228] Messenger, *Call*, 429.

[229] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 292.

Approximately 80,000 British soldiers moved through these clearing stations and hospitals during the war.[230] Thousands remained in asylums during the interwar years, some for their lifetimes.[231] Treatments varied, reflecting the social differentiation that was an accepted part of British culture. Physicians were inclined to diagnose an officer's mental collapse as "neurasthenia," known before the war to afflict the educated class, and for which a rest cure was considered the best treatment. The upper class had access to private doctors and care homes. The threat of succumbing to shell-shock and ending up in a crowded "pauper asylum," to the eternal shame of the afflicted's family, cast a deep pall of fear over the mental health landscape of the time.[232] Enlisted ranks were far more likely to be deemed cases of hysteria, rectified by punitive treatments like electric shock, cold therapies, and forcible movements.[233] The validity of shell-shock was questioned less and less over the course of the Great War, though accusations of malingering continued. However little the condition was understood, it became increasingly observed and communally acknowledged that this war was doing *something* to afflicted men's hearts and minds, and that something was not good.

After the Armistice a British committee convened to develop longer-term solutions to the persistent problem of men whose minds no longer seemed to work as society thought they should. Comprised of eleven medical professionals and six representatives of the armed forces, all members of the gentleman class and predominantly politically conservative, the Committee met formally September 1920 through June 1922.[234] Results were made public in 1922 with issuance of the *Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into 'Shell-Shock,'* the first product of its kind from an industrialized modern nation.

The overall impression on a present-day reader of the *Enquiry into 'Shell-Shock'* is one of confusion. Despite the committee's attempts to reach consensus through a staggering volume of combatant and subject matter expert testimony, conclusions about the nature and treatment of shell-shock were consistently subsumed to the question of *who* is most likely to succumb to the

[230] Between 80-200,000 troops are estimated to have been pulled off the line for shell shock. Referencing the lack of certainty in British Army statistics, Wendy Holden notes "by comparison, the German Army figures registered 613,047 cases of 'disorders of the nerves' between 1913 and 1918" (See *Shell Shock: The Psychological Impact of War*, London, Channel 4 Books, 1998, pp. 70).

[231] Reid, "Nerves," 92.

[232] Reid, "Nerves," 93.

[233] Bogacz, *War Neurosis*, note 71 on page 255.

[234] Bogacz, *War Neurosis*, 235-237.

condition. Answers to the latter were muddled by pre-established British social ideas about perceived weakness among lower classes, proudly held upper class ideas about character and willpower, and related conceptions of cowardice. Conversations surrounding shell-shock were also entangled with the communal national loss of nearly 750,000 young Englishmen, fresh on the hearts and minds of the Committee and the country. "In light of such sacrifices," explains historian Ted Bogacz, "it was difficult for many Englishmen both during the war and for years afterward to forgive those who had faltered in their duty or who had actually deserted their posts; 'shell-shock' seemed an all too easy way out for the weakling or the coward. It was only to be expected that the frustration and anger of officers and doctors involved in the shell-shock crisis would surface when discussing the military aspects of shell-shock."[235]

For present purposes, the *Enquiry* is most valuable as a window into the social and cultural climate Lewis lived in. Lewis's Britain was undergoing revolutionary challenge to long-established social structure as a result of community discourse about how the mind connects to the physical body, and how mind and spirit are affected by both external and internal events. British psychologist Philop Vernon refers to the period as "the most exciting decade in psychology since the death of Aristotle'.[236] Mixed social reaction to war poets like Siegfried Sassoon, who was awarded multiple decorations for valor on the western Front before spending months at Craiglockhart War Hospital, a British neurological hospitals for officers, highlights societal confusion about how values like courage and cowardice did, or did not, play a part in mental health.[237] Though the *Enquiry into 'Shell-Shock'* was ultimately unable to transcend pre-war Edwardian social constructs that take social obligation and duty to be the pinnacles of civilized behavior, social upheaval was well underway.

In post-war years Lewis freely mentions "war neurasthenia,"[238] refers to an acquaintance as a "war wreck,"[239] and describes the nervous state of a female relation by saying "she was in

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[235] Ibid., 244.

[236] Ben Shephard, "Psychology and the Great War, 1914-1918," *The Psychologist*, a publication of the British Psychological Society, 20 Oct 2015, www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/psychology-and-the-great-war.

[237] Lewis was not a fan of Sassoon's, referring to him in a letter of 6 Oct 1918 letter to Arthur Greeves as "a horrid man" (CL I, 403). Sassoon's poetry, which became increasingly graphic as the war progressed, is among the most well-known and oft-quoted of the British wartime canon.

[238] Letter of 22 Apr 1923 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 605.

[239] Lewis is here referencing Segar. Letter of 15 Feb 1932 to Warnie, CL II, 46.

poor form – shell shock I call it."[240] In his fiction, Lewis describes the inner monologue of a character in distress:

> I stood still for a few moments telling myself not to be a fool, and when I finally resumed my walk I was wondering whether this might be the beginning of a nervous breakdown… My only sensible course was to turn back at once and get safely home, before I lost my memory or became hysterical, and to put myself in the hands of a doctor… 'They call it a breakdown at first,' said my mind, 'and send you to a nursing home; later on they move you to an asylum'…[241]

Lewis's mentions of breakdown, loss of memory, and institutionalized care encapsulate many facets of the social dialogue surrounding him. Across genres, Lewis's word choices carry implicit expectation the recipient will understand his terms, suggesting the language of shell-shock was in the public's lexicon and Lewis himself was open to the discussion.

1.10 Lewis's *The Problem of Pain* and mental anguish

Lewis avoids supposing whether shell-shock is something physical or mental in cause. This question was overwhelmingly a focus of scientific and empirical, as well as philosophical, exploration in the inter-war years. Implicit within the inquiry is a serious challenge to the previously established idea that problems of mind, including insanity and other forms of mental illness, reflect disease in the brain as an organ without moral or spiritual implication or cause. Lewis's most well-known non-fiction work intersecting this area, the 1940 *The Problem of Pain,* whose purpose "is to solve the intellectual problem raised by suffering,"[242] makes no mention of mental anguish in the body of work, though psychological pain is never explicitly excluded. *The Problem of Pain* does include an appendix devoted to mental pain, written at Lewis's invitation

[240] Entry of 19 Aug 1922, AMR, 118.
[241] Per., 12.
[242] PoP, vii.

by his personal physician and "almost my greatest friend,"[243] Dr. Robert Havard, "from clinical experience."[244]

The four-paragraph appendix underwent extensive revision by Lewis, and therefore it stands to reason the views captured therein are representative of Lewis's own. Havard's contribution was originally entitled by him as "Pain and Behavior in Medical Practice" and ran to more than 1,100 words, compared to the 539 words eventually published by Lewis. There is no known animosity between them as a result of the editing process. The final product, then, seems as much a reflection of Lewis as of Havard. Researcher Sarah O'Dell argues "the deletion of significant portions of the piece—ranging from small phrases to the lion's share of entire paragraphs… drastically alters the meaning of Dr. Havard's original statements… The overall effect of these revisions is to change the tone of the piece: the matter-of-fact attitude of the published appendix contrasts with the voice of a physician."[245] O'Dell is critical of Lewis's edits, suggesting Lewis's edits "diminish the piece in rhetoric and substance" and suggest Lewis fails to "recognize the complexity of his subject matter."[246] O'Dell objects to Lewis's removal of much poetic imagery originally submitted by Havard on topics such as the nature of evil and original sin, the relationship between the body and mind, and the potential for healing. It is more likely Lewis removes portions of Havard's writing that conflict with Lewis's own emerging thoughts about tripartite humanity and the relationship between body, soul, and spirit, ultimately choosing linguistic precision over Havard's potentially theologically confusing imagery, however poetic was the original submission.

In the published version, Havard distinguishes between short attacks of severe pain, sustained longer pain, mental anguish, and insanity, having this to say about mental pain:

> Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say 'My tooth is aching' than to say 'My heart is broken'. Yet if the cause is accepted and faced, the conflict will strengthen and purify the

[243] Letter of 16 Dec 1955 letter to Mary Van Deusen, CL III, 706. Lewis writes years prior of Havard in a letter of 9 Apr 1950 letter to Dom Bede Griffiths: "Isn't Havard a beautiful creature? *anima candida*." (Meaning: "[He is] pure spirit.") CL III, 44)

[244] Havard, appendix to PoP, 160.

[245] O'Dell, Sarah. "The (Revised) Clinical Imagination: An Unpublished Appendix to *The Problem of Pain*" in *VII: Journal of the Marion E. Wade Center*, vol. 36 (2019): 21-44.

[246] Ibid.

> character and in time the pain will usually pass. Sometimes, however, it persists and the effect is devastating; if the cause is not faced or not recognized, it produces the dreary state of the chronic neurotic. But some by heroism overcome even chronic mental pain. They often produce brilliant work and strengthen, harden, and sharpen their characters till they become like tempered steel… Pain provides an opportunity for heroism; the opportunity is seized with surprising frequency.[247]

Lewis comes to agree with many of Havard's positions. Toward the end of his life, Lewis leverages the language of war to delineate the different ways he experiences mental turmoil and physical pain. "Grief is like a bomber circling around and dropping its bombs each time the circle brings it overhead," Lewis writes. "Physical pain is like the steady barrage on a trench in World War One, hour of it with no let-up for a moment."[248]Over the course of his lifetime, Lewis concludes "the body can suffer twenty times more than the mind,"[249] a reversal of his 1920s "deep rooted conviction that no mental pain can equal bad physical pain."[250] Lewis also embraces the framing of inner pain as a trial that can be overcome, illustrating the same through a number of fictional characters.

Havard recognizes acknowledging turmoil can ease the burden. Again, Lewis comes to agree over time, writing in a 1933 letter:

> I don't now agree – how heartily I once would have – with any idea of 'trying to forget' things and people we have lost, or indeed with trying always and on principle to exclude any kind of distressing thought from one's mind. I don't mean one ought to sentimentalize a sorrow, or (often) scratch a shame till it is raw. But I had better not go on with the subject as I find my ideas are all in disorder. I know I feel very strongly that when in a wakeful night some idea which one 'can't stand' – some painful memory or mean act of one's own or vivid image of physical pain – thrusts itself upon you, that you ought not to thrust it away but look it squarely in the face for some appreciable time: giving it of course an explicitly devotional context. But I don't fully know why and am not prepared to work the thing out.[251]

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[247] Havard, appendix to PoP, 161-162.
[248] AGO, 41.
[249] AGO, 40.
[250] AMR, 212.
[251] Letter of 1 Sep 1933 to Arthur Greeves, CL II, 118.

The letter reveals Lewis to be a man still struggling with thoughts so distressing they either prevent him from sleeping or intrusively wake him. He seems to have wearied of more than a decade of avoiding thoughts about "things and people we have lost," and now acknowledges the necessity of looking those elements "squarely in the face for some appreciable time." Lewis evidences continued struggle with finding a balance between acknowledging mental turmoil and disallowing any such anguish from taking control of his life. In this wrestling his theology of choice begins to take shape in a way directly applicable to moral injury and healing.

1.11 Lewis on moral injury as highly individualized

Moral injury can sometimes be linked to a singular event or series of events, and sometimes arises from such a complicated, intricately connected set of circumstances that it can be difficult to identify and articulate causality beyond "the experience of war." Direct lines cannot necessarily be drawn between length of time in a combat zone, the location of their war, the precise role filled by that combatant, the specific actions taken by that combatant, and similar considerations, and their experience of moral injury. Rather than devote seemingly endless resources to quantification of cause, it is the author's view that accepting the experience of war as consuming then entails a philosophically qualitative approach to the study of combat-related moral injury and healing.[252] Lewis confirms the value of details in conceptualization of the lived experience of moral injury, and validates the importance of acknowledging the overwhelmingly complex nature of combat in cultivating an effective approach to moral healing. In approaching moral injury, a primary ramification of what Lewis calls "truncated thought"[253] is to place disproportionate emphasis on what event(s) might cause moral injury as means to understand its effects, at the expense of details present in wholistic lived experience. Things that may seem "small" to a third party are often internalized by combatants as *the* key elements in the experience of war. Lewis writes in June 1923 that "looking back in one's own life one found so many things exercising influence or failing to influence in a way which no other person could

[252] See "A note on author bias" in the 'Introduction' to this project.
[253] MIR, 66.

anticipate or believe, that one was reduced to despair: one could calculate nothing."[254] The word "despair" stands out, reinforcing what seems to be lack of both connection and control. In this despair, as Lewis articulates, "it is often the little things that are hardest to stand."[255]

Acknowledging the qualitative flies in the face of modern scientifically-driven societies, but other combatants echo Lewis's emphasis on the prominence of highly individualized detail in the lived experience of war. Edward Blunden, for example, offers the following observation in *Undertones of War*, a World War I memoir that is particularly valuable for the short time frame after war in which Blunden captures his thoughts and considered among the best of the World War I cannon:

> Do I loiter too long among little things? It may be so… Each circumstance of the British experience that is still with me has ceased for me to be big or little…Was it nearer the soul of war to adjust armies in coloured inks on vast maps at Montreuil or Whitehall, to hear of or to project colossal shocks in a sort of mathematical symbol, than to rub knees with some poor jaw-dropping resting sentry, under the dripping rubber sheet, balanced on the greasy fire-step, a fragment of some rural newspaper or Mr. Bottomley's oracle book beside him? … a peculiar difficulty would exist for the artist to select the sights, faces, words, incidents, which characterized the time. The art is rather to collect them, in their original form of incoherence.[256]

In present-day wars, examples of details that take greater prominence in the minds and hearts of warfighters than the larger points of battle could look like men with large-scale combat kills who are bothered not by intrusive visions of fields of dead bodies but by the flies swarming those bodies. Or, it might be female pilots who fly numerous bombing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and believe the collateral damage to civilian institutions located next to military targets defensible, but suffer agony over how treatment of women in some parts of the world affects their view of humanity. Or, details could take the form of a team leader who kills on

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[254] Entry of 1 June 1923, AMR, 321.

[255] LB, 41.

[256] Edmund Blunden, *Undertones of War* (London: Penguin Books, 1928), 140-141. Blunden served in the Royal Sussex Regiment during World War I, fighting in some of the bloodiest battles of the War, including the battles of the Somme, Ypres, and Passchendaele. He survived the war and achieved a distinguished academic career, spending periods teaching in Japan and at Hong Kong University before becoming a Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Blunden received numerous awards for his body of work.

multiple occasions in intimate proximity and says seeing another man's life draining away is justifiable when that man wants to kill him, but whose memories of shooting barking dogs who might give away their position prompts tears even years later; the dogs were helpless, they were innocent, he will tell you, and he grew up with animals and still loves them.

Lewis attempts to decouple the magnitude of an action as interpreted from the outside, with that action's potential to affect the individual taking part in it. Lewis says in a World War II radio broadcast:

> What they are always thinking of is the mark which the action leaves on that tiny central self which no one sees in this life but which each of us will have to endure – or enjoy – forever. One man may be so placed that his anger sheds the blood of thousands, and another so placed that however angry he gets he will only be laughed at. But the little mark on the soul may be much the same in both… the bigness or smallness of the thing, seen from the outside, is not what really matters.[257]

Lewis hypothesizes the "bigness or smallness of the thing" is "not what really matters because lived experience is extraordinarily complex. On the business of living through hard times, Lewis writes, "one never meets just Cancer, or War, or Unhappiness (or Happiness). One only meets each hour or moment that comes. All manner of ups and downs… one never gets the total impact of what we call 'the thing itself'… the thing itself is simply all these ups and downs: the rest is a name or an idea."[258] Lewis's examples are noteworthy – again, war makes a prominent appearance. Also significant is Lewis's suggestion that efforts to name a complex experience like "Cancer, or War, or Unhappiness (or Happiness)" fall short of the lived experience, a sentiment that recalls modern debates over whether "moral injury" is the most comprehensive, accurate word choice for the experience. Lewis's assertion that "the total impact" of a complex experience consists of "all manner of ups and downs" could be seen as encompassing the lived experience of moral injury, or PTSD, or both.

Fictionally, Lewis depicts the significance of varied individual reactions to complex experiences in Narnia. There two humans and their native frog-like guide, Puddleglum, find out that the giants hosting them for dinner have served a Talking Beast as the main course:

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[257] MC, 93.
[258] AGO, 12.

> For a moment Jill did not realize the full meaning of this. But she did when Scrubb's eyes opened wide with horror and he said:
>
> 'So we've been eating a *Talking* stag.'
>
> This discovery didn't have exactly the same effect on all of them. Jill, who was new to that world, was sorry for the poor stag and thought it rotten of the giants to have killed him. Scrubb, who had been in that world before and had at least one Talking beast as his dear friend, felt horrified, as you might feel about a murder. But Puddleglum, who was Narnian born, was sick and faint, and felt as you would feel if you found you had eaten a baby.[259]

Lewis's illustration conveys a key point about moral injury – the same event, "didn't have exactly the same effect on all of them." Lewis links each character's reaction to the intimacy of their relationship with Narnia. He avoids any tone of judgment, instead offering what could be interpreted as validation of each character's point of view by taking the time to explain their relationship to Narnia and what significance eating a Talking Stag would hold by virtue of that relationship. Reactions escalate. Jill feels "sorry" for the incident. Scrubb is "horrified." Puddleglum is so distraught he becomes physically ill. Lewis writes in second person to convey the magnitude of the two strongest reactions – "as you might feel about a murder," and "if you found you had eaten a baby." Lewis is going to lengths to try to get the reader to recognize, if not fully understand, how highly individualized is the process of incurring "those little marks or twists on the central, inside part of the soul."[260] Later, Lewis will push this conclusion into an apologetic call for personal relationship with the Christian God.

Sometimes the key experiential element of combat has a linear connection to war but is lived out in an unexpected way. Lewis's confession of when he felt the greatest degree of fear, for example, might be considered unexpected. Lewis observes during his convalescence from a shell wound, "I was to have been sent across to England last night, but we were heavily bombed, so of course all traffic stopped. It is interesting to note that an air-raid here frightened me much more than anything I encountered at the front: you feel so helpless in bed, knowing you can't

[259] SC, 128-129.
[260] MC, 119-120.

walk or anything even if you get out of it."[261] Perceived helplessness is a form of lack of control; lack of control is an element many researchers readily link to moral injury and one Lewis repeatedly writes about.[262] In another potentially unexpected development, Lewis also freely shares that a series of events surrounding the war-influenced breakdown and death of a dear friend years after the war are among the most formative of his life, removed though they are by time from actual combat. Plumbed in detail in the section "Lewis, The Doc, and The Screwtape Letters," the point remains that Lewis's own example supports the assertion that combat-related moral injury is highly individualized, and the source of greatest pain may or may not be readily apparent to a third-party observer.

What else caused "little marks" on Lewis's soul; what were the "little things that are hardest to stand"?[263] Lewis shares several recollections in his personal letters:

> Is it not an abomination the way the Germans have named their trench systems after the heroes of the Ring? The other day they were defending the 'Alberich line' and now they have been driven back to 'Brünnhilde'. Anything more vulgar than the application of that grand old cycle to the wearisome ugliness of modern war I can't imagine.[264]

And, upon returning to Oxford after World War I, a place Lewis last saw during his military training, Lewis says:

> There is of course already a great difference between this Oxford and the ghost I knew before…. The reawakening is a little pathetic: at our first we read the minutes of the last – 1914. I don't know any little thing that has made me realise the absolute suspension and waste of these years more thoroughly.[265]

The first passage speaks to Lewis's lifelong love of "northernness," an interest he rarely finds shared with others; his experience of war is of the corruption and misuse of a personal ideal. The

[261] Letter of 23 May 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 372.

[262] For more, see the subsection "Lewis on mastery of fear" in "Moral Healing."

[263] LB, 41.

[264] Letter of 13 Oct 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 405. Lewis developed in his school days a life-long love for all things "northern," including deep joy of Wagner. Lewis and Greeves shared this affinity, and the common interest in great part constituted initial formation of their friendship.

[265] Letter of 27 Jan 1919 to his father, CL I, 428.

second directly addresses "waste," though it is unclear whether Lewis means widespread societal waste, as in the loss of young men who would have been fellow students; a wasting in his personal life, in the form of lost possibility and development during those years; or both. Highly individualized recollections of his war experience continue to bubble into Lewis's daily experience for many years. As late as 1926, during the last year in which he kept a diary, Lewis records "I went to Alfred Street – of hated memory, for there I enlisted in 1917 – to see a man about my income tax."[266] Demonstrated by Lewis but not as strongly explicitly stated is the duration of time over which moral injury and memory interact, yet another highly individualized component of the lived experience. It lies not with any one man to fully know what sticks on the heart and mind of another, what lingers long enough to appear regularly in their dreams.

1.12 Summary

In this section, Lewis entered into dialogue with prominent modern thinkers in the moral injury field. Lewis's voice has enough resonance, and his lived experience sufficiently closely aligns with how moral injury is currently defined, to establish Lewis as credible. Linguistic patterns emerge when looking across Lewis's work for the language of war that illuminate him as a man whose lived experience of war shapes the way he conceptualizes inner pain, and validate the assertion that Lewis's combat experience may hold significant explanatory power for his beliefs about just war, betrayal, guilt, and mental health. Considering non-fiction and fictional works, Lewis's use of language and imagery emerges as a potentially valuable model for chaplaincy care.

[266] Entry of 20 May 1926, AMR, 532.

2. Lewis's Lived Experience of War

"… you cannot see things till you know roughly what they are."[267]

– C.S. Lewis, 'Out of the Silent Planet,' 1938

"You will not find the warrior, the poet, the philosopher, or the Christian by staring in his eyes as if he were your mistress. Better fight beside him, read with him, argue with him, pray with him."[268]

- C.S. Lewis, 'The Four Loves,' 1960

"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… 'Swine!' – 'Die, then!' – 'That's for you!'

The next that I remember was a lull
And sated pause. I saw an old, old man
Lying before my feet with shattered skull,
And both my arms dripped red."[269]

- C.S. Lewis, 'Dymer,' 1926

[267] OSP, 43.
[268] FL, 91.
[269] *Dymer*, Canto IV, stanzas 27 and 28.

To appropriately identify and trace how Lewis's lived experience of war influences his use of language, development of imagery, and formation of theological beliefs in a manner with direct implications for modern conceptions of moral injury and healing, it is helpful to spend time analyzing what Lewis says about his combat experience. Lewis does not leave an explicit account in the form of a battle-focused diary, historical narrative, or similarly focused undertaking. He does, however, speak seemingly endlessly about war in a litany of mentions – snippets of conversation, longer paragraphs, even entire essays or lectures – over the course of his lifetime. Taken together, Lewis's non-fiction writing can then be clearly and directly linked to the war-related imagery he repeatedly chooses to employ in his fictional works. Curating Lewis's Great War experience and the philosophical conclusions he articulates about the nature of war illuminates how war shapes Lewis's theological development over time. Approaching the study of war as a philosophical experience, as Lewis does, may help non-combatants better comprehend how a relationship of this scope and scale creates space for moral injury, and how readily and profoundly it can shape language.

In the "Introduction," the chief aim of this project is established as providing a conceptualization of the lived experience of combat-related moral injury and healing in a way that may have practical application for religious practitioners today, by illuminating Lewis's use of the language of war to connect his experience of combat, reflections on the same, and theological development. In other words, this project holds up the lens of war to a particular set of Lewis's theological views about humanity, arguing that the experience of war holds some degree of explanatory power for those views, and exploring what happens to conceptualization of moral injury and healing if considered through Lewis's lens. Understanding the lens of war, however – what that lens is and why it fits the topic of moral injury and healing – requires a fair amount of discussion to bring modern readers from an array of backgrounds, statistically unlikely to have firsthand experience of combat, onto the same plane. This section constitutes that foundational undertaking.

Within this section, Lewis's physical experience of war is curated from his personal letters and autobiography, because robust awareness of Lewis's own battlefield experience and the formative power of the culture of war is vital to identifying the language and conceptual imagery of war in his writing. Direct lines are drawn from Lewis's non-fiction accounts to his fictional portrayals. Organized thematically, topic areas include Lewis's physical description of his combat experience, including his commentary on his place in the fraternity of arms and on fighting, killing, death, and suicide; Lewis's treatment of special issues strongly associated with

World War I in modern memory, such as environmental and animal destruction; Lewis's conclusions about the impact of technological advancement on combatants; and Lewis's thoughts about the enemy. In this section Lewis also shares the effects of war on his sociocultural identity and relationships. Dedicated attention is given to Lewis's bonds with his father and childhood best friend, both of which are profoundly shaped by Lewis's combat experience. Cumulatively, Lewis emerges as a man whose experience of war influences how he moves in the world, how he pursues connection with God, and where and how he looks for goodness, beauty, and truth, in ways very much in keeping with how moral injury is understood today. Lewis's journey validates conceptualization of moral injury as damage to relationship and capacity for relationship and offers specific language and imagery to illustrate the same. Finally, this section takes a close look at how a specific war-related experience – Lewis's prolonged intimate interaction with a close relation who succumbs to inner wounds of war – may have been instrumental in formation of *The Screwtape Letters*, and more closely analyzes how Lewis talks about pain, mental anguish, and madness in his fiction.

2.1 Combat, culture, and war as philosophical experience

The language of war is most readily identified in Lewis's writing if the reader thinks about war as forming a unique culture. "The culture of war" refers in sum to the shaping influences of combat, exceeding the technical details of battlefield events and inclusive of military training. As a driver of culture war can be thought of as a force, an encompassing entity with whom combatants are in relationship, giving and receiving. War is not a passive thing that happens *to* participants, but something in which they actively partake, shape, influence, and are influenced by. Thinking about war in terms of relationship is vital to illuminating the nuances of combat-related moral injury. Writers of Scripture, Homer, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, the Greeks and medieval knights Lewis loves, the Norseman who capture Lewis's imagination at a young age, his World War I contemporaries, and present-day thinkers[270] have many of the same things to say about this relationship. Nearly all warriors talk about war in personal pronouns, referring often to "my war" and "our war," making the conflicts in which they fought part of their identity. Comrades in arms are often forever "us." Many attest "war, father of all things [is] … always in us," as writes German Ernst Junger. "Always, as long as the spinning wheel of life continues to whirl within us, this war will be its axis. He has educated us to fight, and we will remain fighters

[270] Alistair McFayden is an example of a present-day scholar who gives focused attention to how sin distorts capacity for relationship, in ways that may have implication for combat-related moral injury. For more, see McFayden's 2009 *Bound to Sin*, published by Cambridge University Press, which delves into McFayden's take on the Christian doctrine of sin in relation to sexual abuse of children and the Holocaust.

as long as we live."[271] Placing Lewis in the culture of war to which he belongs and tracing his language of the same yields a robust account of his wartime experience.

Lewis believes mature understanding of complex events requires lived experience, an opinion that emerges during World War I. Lewis's emphasis on hyper personal experience as a vehicle for accuracy and truth shapes his approach to character development for a lifetime, even when the subject is not directly linked to war. In *That Hideous Strength*, for example, published in 1945, Lewis reveals the inner weakness of a main character by narrating the man's emotions thus:

> The truth is that his toughness was only of the will, not of the nerves… He approved of vivisection, but had never worked in a dissecting room. He recommended that certain classes of people should be gradually eliminated: but he had never been there when a small shopkeeper went to the workhouse or a starved old woman of the governess type came to the very last day and hour and minute in the cold attic. He knew nothing about the last half cup of cocoa drunk slowly ten days before.[272]

In this passage, Lewis focuses on the spaces between theories, ideas, or conceptual commitments and first-hand, practical knowledge. This is the realm of moral injury and the "what ought to be," and Lewis readily links the point to war. "Ever since I served as an infantryman in the First World War," Lewis writes in 1952, more than thirty years after he leaves the western front, "I have had a great dislike of people who, themselves in ease and safety, issue exhortations to men at the front line."[273] Lewis's word choice suggests a war-formed sentiment about the value of experience persists all that time later, and demonstrates in a small slice how impressions formed during war can last a lifetime.

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[271] Jünger, *Inner Experience*, 1-2.

[272] THS, 182.

[273] MC, xii. Lewis's sentiment calls to mind remarks by American President Theodore Roosevelt delivered during a speech at the Sorbonne in Paris on April 23rd, 1910, now popularly known as "the man in the arena." Even today, freshman at the United States Naval Academy memorize a portion of the speech as part of indoctrination training as follows: "It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat."

Thinking of war as a complex event revealed through experience means pursuing knowledge about the *nature* of war. This is an important distinction because embracing an inherently philosophical approach means to look in Lewis's accounts not for logistical notes about where he was, when, with whom, and how many bullets flew that day, or even to expect Lewis to share his thoughts about the strategic importance of military efforts, politics, or similar; a philosophical approach means to look instead for information about experience, about what it is *like*. Lewis explains "By far the commonest native meaning of *natura* is something like sort, kind, quality, or character… When you ask, in our modern idiom, what something 'is like', you are asking for its *natura*. When you want to tell a man the *natura* of anything you describe the thing… it is risky to try to build precise semantic bridges, but there is obviously some idea of a thing's *natura* as its original or 'innate' character."[274]

Lewis is clear about what the experience of war is *like*:

> All that we fear from all the kinds of adversity, severally, is collected together in the life of a soldier on active service. Like sickness, it threatens pain and death. Like poverty, it threatens ill lodging, cold, heat, thirst, and hunger. Like slavery, it threatens toil, humiliation, injustice, and arbitrary rule. Like exile, it separates you from all you love. Like the gallies, it imprisons you at close quarters with uncongenial companions. It threatens *every* temporal evil – every evil except dishonour and final perdition, and those who bear it like it not better than you would like it.[275]

When pressed to capture what war *is*, Lewis speaks of values. Implicit in his description is the suggestion that the nature of war creates great potential for moral injury in its similarities to sickness, poverty, slavery, exile, and imprisonment. By readily and clearly linking the turmoil of war to other types of pain, Lewis opens a powerful bridge over which lessons learned about humanity through a study of combat-related moral injury, and the language used to talk about the same, can be applied to other types of suffering.

[274] SIW, 24-25.
[275] "Why I am Not a Pacifist," WG, 89.

2.2 Lewis and military training

It is helpful in identifying the shaping influence of military culture if one considers that for a soldier like Lewis, who joins the army during wartime specifically to go to war, the evolution begins in military training. Paying close attention to Lewis's training period through the lens of culture, a new undertaking in Lewis scholarship, allows for more precise tracing of how his ideas related to moral injury and healing evolve, and appropriately lengthens the line of Lewis's war-influenced theological and linguistic development. It is during training that Lewis first begins to write about ideas of soul, injury, and healing that thread through his work for a lifetime after the Great War.

The function of military training is to take individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives and forge from them a certain type of person, likely to respond in certain ways to dynamic circumstances and capable of interacting and working with others trained like him in quantifiable ways. Training objectives are tactical, physical, and psychological. As Liddell Hart explains, "the object of the soldier's training is threefold. To make him skilled in handling his weapons under battle conditions. To make him an interlocking and frictionless cog in the military machine, which implies the development of obedience with initiative, of instinctive combination according to some practised system of action, and of physical stamina. Thirdly, and above all, to make him conquer his own sense of fear."[276] When the process works as designed, training creates a framework that directs individual thinking, forming the valid boundaries and edges of a soldier's considerations while providing common language to operate with comrades within the same framework. Germane to Lewis's perspective on moral injury and moral healing is that as part of directed thinking, military training teaches an individual how to make deliberate, decisive judgments in times of extraordinary, complex stress. Lewis praises militaristic thinking in his fictional characters by describing them as "well thought of… how a soldier ought to think,"[277] imparting an impression of value.

The first time Lewis puts on a uniform is to report to training, which matters because it underscores the fact that Lewis does not join a military during peacetime that then went to war, he joins *to* go to war. The scenarios carry different implications for training, including

[276] Hart, *Thoughts*, 84.
[277] LWW, 147.

psychological preparation. In long wars, like World War I, the training curriculum was refined and established over initial years of war to feed the consistent, unrelenting need for manpower at the front. Lewis entered a pipeline implemented by the British Army early in 1916 that required officers to attend one of more than two dozen Officer Cadet programs located throughout England. It is likely Lewis knew how long this training period would last – approximately four months - and generally what the process of moving through training to the front might look like. Arriving in the later years of the war, Lewis and his peers would have also been aware of the exceedingly short life expectancy for men serving in the position of subaltern that he does. The point is driven home by the identity discs he would have been issued – one red to remain with his body, one green to be sent to headquarters with his burial report, should they be needed (Army Order 287, issued on August 24th, 1916, dictates issuance of two discs in place of the previous single disc, in an attempt to better identify the bodies of the fallen).[278] After he commits to the army, Lewis says of facing his last set of school exams, "boys who have faced this ordeal in peace-time will not easily imagine the indifference with which I went… even a temper more sanguine than mine could feel in 1916 that an infantry subaltern would be insane to waste anxiety on anything so hypothetical as his post-war life."[279] At the time, officers were twice as likely to meet death as the men they led.[280] Still, Lewis uses the word "startling" to describe his arrival at Oxford for military training in summer 1917, to grounds overrun by war wounded. "The effect of the war here is much more startling than I could have expected, and everything is very homely and out of order," Lewis confesses. "Hall is in possession of the blue-coated wounded, who occupy the whole of one quad."[281] Lewis describes his "first days in the army" as a "frantic endeavour to find out what you had to do."[282]

Pre-war military training is simultaneously detailed and broad in scope, even for combatants headed for a long-running conflict in a known area of operation, like Lewis and his peers. Soon-to-be combatants learn to anticipate their own physical and mental actions and means to (hopefully) control them, the reactions of others, and the behavior of the enemy they are to fight because, as Sun Tzu articulates, "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you

[278] Messenger, *Call*, 432.
[279] SBJ, 224.
[280] Stephenson, *The Last Full Measure,* 193.
[281] Letter postmarked 28 Apr 1917 to his father, CL I, 295.
[282] SBJ, 108.

need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."[283] Trainees learn to work within teams of varying sizes in shifting environments, including how to lead them and how to trust other people with their lives; to care for their physical bodies, weapons, and other gear in the clime they are about to enter; and just enough about the geopolitical situation at the moment they will arrive, to get by once they land there. For British infantry officers in World War I, topic areas of instruction included, among others, discipline, drill, musketry, tactics and field warfare, topography, billeting, machine guns, interior economy and military law, physical signaling, explosives and bomb handling, entanglements and obstacles, leading a grenade party, and holding and capturing trenches.[284] Due to persistent munitions shortage, many schools dedicated a significant portion of time to bayonet instruction.[285] Lewis would have been issued a box respirator, the most recent in a series of upgraded equipment designed to protect soldiers against chemical gas attacks, and one with a far better success rates than its predecessors.[286]

By the second half of World War I, military training was heavily scenario-based and often led by men who fought in the early years of the war but suffered injury and were found unfit (or not yet fit) to return to the front. Training standards varied widely by location, with some newly minted officers pushed to the point of break during training, and others arriving at the front with little to no idea of how to handle a firearm. Lewis shares that part of his instruction involves model trenches with "dug outs, shell holes, and – graves." Lewis remarks that at the time, "this last touch of realistic scenery seems rather superfluous. But then our C.O., a certain Colonel Stanning, is quite cracked."[287] One wonders if Lewis's opinion on the value of his training undergoes any revision once on the front himself, but a careful mining of his writing does not reveal an answer.

Lewis notices the coarseness of war culture early in training, describing the Flying Corps as men "who, like most people in dangerous things, are busily engaged in eating and drinking on their splendid pay, for tomorrow they die."[288] He has entered an adrenaline-seeking culture,

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[283] Sun Tzu, *Art*, 36.
[284] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 64.
[285] Holmes, *Tommy*, 382.
[286] Holmes, *Tommy*, 421.
[287] Letter of 3 Jun 1917 to his father, CL I, 315.
[288] Letter of 3 May 1917 to his father, CL I, 299.

popularly known for drinking, smoking, cursing, and womanizing, what Lewis calls "the notorious lustfulness of sailors and soldiers."[289] Lewis is correct – it is difficult to convince someone staring at death every day, many times a day, day after day after day, that inhibitions against rough behavior are worthy of consideration. The challenge is well-documented by World War I chaplains.[290] A sense of "giving in" to sources of pleasure or release in the face of potential impending death is psychologically common, and if not supported, is at least socially understood by its members. Another example of Lewis's tolerance of otherwise unseemly behavior might be Lewis's lifelong patience with his brother's alcoholism;[291] Warnie was a career soldier who attended Sandhurst and fought in World War I and World War II. There is suggestion Lewis may have turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism on occasion, though not with anything resembling Warnie's fervor. In his diary entry of September 25th 1922, for instance, Lewis writes "This evening I was bitterly tired and I can't think why: [Mrs. Moore] says that possibly I miss the drinks that I have got into the habit of with W[Arnie]. I am accordingly finishing in small tots the brandy which was bought for Ivy."[292] Lewis later invites alcohol and arguably alcoholism into the story of Narnia, in the form of Uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew*, who after his adventure in Narnia is thinking only about the "bottle in his wardrobe,"[293] and the Ape in *The Last Battle*, who "take[s] to drinking"[294] midway through the book and by his latest appearances can barely walk for hangover.[295]

Immersion in war culture has potential to shape the way its participants reason, often reflected in more foundational changes in language. Looking to Lewis's work, the topic of raiding emerges as a discrete example. Armies took a mixed approach to raiding during World War I. The British, for instance, considered raiding a normal part of front-line duty. French

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[289] SL, 51.

[290] For full treatment of the subject, see Michael Snape's *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars*.

[291] "W's trouble is to be called 'nervous insomnia' in speaking to Janie and others: but in reality (this for yr. private ear) it is Drink," Lewis writes to Arthur Greeves in 1949. In the same letter, Lewis describes Warnie's admittance and discharge from a hospital for "out of control" behaviour, followed by a stint in The Warneford Hospital in Warneford Road, Oxford, "an asylum." (CL II, 952-953). Warnie himself describes the cycle as "insomnia – drugs – depression – spirits – illness" in his diary entry of 4 Mar 1949. Warnie would be hospitalized for alcohol-related causes multiple times in the 1940s and beyond.

[292] AMR, 144.

[293] MN, 196.

[294] LB, 89.

[295] See the chapters 9 and 10, LB.

troops, however, were far less likely to engage in raids, and were rewarded with leave when they did successfully conduct them.[296] By 1916, the British were conducting raids by day and night, in unorthodox garb and using makeshift equipment specialized for man-on-man engagement; one soldier Lewis-Stempel presents in *Six Weeks* recalls wrapping the end of a stick in barbed wire to create a more formidable club. While there was no lack of volunteers for the activity, some found raids depressing, stressful, and unhelpful in achieving larger operational aims. It is not known whether Lewis engaged in raids, though men of his rank were tasked with leading them, another unique function of a subaltern in the British Army.[297] Lewis does use the topic of raiding to illustrate a combatant's evolution in reasoning and language in *The Horse and His Boy*. There, the boy Shasta and the war horse Bree engage in "a certain amount of what Shasta calls stealing and Bree calls 'raiding.'"[298] "A free horse and a talking horse mustn't steal, of course," Bree reasons. "But I think it's all right. We're prisoners and captives in enemy country. That money is booty, spoil."[299] Though Shasta initially hesitates, over time "he had no difficulty in doing a little 'raiding' (as Bree called it)."[300]

Lewis successfully prevents war culture from needlessly coarsening his own use of language in *Spirits in Bondage*, the volume that includes his war-time poems, and throughout his writing career. Lewis repeatedly redacts the rough words of others as a mechanism of preserving accuracy and his own writing sensibilities. In a personal letter, for example, Lewis describes an interaction with former soldiers thus: "Their conversation was of a purely military kind. 'Wot the f-g 'ell are you doin Jarge?' 'Where's that bl-dy f-g hammer?' 'I 'ant got yet bleedin' 'ammer. Go and f-g well b-r yerself' etc. etc."[301] Lewis also references rough language in fiction, such as in Narnia when he notes "Tirian could hear Griffle using dreadful language"[302] in the heat of battle, or when in a moment of dynamic action "everyone skipped back (some of the sailors with ejaculations I will not put down in writing)."[303] In his essays, Lewis describes a private on a front line as enduring a "(blank) cold night" at the orders of a "(blank) King," obeying "(blank)

[296] Keegan, *First*, 332.
[297] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 114-118.
[298] HB, 48.
[299] HB, 21.
[300] HB, 91.
[301] Letter of 18 Apr 1927 to Warnie Lewis, CL I, 692-3.
[302] LB, 145.
[303] VDT, 100.

orders" the motivation of which "was no "(blank) business of" his.[304] Lewis seemingly considers rough language a sufficiently distinct part of the landscape of war to retain it, and his inclusion suggests that despite the redactions, he harbors no sense of judgment.

In some ways, however, Lewis's behavior once he is in the Army seems to mirror what he records as coarseness in others. The most oft-discussed example is also a straight-forward one when viewed through the lens of war culture. Solidly progressing in his officer training, Lewis spent a night at Exeter, celebrating two friends who achieved 'Firsts' in their schools. He became for the first time in his life "royally drunk," in the company of many young men in similar condition. He then proceeded to roar around the party, "imploring everyone to let me whip them for the sum of 1*s*. a lash." The Dean "got fed up with the row" and shut the party down, ordering the riotous guests off campus. Lewis passed out on the floor of his own room sometime during the night, later failing to remember how he arrived there. In the morning, one of his friends helped him piece together events of the preceding evening. They had a good long chat about the possible merits and shortcomings of sadism, punctuated by the fetching of a book to learn more about M. Le Vicomte de Sade himself.[305]

Indulgence in unrestrained behavior in moments of stress might meet with criticism by theological or psychological standards, but in a post-party letter detailing the event to his friend, Arthur Greeves, there is no indication Lewis felt any sense of embarrassment, confusion, or regret, sentiments regularly attributed to in conjunction with the incident. In Alister McGrath's *C.S. Lewis: A Life*,[306] to note one prominent example, McGrath supposes Lewis's behavior is a reflection of youthful sexual development influenced by a lack of adequate parenting, including the early loss of his mother, and trauma at boarding school, possibly including sexual trauma. Considering this event through the lens of military culture, however, has far greater explanatory power. Lewis himself discusses the matter at length the next morning with a friend, in such detail they seek out books on the subject of sadism together. Lewis then writes to Arthur Greeves, and his remarks carry a flavor of boasting more than anything else. That letter passes without redaction through both Greeves and Lewis's brother, Warnie, during compilation of the

[304] "Private Bates," PC, 52.

[305] Letter of 10 Jun 1917 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 319-320.

[306] See also a 2023 interview with McGrath on the topic, here: https://www.premierunbelievable.com/articles/was-cs-lewis-a-sadomasochist/15890.article.

Collected Letters, though both Arthur and Warnie remove sensitive portions of other letters.[307] All in all, this is not the behavior of a man who is embarrassed or regretful, even later in life, nor of intimate friends who are embarrassed by him. Viewed through the lens of military culture, whether morally right or wrong, Lewis's actions hardly warrant notice in a environment where sex is commonly considered an outlet for emotional stress as much as anything else.[308] Lewis is a soldier, and over the course of his training that summer of 1917, he starts to act like one.

2.3 Lewis's physical descriptions of war

Though Lewis gives greater primacy to philosophies of war than graphic accounts of what he smells, sees, hears, tastes, and touches on the battlefield, Lewis's body of work includes a significant amount of literal depiction, as well as fictional accounts that can be reasonably presumed to have formed from the well of his lived experience. Assembling Lewis's physical descriptions of war is not a linear effort, but rather a cobbling together of shards from his letters, and the landscapes and dialogues of his fiction. Though Lewis offers the disclaimer in his autobiography that "the war itself has been so often described by those who saw more of it than I that I shall say here little about it,"[309] when taken together these pieces offer a comprehensive portrayal.

By the time Lewis arrives at the front, the British Army has established a rhythm of days on the line alternated with days away from the trenches for respite and additional training. During World War I, much of the logistical work of warfare took place at night, when substantial tasks entrusted to subalterns included the night watch; maintenance of grasses or other hindrances in front of the trenches that might disrupt the field of fire; oversight and sometimes participation in manual labor to maintain the trenches; and the never-ending task of repairing wire undone by German offensives.[310] Supplies, including food, munitions, and water, were also

[307] See the subsection "Lewis on PTSD" for detailed descriptions of redactions in Lewis's letters by various players.

[308] Smith, et. al. "Compulsive sexual behavior among male military veterans: prevalence and associated clinical factors." *Journal of Behavioral Addiction*. Vol. 3, Issue 4. Dec 2014:214-22. DOI: 10.1556/JBA.3.2014.4.2.

[309] SBJ, 239.

[310] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 108-110.

brought in at night. Subalterns occupied a unique place in the World War I landscape. Only British regiments conduct officer-led patrols, sending an officer out with two or three men. The other continental armies, including the Germans, sent out patrols under the leadership of a non-commissioned officer (NCO). Though he does not comment on the British military's structure, the methodological difference was a significant factor in the number of officer casualties and short projected lifespan of men of Lewis's rank.[311] Instead, Lewis offers a pragmatic account. "We have just come back from a four days tour in the front line during which I had about as many hours sleep," Lewis says, "then when we got back to this soi-distant rest, we spent the whole night digging."[312] Lewis does not mention the fact that several years into the war, with a frontline that changes and resumes its shape, there is a good chance that digging a new trench (if that is the sort of digging he refers to) would have meant excavation of fallen bodies.[313] Lewis simply says he is increasingly subject to "aching and continuous weariness."[314]

Lewis notes "weariness and water were our chief enemies" through the winter of 1917-1918. Lewis says the trenches where he fought and lived "are very deep, you go down to them by a shaft of about 20 steps: they have wire bunks where a man can sleep quite snugly, and brasiers for warmth and cooking. Indeed, the chief discomfort is that that tend to get *too* hot, while of course the bad air makes one rather headachy."[315] Of weariness, Lewis says "I have gone to sleep marching and woken again and found myself marching still."[316]Of water, "One walked in the trenches in thigh gum boots with water above the knee," he recalls, "one remembers the icy stream welling up inside the boot when you punctured it on concealed barbed wire."[317]

Physically, Lewis learned to rest "as soldiers do; dead asleep in two breaths but ready… to be wide awake in one if need were."[318] A recurrent detail in his fiction suggests figuring out how to sleep on the line is a learned skill. Lewis describes a fighting Queen and her soldier-at-arms staying warm by lying "close, back to back, like men do in the wars,"[319] a detail that reappears in Narnia when the English children "bivouacked on the bare moor, and Puddleglum

[311] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 111.
[312] Letter of 5 Mar 1918 to his father, CL I, 363.
[313] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 87.
[314] SBJ, 117
[315] Letter of 4 Jan 1918 to his father, CL I, 351-352.
[316] SBJ, 239.
[317] SBJ, 239.
[318] TWHF, 148-9.
[319] TWHF, 148.

showed the children how to make the best of their blankets by sleeping back to back. (The backs keep each other warm and you can then have both blankets on top.)"[320] In both cases, Lewis seems to choose a war-related illustration as the best way to convey the particular type of intimacy that grows between characters who confront challenges, including fighting, together.

In the trenches, insects and vermin were everywhere, including but not limited to brown rats so bold soldiers sat down to eat with food in one hand and a pistol in the other, mosquitoes, fleas, lice, flies, maggots, and all of the grubs, worms, and other creatures that fell out of dirt when men lived in holes under it. Scholar Richard van Emden, who personally interviewed more than 270 Great War veterans, wrote more than a dozen books on the subject, and worked on more than a dozen British television programmes on the same, reflects that "hypersensitivity to insects, an instinctive response to 'creepy-crawlies' that must have existed to a greater or lesser extent among other soldiers… has gone largely unrecorded."[321] Van Emden describes the natural world of 1917, the year Lewis arrived at the western front, as one marked by "a loathing of all the creatures that made life a misery for men already in torment… all tugged relentlessly at the soldier's morale."[322] Van Emden draws on soldiers' letters and first-person stories to describe:

> Rats that stripped the carcasses of man and beast alike; lice that goaded soldiers into a frenzy of bloody scratching; maggots that wormed their way out from the eye sockets of the dead; and the flies that settled in a great blue cloud on any dead flesh – the same flies that also thrived on feces and food. It was enough to revolt any man.[323]

Lewis was afraid of insects to an extent he calls a "phobia," plagued as a child by nightmares of insects, and declaring as late as 1955 that "to this day I would rather meet a ghost than a tarantula."[324] His lack of commentary on the subject of insects in the trenches is a catching omission, though motive can remain only speculation.

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[320] SC, 82.

[321] Richard van Emden, *Tommy's Ark: Soldiers and their Animals in the Great War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 8.

[322] Van Emden, *Tommy's Ark*, 189.

[323] Van Emden, *Tommy's Ark*, 189.

[324] SBJ, 7-8.

During his time on the front, the bugs Lewis loathes did eventually make him sick, infecting him with trench fever and sending him to hospital for weeks.[325] Lewis does not directly mention disease in the trenches, apart from his own experience of trench fever, an illness suffered by tens of thousands. The trenches were places of filth, with no mechanism to create cleanliness. In such close quarters, living next to the rotting bodies of men and animals, illnesses swept through and passed rapidly between units. In 1917 alone, more than 6,000 British soldiers were admitted to hospitals with dysentery, more than 15,000 with nephritis, nearly 2,000 with tuberculosis, and more than 21,000 with frostbite; anthrax hit another eight men, and enteric fever, more than 1,200.[326] More than 153,000 men were treated for venereal disease on the western front, typically incurred in French brothels during days of leave.[327] Other concerns created by living conditions include typhoid, though the British Army through inoculation managed to make dramatic improvements in prevention; tetanus; and by 1917, the same Spanish Flu that was then devastating civilian populations across the Continent.

Lewis was physically changed by war, and he readily extends observation of physical changes to his mental and emotional state. He smoked a great deal on the line,[328] a habit not mentioned prior to military service and one that underscores his need for physical comfort, stimulation, and respite from stress. He learned to walk "with an eye cocked skyward… ducking at the old *Who-o-o-o-p – Bang*!"[329] He became more accustomed to the sounds of war; "Then there'd be shrieks, a pistol shot, a cry, and someone down."[330] Overall, Lewis finds, war "wasn't at all like what I thought."[331] Later Lewis will create fictional characters of whom he writes, "It surprised him that he could experience so extreme a terror and yet be walking and thinking – as men in war or sickness are surprised to find how much can be borne. 'It will drive me mad,' 'It will kill us outright,' we say; and then it happens and we find ourselves neither mad nor dead, still held to the task."[332]

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[325] See "biographical sketch" in the "Introduction."
[326] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 130.
[327] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*,
[328] Entry of 4 Mar 1923, AMR, 284.
[329] Letter of 21 Feb 1932 letter to Warnie, CL II, 48.
[330] *Dymer*, Canto IV, stanza 33.
[331] HB,
[332] Per., 96.

Lewis's physical descriptions of war are often intermingled with philosophical and theological conclusions. Lewis describes his war, the Great War, as "diffused suffering over a long period," an experience of "terror, bereavement [and] physical pain."[333] Lewis says the "toil" of war makes men's faces "brutal…the faces of devils."[334] Combat is an environment where "fellow-brutes that once were men… cannot sing."[335] In war "I am a wolf,"[336] Lewis writes, fighting for a "wolfish power,"[337] caught in "red battle's animal net,"[338] far from a God who makes man "vermin" for humanity's "backward cleaving to the beast."[339] War reveals "the lonely soul of man,"[340] "a haunted, twisted soul"[341] caught in a "circling path from death to death,"[342] "for sorrow on sorrow is coming wherein all flesh has part."[343] There, with no call "to dream of anything,"[344] the fighting wolf-man is subject only to "fact and the crushing reason" that thwarts "fantasy's new-born treason."[345] "This present curse," makes a "real hell,"[346] but every time "the filth of war, the baresark shout of battle, it is vexed… out of the deeps, of old, it rose aloft…like the phoenix… till the beast become a god,"[347] a "beast with jaws blood-wet."[348] Lewis summarizes the Great War as "living in holes and mud heaps, driven, hunted, terrified, verminous, starved for sleep, hopeless."[349] Lewis readily integrates physical descriptors with emotional states like "terrified" and the concluding "hopeless." The word "hunted" is particularly strong, instantly conveying the complexity of being both predator and prey on the battlefield. Once on the front for several months, Lewis notes he has "discovered that optimism about the war increases in an inverse ration to the optimist's proximity to the line."[350]

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[333] SL, 15.
[334] "Death in Battle," SIB, lines 18-19.
[335] "French Nocturne (Monchy-Le-Preux)," SIB, lines 19-20.
[336] "French Nocturne (Monchy-Le-Preux)," SIB, line 18.
[337] "Oxford," SIB, line 12.
[338] "Oxford," SIB, line 6.
[339] "Satan Speaks," SIB, lines 16 and 12.
[340] "Dungeon Grates," SIB, line 1.
[341] "Satan Speaks," SIB, line 14.
[342] "In Prison," SIB, lines 4-5.
[343] "Ode for New Year's Day," SIB, line 7.
[344] "French Nocturne (Monchy-Le-Preux)," SIB, line 17.
[345] "Satan Speaks," SIB, 9-10.
[346] "Apology," SIB, lines 3-4.
[347] "Victory," SIB, lines 20-28.
[348] "Satan Speaks," SIB, line 12.
[349] Letter of 31 Aug 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CI I, 393-394.
[350] Letter of 22 Feb 1918 to his father, CL I, 362.

It is possible to identify seemingly direct connections between Lewis's physical descriptions of war and fictional portrayals. To do so illustrates the length of time over which war-formed thoughts can percolate and persist. In his autobiography, for example, written in the 1950s, Lewis recalls:

> The frightening cold, the smell of H.E., the horribly smashed men still moving like half-crushed beetles, the sitting or standing corpses, the landscape of sheer earth without a blade of grass, the boots worn day and night till they seemed to grow on your feet.[351]

Lewis offers a hauntingly similar fictional portrayal in *The Screwtape Letters*. There, Lewis writes:

> It seemed to be all our world; the scream of bombs, the fall of houses, the stink and taste of high explosive on the lips and in the lungs, the feet burning with weariness, the heart cold with horrors, the brain reeling, the legs aching.[352]

Again, Lewis employs the smell of high explosives. Again, he remembers physical pain and weariness of legs and feet. Again, he writes of cold. Looking at the passages together, one example of many, Lewis's fictional accounts of war seem less than imaginary.

2.4 Lewis on the experience of fighting

In his descriptions of war, Lewis readily and seemingly openly plumbs the physical experience of fighting and killing. Lewis repeatedly emphasizes smell, compression of time, physical exhaustion, fear, hopelessness, overwhelm, and confusion in his descriptions of circumstances that afterward leave participants "dazed with the horrors of that night."[353] These are the same emotions often reported by those who wrestle with combat-related moral injury,

[351] SBJ, 240. "H.E." is shorthand for "high explosives." Many poets and historians note the power of high explosives to rip men in half on impact, a unique and supremely memorable form of carnage.

[352] SL, 92.

[353] LB, 125.

PTSD, or both. In Lewis's writing on fighting and killing is found demonstrated continuity between the outer and inner experience of war that may be helpful bringing to life the lived experience of combat-related moral injury.

Confusion is a consistent theme in Lewis's descriptions of battle. Though Lewis acknowledges "As in the centre of a storm or even of a battle, I have known sudden stillness for a moment,"[354] his portrayals of combat consistently include moments when to the combatants, "all became confused."[355] Lewis writes of kings who "hardly understood what was happening"[356] in the heat of fight, and of troops who had "so many different things to worry about that they didn't know what to do."[357] After their engagements, Lewis's characters frequently "could never remember what happened in the next two minutes." They gradually become hyperaware of the return of physical sensation. As one recalls after a hard fight, "he was so terribly thirsty and his arm ached so."[358]

Lewis gives special attention to fear, contending the fear a combatant experiences on a battlefield is unique. When asked if he felt fear during his time in the trenches, Lewis replies "with great emphasis," "all the time."[359] Lewis's fictional characters consistently feel fear, no matter their rank or experience, suggesting that to Lewis, fear is a universally similar facet of the lived experience of warfare. Lewis, for example, imbues career soldier Bardia with honesty about fear in *Till We Have Faces*. There Bardia teaches, "If you should then feel fear, never heed it. We've all felt it at our first fight. I feel it myself before every fight."[360] In the same work Orual, who goes to war voluntarily, like Lewis, confesses:

> I was never yet in any battle but that, when the lines were drawn up and the first enemy arrows came flashing in among us, and the grass and trees about me suddenly became a place, a Field, a thing to be put in chronicles, I wished very heartily that I had stayed at home.[361]

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[354] TWHF, 138.
[355] OSP, 81.
[356] PC, 195.
[357] LB, 73.
[358] LB, 136.
[359] Baker, "Near the Beginning" in *Remembering C.S. Lewis*, 69.
[360] TWHF, 242.
[361] TWHF, 258.

Lewis also writes of a soldier in Narnia lining up for his first battle that the soldier "stood with his heart beating terribly, hoping and hoping that he would be brave. He had never seen anything (though he had seen both a dragon and a sea-serpent) that made his blood run so cold as that line of dark-faced bright-eyed men."[362] Despite their fears, these characters consistently demonstrate a retained ability to control their own actions and responses. They choose what to do next. Lewis directly describes determined mastery of a skittering mind, using combat as an experience upon which the character draws, in the Ransom Trilogy. There, lead character Ransom summons his courage to take dramatic action thus:

> The thing still seemed impossible. But gradually something happened to him which had happened to him only twice before in his life. It had happened once while he was trying to make up his mind to do a very dangerous job in the last war… the thing had seemed a sheer impossibility: he had not thought but know that, being what he was, he was psychologically incapable of doing it; and then, without any apparent movement of the will, as objective and unemotional as the reading on a dial, there had arisen before him, with perfect certitude, the knowledge 'about this time tomorrow you will have done the impossible.' The same thing happened now.[363]

Lewis repeatedly gives readers characters who despite their significant fears, choose to fight. Lewis's portrayals of fear point toward moral healing both through Lewis's emphasis on choice, and his implicit assertion that fear is something common to combatants in varied scenarios.

Whether a true single combat or a moment of individual testing on a crowded field of war, Lewis repeatedly emphasizes the capacity of combat to reveal character. Often characters are aware of the opportunity to "win [their] spurs."[364] As Lewis describes in Narnia: "The trumpet at last! On the move now – now trotting – the banner streaming out in the wind… and now a gallop. The ground between the two armies grew less every moment. Faster, faster. All swords out now all shields up to the nose, all prayers said, all teeth clenched. Shasta was dreadfully frightened. But it suddenly came into his head, 'If you funk this, you'll funk every battle all your life. Now or never.'"[365] Should the characters fail, by external or their own

[362] LB, 134.
[363] Per., 126.
[364] LWW, 130.
[365] HB, 186.

standards, Lewis writes of their reactions in words like "shame" and "disgrace,"[366] language strongly associated with moral injury.

Choosing to fight, however, does not mean that one fights perfectly. Lewis pays special attention to the first time someone kills, presenting nuances of the first fighting experience and openly acknowledging the difficulties inherent therein. As career soldier Bardia admits to a student in *Till We Have Faces*, "the first time I did it – it was the hardest thing in the world to make my own hand plunge the sword into all that live flesh.'"[367] Lewis's characters rarely perform as they "should" in their first contest. There are numerous elements they do not know to consider, having never experienced battle. They are not comfortable with their equipment. Time is distorted and battles are decided extremely quickly. If they live, there is an element of luck. Lewis writes of Peter's first battle, for example, against a wolf in *The Chronicles of Narnia*:

> Peter did not feel very brave; indeed, he felt he was going to be sick. But that made no difference to what he had to do. He rushed straight up to the monster and aimed a slash of his sword at its side. The stroke never reached the Wolf. Quick as lightning it turned round, its eyes flaming, and its mouth wide open in a howl of anger. If it had not been so angry that it simply had to howl it would have got him by the throat at once. As it was – though all this happened too quickly for Peter to think at all – he had just time to duck down and plunge his sword, as hard as he could, between the brute's forelegs into its heart. Then came a horrible, confused moment like something in a nightmare. He was tugging and pulling and the Wolf seemed neither alive nor dead, and its bared teeth knocked against his forehead, and everything was blood and heat and hair. A moment later he found that the monster lay dead and he had drawn his sword out of it and was straightening his back and rubbing the sweat off his face and out of his eyes. He felt tired all over.[368]

Words jump out – "horrible, confused," "nightmare," "blood and heat and hair," "tired." These are the experience of fighting. The moment of luck in this scene is the wolf's anger that caused him to howl. Perhaps Lewis felt himself the beneficiary of such "lucky" moments during his time on the front, including during his war wounding. The most prominent philosophical commitment in this scene is the assertion that Peter's emotions "made no difference in what he had to do."

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[366] HB, 151.
[367] TWHF, 234.
[368] LWW, 152.

There is a direct line here to Lewis's theology of choice, as well as to his notion of just war. Lewis does not give Peter the power to choose the objective, but he does give Peter complete control over how to react to his task. Lewis extends no judgment to what Peter's emotions may be as he enters battle, only to how Peter chooses to navigate those emotions (in this case, by plowing through them).

Though Lewis eventually makes Peter a king lauded for his courage, Lewis retains the elements of confusion, overwhelming physicality, and confusion in descriptions of a mature Peter's battlefield excursions. Many books into Peter's adventures in Narnia, for example, long after he is established as king, Lewis describes a battle thus:

> The next minute or so was very confused. There was an animal roaring, a clash of steel; the boys and Trumpkin rushed in; Peter had a glimpse of a horrible, gray, gaunt creature, half man and half wolf, in the very act of leaping upon a boy about his own age, and Edmund saw a badger and a Dwarf rolling on the floor in a sort of cat fight. Trumpkin found himself face to face with the Hag. Her nose and chin stuck out like a pair of nutcrackers, her dirty gray hair was flying about her face and she had just got Doctor Cornelius by the throat. At one slash of Trumpkin's sword her head rolled on the floor. Then the light was knocked over and it was all swords, teeth, claws, fists, and boots for about sixty seconds. Then silence.[369]

In this battle, Lewis dedicates at least a line to each combatant's experience – some characters "rushed in," others "had a glimpse" of combat. One "finds himself face to face" with a foe and responds by beheading her. Despite varied viewpoints into the same battle, their experience is portrayed as one of common ferocity and confusion. For each of them, "all was swords, teeth, claws, fists, and boots." The reader is left to imagine who employed what against whom, but the intensity of the fight is clear, underscored by Lewis's specific mention of the short period it lasted – "sixty seconds." The following silence suggests death.

Lest readers be tempted to think that Lewis extends some sort of special treatment to a soldier character of high rank, like Peter, Lewis offers a similar depiction of a first battlefield engagement using a regular boy, also in Narnia:

[369] PC, 171.

> Eustace, who had drawn his sword when he saw the King draw his, rushed at the other one: his face was deadly pale, but I wouldn't blame him for that. And he had the luck that beginners sometimes do have. He forgot all that Tirian had tried to teach him that afternoon, slashed wildly (indeed I'm not sure his eyes weren't shut) and suddenly found, to his own great surprise, that the Calormene lay dead at his feet. And though that was a great relief, it was, at the moment, rather frightening. The King's fight lasted a second or two longer: then he too had killed his man.[370]

Again, the reader gains an impression of the combatant's fear, overwhelm, lack of familiarity with their weapon, violent encounters that can be measured in seconds, and an outcome influenced by the "luck that beginners sometimes do have." Of interest is Lewis's use of the first person. While not wholly unusual, he sparingly employs the tense. The choice to use first person here as a mechanism of pardoning Eustace for any perception of cowardice seems significant.

Likely from his own participation in war, Lewis's writing is full of technical descriptions of how to fight and prepare to fight. "Don't look at my face, look at my sword," one of his characters teaches another. "It isn't my face is going to fight you."[371] A seeming fixation with weapon cleanliness and preparation appears across several books in *The Chronicles of Narnia;* this is a preoccupation any who undergo structured military training will recognize and likely share. It is Aslan himself who tells Peter, "You have forgotten to clean your sword," after the young King's first kill. Peter blushes when he sees "it was true… all smeared with the Wolf's hair and blood," and for the remainder of his life heeds Aslan's instruction to, "whatever happens, never forget to wipe your sword."[372] During *The Last Battle* in Narnia, it is another king who "inspected Eustace's sword and found that Eustace had put it back in the sheath all messy from killing the Calormene. He was scolded for that and made to clean and polish it."[373] Yet another king, finding himself upended out of a boat and into the water, "was still so angry that he hardly noticed the cold of the water. But of course he dried his sword very carefully on the shoulder of his cloak, which was the only dry part of him, as soon as they came to shore."[374]

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[370] LB, 80-81.
[371] TWHF, 104.
[372] LWW, 132-3.
[373] LB, 87.
[374] LB, 23.

While these details cannot be definitively linked to Lewis's wartime experience, their repeated appearance suggests that may be the case.

Another detail that cannot be definitively linked to Lewis's wartime experience but likely emerges from it, is Lewis's writing on killing by bayonet. Lewis would have been issued a bayonet during World War I. Officers were divided as to the merits of the bayonet; some viewed fixed bayonets and a willingness to use them a powerful psychological tool that weakened enemies, while others saw the amount of bayonet training that occupied British infantry training as an outdated use of time. Though no such data exists, it is interesting to consider whether a combatant's views about the merits or shortcomings of weapons like bayonets bear any correlation to occurrence of moral injury. The Germans did not use them. While bayonets accounted for an extremely small fraction of enemy deaths, the bayonet was an important part of British fighting persona. Many Great War officers wrote about the positive effect on morale and courage they experienced when fixing bayonets.[375] According to trench maps, the lines in the area where Lewis fought were only 200-300 yards apart, with frequent raids by both sides.[376] It is reasonable to conclude Lewis likely trained hard with his bayonet and may have used it, that he knows the feeling of fixing his bayonet to prepare for combat in close quarters, and that he did fight in close quarters by bayonet or other means. Lewis mentions bayonet fighting in the narrative poem *Dymer*, writing of the main character:

> For his high mood fell shattered. Like a man
> Unnerved, in bayonet-fighting, in the thick,
> - Full of red rum and cheers when he began,
> Now, in a dream, muttering: 'I've not the trick.
> It's no good. I'm no good. They're all too quick.
> There! Look there! Look at that!' – so Dymer stood.
> Suddenly drained of hope. It was no good.[377]

In only a few lines, Lewis presents Dymer as experiencing both an emotional high and emotional low during the fight and in implied quick succession. Lewis's illustration is important because

[375] Holmes, *Tommy*, 382-385.

[376] See "First World War Trench Maps," available through the National Libraries of Scotland and the United Kingdom.

[377] *Dymer*, Canto III, stanza 29.

emotional volatility during discrete combat engagements, is a facet of battle not necessarily intuitive to any who have not taken up arms themselves. There is a direct link here to moral injury, because vacillating emotions create great potential for confusion. In a very practical way, how this battle concludes – whether Dymer wins or loses, acts nobly or remains drained of hope – can dictate through which lens he or any other combatant then holds the engagement in their memory.

In yet another detail that cannot be definitively linked to his own experience but likely originated from it, Lewis also illustrates how the hyper personal experience of fighting can be perceived by soldiers of low rank as somewhat disconnected from the strategic war effort. The implication here for moral injury is important, because disconnect between individual action and larger strategy creates space for combatants to conclude their actions are without greater meaning or impact. In Narnia, for example, readers meet Shasta. Shasta is a young boy who sneaks into army ranks in defiance of orders, forbidden from fighting due to his young age; the same was a common occurrence in World War I, where reportedly boys as young as 12 years of age sometimes managed to find their way into the ranks.[378] Having reached the battle he so desires, Lewis writes of Shasta:

> But when at last the two lines met he had really very little idea of what happened. There was a frightful confusion and an appalling noise. His sword was knocked clean out of his hand pretty soon. And he'd got the reins tangled somehow. Then he found himself slipping. Then a spear came straight at him and as he ducked to avoid it he rolled right off his horse, bashed his left knuckles terribly against someone else's armor, and then – But it is no use trying to describe the battle from Shasta's point of view; he understood too little of the fight in general and even of his own part in it.[379]

Amid characteristic description of overwhelm, in this passage Lewis telescopes dramatically outward to make a statement on the position of the individual soldier of low rank in a larger war. Lewis finds Shasta's point of view so limited, that Shasta's experience of war cannot be effectively described beyond the tactical. It is impossible to determine whether Lewis feels his

[378] In *A Call to Arms*, Charles Messenger writes of a *Daily Mirror* article of 16 Sep 1916 reporting on one Private S. Lewis, who fought for six weeks on the Somme before his true age was discovered (107).

[379] HB, 186.

own point of view to be of limited value, or whether he is giving fictional life to an emotion Lewis saw in others, but Lewis's acknowledgement that soldiers can feel that their own experiences are unimportant or invalid is an important window into the lived experience of combat-related moral injury.

Lewis's fictional descriptions of combat are graphic, challenging, and likely formed of his own lived experience. Through an array of characters, Lewis repeatedly demonstrates the intertwined effects on body and mind of fighting and killing. On the literal act of fighting for one's life, Lewis concludes:

> In a way it wasn't quite so bad as you might think. When you are using every muscle to the full – ducking under a spear-point here, leaping over it there, lunging forward, drawing back, wheeling round – you haven't much time to feel either frightened or sad.[380]

The overarching impression Lewis leaves is of battle as something encompassing, something that uses a combatant "to the full." There may not be time to feel "frightened or sad" in the moment, but Lewis's mention of the emotions acknowledges their weight and presence, presumably in the moments preceding and following the fight. Coupled with the portrayals of hopelessness, overwhelm, confusion, and exhaustion Lewis presents in other battle scenes, striking continuity arises between the outer experience of war and inner experience of moral injury. The choices Lewis makes in emphasis provide valuable clues about where to begin, and perhaps direct, efforts toward moral healing.

2.5 Lewis on technology and combat-related moral injury

Lewis describes an experience of war in which commonalities across ages is of greater importance than differences in individual wars. War scholars often agree. "In the history of war [moral factors] form the only constant factors," writes Liddell Hart, "changing only in degree, whereas the physical factors are fundamentally different in almost every war and every

[380] LB, 147-8.

situation."[381] Today, however, the rapid pace of technological advancement and the role of technology in warfare ensures the subject remains a source of much popular and scholarly attention. Lewis is therefore interesting for the lack of attention he affords technology in his writing, though he fights in a war known to history for the advent of tank, aerial and submarine warfare; employment of chemical gas; and other technological developments associated with the advent of modern warfare.

A prominent question surrounding technology's relationship to moral injury is that of proximity – that is, whether combatants are less, more, or equally likely to suffer moral injury by killing an enemy in hand-to-hand combat, by dropping bombs from fighter aircraft, or by pushing buttons from a physically safe, removed location that unleashes ordnance on a target thousands of miles away. While there is a certain sort of psychological detachment at pushing a button as opposed to killing a man at arms' length, the implications for moral injury are more muddled than perhaps they first appear. In the case of the former, for example, a combatant may extinguish with a single button large numbers of people for a national cause with which they do not agree or of which by virtue of rank they are largely unaware. In the latter scenario, a combatant kills a man who is quite literally at that moment trying to kill them, which may open more personally clear lines of moral defensibility. Practical experience confirms there are differences in killing related to proximity. An increasing number of books, journal articles, and popular pieces explore the topic in greater depth, including drone warfare and violence. Notable names in the space include military veterans such as David Grossman and Wayne Phelps in the U.S., and scholar Christian Enemark in the United Kingdom.

Lewis does not comment directly on the role of technology in warfare, nor does he speculate about how technology drives military strategy and tactics, or the impact to the soul of different kinds of killing. To Lewis, the underlying issues pertaining to technology's role in combat-related moral injury and healing are largely the same as any war-related scenario – a sense of disillusionment and betrayal, related not only to technology designed for killing but at seeing technologies with potential to enhance peace used for destruction. If anything, Lewis believes that to hold a period of warfare as something vastly different from any other does harm to the people affected by it. In one of his better-known commentaries on the subject, Lewis addresses a World War II-era public increasingly consumed by fear of rapidly evolving weapons:

[381] Hart, *Thoughts*, 80.

> ’How are we to live in an atomic age?’ I am tempted to reply: ‘Why, as you would have lived in the sixteenth century when the plague visited London almost every year, or as you would have lived in a Viking age when raiders from Scandinavia might land and cut your throat any night; or indeed, as you are already living in an age of cancer, an age of syphilis, an age of paralysis, an age of air raids, an age of railway accidents, an age of motor accidents.’… you and all you love were already sentenced to death before the atomic bomb was invented… it is perfectly ridiculous to go about whimpering and drawing long faces because the scientists have added one more chance of painful and premature death to a world which already bristled with such chances and in which death itself was not a chance at all, but a certainty.[382]

Lewis approaches human nature as something common across broad spans of time, consistently choosing war as a bridge to wider discussion of the human condition. The emphasis matters in his ideas of moral healing, which do not acknowledge technology as disrupting the more universally shared experience of moral injury. Many examples of Lewis deliberately linking World War I to the arc of human history are found in his interwar and World War II-era fictional writings. Discussion of technology remains absent. Consider, for example, a passage in the Ransom Trilogy published in the 1930s, in which Lewis places a character on another planet, able from that vantage point to make sweeping observations about human history on Earth, and says:

> At that moment, far away on Earth, as he now could not help remembering, men were at war, and white faced subalterns and freckled corporals who had but lately begun to shave, stood in horrible gaps or crawled forward in deadly darkness, awaking, like him, to the preposterous truth that all really depended on their actions; and far away in time Horatius stood on the bridge, and Constantine settled in his mind whether he would or would not embrace the new religion, and Eve herself stood looking upon the forbidden fruit and the Heaven of Heavens waited for her decision.[383]

[382] “On Living in an Atomic Age,” PC, 91-2.
[383] Per., 121.

In only a few sentences Lewis leads with war, walks through classical history and philosophy, and ends at theology, a veritable mirror of his personal journey. Lewis's troops are "awaking" to the truth that their actions matter, that through the course of history all is "decision."

Lewis shies from technology in war-time presentations even in *That Hideous Strength*, a volume published in the 1940s that takes science as its subject and therefore has at least a more ready relationship to technology. Instead, Lewis chooses human connection and common experience in a vignette of three characters with personal experience in three different wars. The characters find themselves in the same room, reliving elements of their respective combat experiences. The first man, who fought in World War I, remarks:

> To tell you the truth I sometimes feel I don't greatly care what happens. But I wouldn't be easy in my grave if I knew they'd won and I'd never had my hands on them. I'd like to be able to say as an old sergeant said to me in the first war, about a bit of a raid we did near Monchy. Our fellows did it all with the butt end, you know. 'Sir,' says he, 'did ever you hear anything like the way their heads cracked.' [384]

Lewis fought near Monchy and, in addition to this mention, names a poem in *Spirits in Bondage* after the town. The second man, a soldier in medieval battles:

> …saw in memory the wintry grass of Badon Hill, the long banner of the Virgin fluttering above the heavy British-Roman cataphracts, the yellow-haired barbarians. He heard the snap of the bows, the *click-click* of steel points in wooden shields, the cheers, the howling, and the ring of struck mail. He remembered also the evening, fires twinkling along the hill, frost making the gashes smart, starlight on a pool fouled with blood, eagles crowding together in the pale sky. [385]

Through this character Lewis introduces the culture of war, and in so doing affirms that the experience of war is far more expansive and encompassing than bullets flying. Here twinkling fires convey a tone of merriment, cold makes wounds hurt more, starlight is revealed against the darkness of blood, and eagles crowd above it all to ravage the carcasses of the dead on both sides

[384] THS, 321-2.
[385] THS, 321-2.

of the battle.[386] Eagles feeding on human carcasses is something of a jarring image, to say nothing of the national, sociocultural, and unit-level events that lead to men becoming bodies on the ground, being eaten.

The third man "remembered his long struggle in the caves of Perelandra,"[387] a reference to another work in which Lewis depicts a one-one one psychological and physical grappling with a man-shaped embodiment of evil. By choosing this character and that reference, Lewis reminds readers of the inner experience of war. Across all three quotes, Lewis offers the graphic nature of war, the culture of war, and the psychological dimension of war. Discussion of technology remains absent.

2.6 Lewis's experience of physical wounding

Lewis's philosophical conclusions about war are formed by a viscerally embodied experience - physical injury from shell wound that sends him away from the front lines to hospital and a prolonged period of convalescence. This part of Lewis's war-time story is important to understand because during these months Lewis picks up his pen in earnest, writing multiple poems later included in *Spirits in Bondage* and editing those already drafted. His letters from this time period are often more emotionally forthcoming than perhaps are letters from other spans, providing a valuable window into the lived experience of combat-related moral injury close in linear time to the battlefield. The fragile physical and emotional state of individuals receiving care from their country amplifies potential for perceived hurt in the care process, which might easily translate into feelings about nation-state; Lewis begins to express such sentiment during his convalescence. Expending effort to better understand Lewis's experience of physical wounding also fills a void in current Lewis scholarship, which has yet to consider how physical war wounding might shape the way Lewis thinks, acts, interacts, or chooses his words.

[386] This is not the only place eagles make an appearance in Lewis's writing for the implied purpose of feasting on human remains. They appear again in Narnia in *The Horse and His Boy* ("The Fight at Anvard"). In *The Last Battle*, Lewis assigns a Talking Eagle named "Farsight" several pivotal scenes. Eagles are carrion eaters, and Lewis would have likely seen eagles while on the front lines. Several species are found in France.

[387] THS, 321-2.

The experience of physical wounding becomes a formative characteristic of Lewis's combat memory, and a subject on which he speaks openly about his worries, anxieties, and embarrassments. Lewis eventually settles on the experience of physical wounding as connective, in later years consoling his father in a time of physical trial by affirming "I know what hospitals and nursing homes are like – there at any rate I can sympathize with some experience."[388] Surprisingly little is said about wounding in Lewis's fiction, given the sheer volume of characters he creates who are wounded in battle; the characters simply refer to times when they "got that wound which still aches at every change of weather."[389] All seem to take potential for wounding as part of the landscape of war and are portrayed as therefore unsurprised when it occurs.

The assumption of wounding by Lewis's characters is in keeping with many combatants of the Great War, where the ratio of wounded to killed during the war in its entirety was 3:1.[390] Subalterns, Lewis's peers, represent a disproportionate percentage of those affected. Lewis was wounded by a British shell that falls short and implodes very nearly on top of him on April 15, 1918, while fighting at Mount Bernechon during the Battle of Arras, part of the final German offensive of World War I. While it will never be known what, exactly, caused that shell to fall short of its intended target, it is worth noting an extra layer of operational chaos infused into frontline operations at the time. In the winter of 1917-1918 – that is, when Lewis arrived at the front – infantry brigades were reduced from four battalions to three, with a corresponding and distinct impact on the way units moved in relation to one another. As the Army evolved from operating in a line, the gap between theory and practice was significant and may have been a contributing factor to shells like the one that hit Lewis, falling short.[391] Whatever the cause, the explosion does kill fellow Lieutenant Laurence Johnson, Lewis's closest friend on the line and a symbol of all that Lewis hoped would survive war, and Sergeant Harry Ayres, Lewis's second-in-command in his section.

Remaining alive after an initial hit was only part of a wounded soldier's fight to survive. On the battlefield, minor injuries could be patched by a fellow combatant using the field

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[388] Letter of 5 Aug 1929 to his father, CL I, 806.

[389] TWHF, 300.

[390] Michael Stephenson, *The Last Full Measure: How Soldiers Die in Battle* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 192.

[391] Holmes, *Tommy*, 278.

dressings soldiers carried in their tunics; officers also carried a small amount of morphia to ingest themselves or give in cases of extreme pain, or to ease themselves into death with greater comfort. A wounded officer able to walk by himself then needed to make his way to a dressing station in the rear; stretcher bearers flew past these "walking wounded" to get to men who could not move on their own. Men were instructed not to stop and help their comrades, but to continue fighting. At a Regimental First Aid Post, usually located in a reserve trench either part of or just behind the fighting trenches, a medical officer would render basic aid, sometimes give a nip of alcohol to dull pain, and send the officer to an Advanced Dressing Station. There morphine and other injections could be given, and emergency amputations undertaken if needed. Theoretically now stable enough to journey, the wounded were transported beyond artillery range to a Casualty Clearing Station (C.C.S.) for most surgical work. By September 1917 there were 59 C.C.S.s on the western front, each with capacity to handle up to 1,200 cases per day.[392] The burial ground attached to each C.C.S. would not have cheered those conscious enough to notice it. Next often came a train to a base hospital on the Channel coast and finally, if the man could not be made fit for return to the front in short order, to an officers-only convalescent hospital.

The progression sheds light on the severity of Lewis's experience. Lewis writes of the C.C.S. in multiple places in his wartime and 1920s poetry, but not of previous stops, which suggests either that in his specific portion of the line there was no advanced dressing station, or that he struggled to retain consciousness and does not recall previous stages. Lewis was picked up by stretcher-bearers, which means that personnel explicitly directed to rush by anyone strong enough to move themselves and focus on the most severely wounded, thought Lewis wounded enough to stop and pick up. Once in medical care, Lewis passed through every phase to a convalescent hospital, where he remained for six months, though approximately 40% of officers were discharged from base hospitals after only a night.[393] Despite categorizing his experience as minor in many of his later letters and his 1950s autobiography, Lewis's injuries were significant.

Hearing Lewis is near death, Lewis's brother, Warnie, then also serving on the western front, procured a motorbike and rode fifty miles over rough terrain to reach Lewis. Warnie explains events thus: "A shell burst close to where he was standing, killing a Sergeant, and luckily for [Jack] he only stopped three bits: one in the cheek and two in the hands: he then

[392] Holmes, *Tommy*, 478.
[393] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 283-290.

crawled back and was picked up by a stretcher bearer."[394] Warnie glosses over the level of fear necessary to motivate the physically arduous, itself dangerous, frantic journey he undertakes to reach Lewis. During his convalescence Lewis gradually provides more details to his father:

> As a matter of fact I was really hit in the back of the left hand, on the left leg from behind and just above the knee, and in the left side just under the arm pit. All three were only flesh wounds. The myth about being hit in the face arose, I imagine, from the fact that I got a lot of dirt in the left eye which was closed up for a few days, but is now alright. I still can't lie on my side (neither the bad one nor the other one).[395]

In an update weeks later, Lewis says:

> I am doing exceedingly well and can lie on my right side (not of course on my left), which is a great treat after you have been on your back for a few weeks. In one respect I was wrong in my last account of my wounds: the one under my arm is worse than a flesh wound, as the bit of metal which went in there is now in my chest, high up under my 'pigeon chest' as shown: this however is nothing to worry about as it is doing no harm. They will leave it in there and I am told that I can carry it about for the rest of my life without any evil results.[396]

And a month later, Lewis says, "It is not a whole shell in me, only a bit of one."[397]

In the years immediately following World War I, Lewis crafts a scene in the narrative poem *Dymer* that may more candidly convey what it is like, to be blown up. There Lewis writes:

> In the grass he lay. Now first he was aware
> That, all one side, his body glowed with pain
> And the next moment and the next again
> Was neither less nor more. Without a pause –
> It clung like a great beast with fastened claws.
>
> That for a time he could not frame a thought

[394] From an editor's note accompanying Lewis's letters of the time, chronicling communication between Warnie and his father found in "The Lewis Papers" (CL I, 366).

[395] Letter of 4 May 1918 to his father, CL I, 367.

[396] Letter of 14 May 1918 to his father, CL I, 368.

[397] Letter of 12 June 1918 to his father, CL I, 378.

> Nor know himself for self, nor pain for pain
> Till moment added on to moment taught
> The new, strange art of living on that plane,
> Taught how the grappled soul must still remain,
> Still choose and think and understand beneath
> The very grinding of the ogre's teeth.[398]

Lewis continues to describe "within, the thundering pain… it throbbed, it raged with power fit to convulse the heavens;"[399] "and he could see his own limbs faintly white and the blood black upon them."[400] It is difficult to imagine the level of sensory detail Lewis captures as existing too far apart from his lived experience.

Lewis's emotions emerge in a less linear manner, in keeping with the way trauma processing is now understood. In May 1918, a month after he is wounded, Lewis writes to his father of feeling "angry" at "the carelessness of some fool at the War Office, who – as Arthur informs me – told you some rubbish about my being hit in both arms and in the face."[401] This is the first occasion on which Lewis directly mentions anger, a sentiment that will bubble in Lewis's letters and diary for a decade following the war. Highlighting Lewis's anger is important in casting him as relatable to those suffering today. Lewis wrestles with many of the challenges today considered hallmarks of moral injury, PTSD, or both.

Lewis also knows what it is like to confront various emotional challenges simultaneously, much as today's soldiers do when they leave the battlefield and return to domestic, financial, social, and other hardships that muddle the healing process. For Lewis, World War I swirls against a backdrop of Irish unrest and Spanish Flu. Varied threats and fears mix in Lewis's life in passages like this intensely vulnerable note from summer 1918, penned while he lies in hospital:

> If I should happen to get the disease I suppose all my bits of things will be burned. I could sit down and cry over the whole business: and yet of course we have both much to be thankful for. When a man can sleep between sheets as long as he will, sit in arm chairs, and have no fears, it is peevish to complain. If I had not been wounded when I was, I should have gone through a terrible time. Nearly all my friends in the Battalion are gone. Did I ever mention Johnson who was a scholar

[398] *Dymer*, Canto VIII, stanzas 1-2.
[399] *Dymer*, Canto VIII, stanza 3.
[400] *Dymer*, Canto VIII, stanza 5.
[401] Letter of 4 May 1918 to his father, CL I, 367.

> of Queens? I had hoped to meet him at Oxford some day, and renew the endless talks that we had out there. 'Dis aliter visum', he is dead. I had had him so often in my thoughts, had so often hit on some new point in one of our arguments, and made a note of things in my reading to tell him when we met again, that I can hardly believe he is dead. Don't you find it particularly hard to realise the death of people whose strong personality makes them particularly alive: with the ordinary sons of Belial who eat and drink and are merry, it is not so hard.[402]

The loss of Johnson and Ayres, mentioned in this passage, is a specific element of Lewis's experience of wounding overlooked in current scholarship. To illuminate the depth of such a loss, a 2004 study found the degree of grief and bereavement experienced by American Vietnam veterans thirty years after the loss of a comrade in arms comparable to that experienced within the first six months of loss of a spouse.[403] Lewis does not indicate awareness of whether Johnson and Ayres were alive or dead when that shell hit. It is known that news somehow trickles to Lewis while hie is convalescing in the hospital as bodies are recovered. When he receives confirmation of the death of Johnson, Lewis describes himself as "dull, lonely, and disappointed."[404] Johnson and everything he represents is gone. During the same time period, Lewis receives word that friend Paddy Moore has "been missing for over a month and is almost certainly dead," and reflects "it is pathetic to remember that he at least was always certain that he would come through."[405] Lewis falls into a depression, describing "everything I do & suffer" as "dull and repulsive."[406] There is an odd occurrence in his letters of the time that suggest a sense of hopelessness – in two letters, the first dated May 14th 1918 to his father and the second from

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[402] Letter of 20 June 1918 to his father, CL I, 388.

[403] Ilona Pivar and Nigel Field, "Unresolved grief in combat veterans with PTSD" in *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 18, no. 6 (2004): 745-755. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2003.09.005. Pivar and Field report "The veterans' mean Core Bereavement Items (CBI) and Texas Revised Inventory of Grief (TRIG) scores were striking considering that approximately 30 years had passed since these combat losses were experienced. The veterans' mean score of 48.90 on the TRIG was higher than a mean score of 47.39 in a midlife conjugal bereavement sample whose spouses had died within the previous 6 months (Field & Horowitz, 1998) and a mean score of 45.60 for an elderly conjugally bereaved sample whose spouses had died 3–6 months ago (Prigerson et al., 1995). The fact that 70% of the veterans had higher TRIG scores than the average scores for these conjugally bereaved samples attests to the degree to which these veterans continue to experience grief over interpersonal losses that occurred over 30 years ago. Because the death of a spouse is known to be one of the most stressful life events that an individual is likely to encounter (Holmes & Rahe, 1967), the results for the TRIG are indeed remarkable. A similar result was obtained for the CBI; the veterans' mean score of 26.57 on the CBI was comparable to a normative sample who had a mean CBI score of 25.97 assessed at 1 month post loss."

[404] Letter of 20 June 1918 to his father, CL I, 389.

[405] Letter of 14 May to his father, CL I, 369.

[406] Letter of 23 May 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 370.

October 15th 1918 to Arthur Greeves, Lewis lists his return address as "same place." Both letters include conversation about war. Later in 1918, Lewis gets word that his friend Somerville "is gone too," and with him "the old set completely vanishes."[407] *Dis aliter visum* – fate had other plans.

Lewis's feelings continue to froth forward over time, and Lewis maintains his candor about the physical healing process. Two months after his wounding, for example, Lewis continues to express exasperation, shedding light on the prolonged impact of his wounds on daily life:

> The wound on my leg is still bothering me a bit, although it was the smallest I had. The bandage – just above the knee – is always slipping, and descended to my ankle the other day in the middle of Piccadilly, necessitating urgent calls for a taxi.[408]

It is easy to imagine some degree of embarrassment at the experience of one's bandages falling to one's ankle in the middle of the road. The call for a taxi suggests that while Lewis is by then healing enough to begin to be out and about, he is unable to bandage the leg himself, or perhaps to wrangle through his clothing to adjust the bandages. He remains dependent on care. In the same letter Lewis writes of tests of blood and excreta, "the one painful, the other disgusting," referring to himself as "still close prisoner" in the convalescent hospital. Nor is the scene in the street the only time Lewis suffers indignity, though he evidences grace in laughing about it. "I expect to be sent across in a few days time, of course as a stretcher case," Lewis informs his father, before his imminent move to a hospital in England for longer-term care, "indeed whatever my condition they would have to send me in that way, because I have no clothes. This is a standing joke out here – the mania which people at the dressing stations have for cutting off a wounded man's clothes whether there is any need for it or not. In my case the tunic was probably beyond hope, but I admit that I mourn the undeserved fate of my breeches. Unfortunately I was unconscious when the sacrilege took place and could not very well argue the point."[409]

[407] Letter of 3 Oct 1918 to his father, CL I, 402.
[408] Letter of 20 June 1918 to his father, CL I, 387.
[409] Letter of 14 May 1918 to his father, CL I, 368.

Lewis mentions physical effects of war wounds regularly for several years after World War I ends, and the impact on his own body lasts a lifetime. As 1918 rushes into fall, six months after his wounding, Lewis describes still feeling "very weak and tired these days and inclined to lose interest in anything that needs continued attention."[410] He would have remained surrounded by others then, having spent nearly a year now in the close quarters of trenches and hospitals that allow for no privacy. In January 1919, Lewis categorizes himself as having been "severely wounded."[411] Later Lewis says he went into the army "Class A and came out B; that I can't take and violent exercise: and that I still have other trouble we wot of;"[412] the full description was redacted. Into the summer of 1919 Lewis finds he "can't swim half the distance I used to, and am rather stiff after that."[413] Near summer 1921, he explains seemingly chronic physical pain by saying "an old wound always gives you some degree of rheumatism as a souvenir."[414] Well into 1922, Lewis records feeling worried "by shooting pains in my left armpit near the old wound."[415] Lewis eventually has the shell fragment removed from his chest decades later, on the advice of physicians.

The severity of Lewis's physical wounding may have some explanatory power for Lewis's later decision to embrace a model of humanity that deeply links the physical body to soul and spirit. It is horribly ironic that a man who pre-war considered intellectualism far superior to anything related to the body, was post-war constantly reminded of the needs of that body. Acknowledging the depth and complexity of an experience like physical wounding helps better illuminate ways physical injury impacts the mental and emotional experience of moral injury, potentially further complicating the healing process.

2.7 Lewis on death

[410] Letter of 7 Aug 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 393.
[411] Letter of 18 Jan 1919 to the War Office, CL I, 424.
[412] Letter of 23 Feb 1918 to his father, CL I, 436-437.
[413] Letter of 25 May 1919 to his father, CL I, 450-451.
[414] Letter of 28 Mar 1921 to his father, CL I, 536.
[415] Entry of May 4, 1922, AMR, 39.

Extending consideration of physical wounding to death is an organic progression. Tracing Lewis's treatment of death provides a window into the ways Lewis uses his letters and non-fiction writing to work out the theological and philosophical implications of his lived experience of war, then leverages the language of war to illustrate those points through fictional characters. Lewis's presentation of death is characterized across his body of work by the marked detachment often exhibited by combatants, pervasive use of war-related language, and rich psychological depth related to anticipation of perceived imminent death. Over the years Lewis delineates between natural and battlefield deaths, considers various aspects of suicide, thinks about how he might die, and illustrates what he believes proper death *should* be like, even granting that proper death to multiple fictional characters. He comes to believe thinking about and considering death is vital to a mature humanity, arguing that forced attention to the topic is a benefit to society otherwise easily consumed by trivialities.[416] Lewis says death "is horrible. It has a foul smell,"[417] but his willingness to boldly address the topic is ultimately revealed as connective. "Both you and I have had dealings with pain and death," Lewis writes his aunt in 1926, when she is diagnosed with cancer. "I hope we can talk to each other with soldierly freedom."[418]

Some of Lewis's thoughts about death are undoubtedly formed by the boyhood loss of his mother to cancer when he was aged eight, but because his writings on the subject are penned against the backdrop of war and continue throughout his life, it can be credibly said that Lewis's war-time experience solidifies the topic in his mind in increasingly mature and nuanced ways. "Young men are supposed to think themselves immortal," Lewis writes in 1924, "but the subject is not very often out of my mind for a long time together. It is however a subject that will keep, God knows."[419] "I am talking, of course, about *dying*, not about *being killed*," Lewis clarifies. "If shells started falling about this house I should feel quite differently. An external, visible, and (still worse) audible threat at once wakes the instinct of self-preservation into fierce activity. I don't think natural death has any similar terrors."[420] Lewis makes a link between violent death and potential for moral injury in the years close to World War I in the narrative poem *Dymer*.

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[416] For more, see the appendix, "Lewis on Just War."
[417] Per., 58.
[418] Letter of Nov 1926 to Lily Suffern, CL I, 672.
[419] Letter of 11 May 1924 his father, CL I, 630.
[420] Letter of 19 Mar 1963, LAL, 121.

There Lewis describes a character who at their first encounter with violent death "felt the empty sense of something broken,"[421] a descriptor strongly evocative of moral injury.

Lewis's fictional portrayals reveal detailed knowledge of how death comes to the physical human body. For example, to Orual's depressive cry to chief soldier Bardia that had he killed her earlier in the story of *Till We Have Faces*, she would be out of her current misery, he replies, "No, you wouldn't… You'd be dying, not dead. It's only in tales that a man dies the moment the steel's gone in and come out. Unless of course you swap off his head.'"[422] In Narnia, Lewis describes both bodies and animals eating them when troops spot "an eagle or two wheeling high up in the air. 'They smell battle,' said [one soldier], pointing at the birds. 'They know we're preparing a feed for them.'"[423] In another line, Lewis gives readers a man "terribly wounded… covered with blood, his mouth was open, and his face a nasty green color."[424] Green faces struggling for air is an image strongly associated with World War I in common memory of chemical warfare, featured most prominently and accessibly in Wilfred Owen's poem *"Dulce et Decorum Est".* Even Lewis's more metaphysical personifications of death betray a disturbing physicality. Returning to Narnia, witches summon "A dull, gray voice" that says "I'm hunger. I'm thirst. Where I bite, I hold till I die, and even after death they must cut out my mouthful from my enemy's body and bury it with me. I can fast a hundred years and not die. I can lie a hundred nights on the ice and not freeze. I can drink a river of blood and not burst."[425]

Lewis's categorization of death as something to be won, a blessed escape before pain, is an idea that repeatedly surfaces in his body of work. Close to World War I, Lewis writes in *Dymer*:

> As some who have been wounded beyond healing
> Wake, or half wake, once only and so bless,
> Far off the lamplight travelling on the ceiling,
> A disk of pale light filled with peacefulness,
> And wonder if this is the C.C.S.,
> Or home, or heaven, or dreams – then sighing win

[421] *Dymer*, Canto IV, stanza 19.
[422] TWHF, 74.
[423] HB, 183.
[424] LWW, 179.
[425] PC, 166.

Wise, ignorant death before the pain begins.[426]

The acronym "C.C.S." is shorthand for "casualty clearing station," one of a series of stops to stabilize combat wounded troops before transportation further away from the line. Lewis moved through a casualty clearing station when he was wounded, a facet of personal story that immediately casts a personal tone over the stanza.[427]

Only a few cantos later in *Dymer*, the title character happens upon a man dying. There, Lewis writes:

> He halted then, footsore, weary to death,
> And heard his heart beating in solitude,
> When suddenly the sound of sharpest breath
> Indrawn with pain and the raw smell of blood
> Surprised his sense. Near by to where he stood
> Came a long whimpering moan – a broken word,
> A rustle of leaves where some live body stirred.
>
> He groped towards the sound, 'What, brother, brother,
> Who groaned?' – 'I'm hit. I'm finished. Let me be.'
> - 'Put out your hand, then. Reach me. No, the other.'
> - 'Don't touch, Fool! Damn you! Leave me.' – 'I can't see.
> Where are you?' Then more groans. 'They've done for me.
> I've no hands. Don't come near me. No, but stay,
> Don't leave me… O my God! Is it near day?'[428]

Though *Dymer* is not a battle poem, the imagery is strongly evocative of war, as are words such as "footsore" and "hit." Dymer calls the stranger "brother," suggesting similar or common background. Such a relational connection is contrary to Dymer's character as thus far presented in the poem; personal experience of war is the most likely explanation for how Lewis crafts the scene the way he does. In the same work, Lewis offers a first-hand perspective of death:

> Then came the gun crack and the splash of light
> Vanished as soon as seen. Cool garden clay

[426] *Dymer*, Canto I, stanza 29.
[427] For more, see "Lewis's experience of physical wounding," this section.
[428] *Dymer*, Canto IV, stanzas 11 and 12.

Slid from his feet. He had fallen and he lay
Face downward among the leaves – then up and on
Through branch and leaf till sense and breath were gone.[429]

Lewis's descriptions of the "raw" smell of blood, severed hands, and the sensation of one's feet slipping out from under one after a "gun crack" are strikingly graphic depictions.

Lewis's willingness to accurately portray physical death extends to corpses. Lewis says he has "familiarity both with the very old and the very recent dead,"[430] and tells of "horribly smashed men still moving like half-crushed beetles."[431] In several places Lewis notes the gruesome postures in which bodies come to repose, writing of "sitting or standing corpses"[432] and of limbs "broken and bent and white."[433] Lewis knows generally it can take time "before the limbs of his corpse bec[ome] quiet."[434] Until then, "men with splintered faces / No eyes, no nose, all red – were running races / With worms along the floor."[435]

For all the graphic detail offered in his fiction, Lewis's 1920s diary and personal letters on the subject carry an air of intellectualized detachment. "Stripped of all wherewith belief and tradition have clothed it, death appears a little grimmer – a shade more chilly and loathsome – in the eyes of the most matter of fact," Lewis tells his father. "I have seen death fairly often and never yet been able to find it anything but extraordinary and rather incredible. The real person is so very real, so obviously living and different from what is left that one cannot believe something has turned into nothing."[436] The effect continues in his autobiography, which is full of simple observations of boyhood relationships like "I liked Ballygunnian; he, too, was killed in France."[437] On the occasion of his father's death, Lewis reflects "I have often noticed how much less stir nearly everyone's death makes than you might expect. Men better loved and more worth loving than my father go down making only a small eddy."[438]

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[429] *Dymer*, Canto VII, stanza 33.
[430] SBJ, 239.
[431] SBJ, 240.
[432] SBJ, 240.
[433] *Dymer*, Canto IX, stanza 30.
[434] SL, 93.
[435] *Dymer*, Canto V, stanza 6.
[436] Letter of 23 Apr 1921 to his father, CL I, 539-540.
[437] SBJ, 120.
[438] TWHF, 243.

The impression of detachment is confirmed by those close to Lewis. Family friend "The Doc" describes Lewis as suffering "a mild form of dissociation" which "certainly ought to be avoided."[439] Janie, a family friend in Ireland, brings against Lewis a charge of "inhumanity" – "by inhumanity she meant not unkindness, but I think, a kind of detachment."[440] Explicit details about what leads to Janie's condemning assessment are not provided, but Lewis's approach to death certainly fits within her articulated parameters. "Hence, too," he says, "a very defective, perhaps culpably defective, interest in large impersonal movements, causes, and the like. The concern aroused in me by a battle (whether in story or in reality) is almost in an inverse ratio to the number of the combatants."[441]

Lewis seems troubled not the least by the third-party assessments that confirm his own conclusions about himself, though they strike him strongly enough for him to record in his diary. Of his own near-death experience in combat, Lewis writes:

> The moment, just after I had been hit, when I found (or thought I found) that I was not breathing and concluded that this was death. I felt no fear and certainly no courage. It did not seem to be an occasion for either. The proposition 'Here is a man dying' stood before my mind as dry, as factual, as unemotional as something in a textbook. It was not even interesting.[442]

The theme recurs in the Ransom Trilogy. There Dr. Ransom observes, "there comes a point at which the actions of fear and precaution are purely conventional, no longer felt as terror or hope by the fugitive… he felt little emotion. He noted in a dry, objective way that this was apparently to be the end of his story."[443] Ransom's view is confirmed in a scene where he believes himself to be violently drowning to death, yet "the mere abstract proposition, 'This is a man dying,' floated before him in an unemotional way."[444] These are the exact words Lewis uses to describe his own near-death experience, as previously presented. Lewis again drives home the point in a dialogue between Ransom and his enemy, both perceiving themselves to be on the brink of death at the time:

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[439] Entry of 14 Dec 1922, AMR, 203.
[440] Entry of 9 Jan 1923, AMR, 234.
[441] SBJ, 38.
[442] SBJ, 242.
[443] OSP, 55-56.
[444] Per., 147.

> ’Come,’ said Ransom at last, ‘there’s no good taking it like that. Hang it all, you’d not be much better off if you were on Earth. You remember they’re having a war there. The Germans may be bombing London to bits at this moment!’ Then seeing the creature still crying, he added, ‘Buck up, Weston. It’s only death, all said and done. We should have to die some day, you know. We shan’t lack water, and hunger – without thirst – isn’t too bad. As for drowning – well, a bayonet wound or cancer, would be worse.’[445]

Ransom’s list of types of death is noteworthy because it illustrates a character thinking in detail about ways he might die and assigning value to each possibility. Lewis is clear across several works that he places higher value on a short life ardently lived, than a long life of little impact. “I’d rather be killed fighting for Narnia than grow old and stupid at home and perhaps go about in a bath-chair and then die in the end just the same,”[446] a young man attests as he marches into his first and final battle. “If Aslan gave me my choice I would choose no other life than the life I have had and no other death than the one we go to.”[447] Of Bardia, lead soldier in the King’s army in *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis says “he will look on [death] six times a day and whistle a tune as he goes out to find it.”[448] The dying words of Roonwit the Centaur in *The Last Battle* are to remind the King “that all worlds draw to an end and that noble death is a treasure which no one is too poor to buy.”[449] In *The Screwtape Letters*, the ‘patient’ enters into indescribable joy through death in a bomb explosion, another detail reminiscent of Lewis’s wartime experience.

Lewis finds “looking on death” beneficial to individuals and communities. Because death is inevitable, it is worthy of straight-forward examination. “War threatens us with death and pain,” and therefore has value in forcing us to confront the issue. Lewis elaborates:

> There is no question of death or life for any of us, only a question of this death or that – a machine gun bullet now or a cancer forty years later. What does war do to death? It certainly does not make it more frequent; 100 percent of us die, and the percentage cannot be increased. It puts several deaths earlier, but I hardly suppose that that is what we fear. Certainly when the moment comes, it will make little

[445] Per., 141.
[446] LB, 108.
[447] LB, 111.
[448] TWHF, 83.
[449] LB, 103.

> difference how many years we have behind us. Does it increase our chances of a painful death? I doubt it. As far as I can find out, what we call natural death is usually preceded by suffering, and a battlefield is one of the very few places where one has a reasonable prospect of dying with no pain at all. Does it decrease our chances of dying at peace with God? I cannot believe it. If active service does not persuade a man to prepare for death, what conceivable set of circumstances would? Yet war does do something to death. It forces us to remember it… War makes death real to us… The great Christians of the past… thought it good for us to be always aware of our mortality. I am inclined to think they were right. All the animal life in us, all schemes of happiness that centered in this world, were always doomed to a final frustration. In ordinary times only a wise man can realise it. Now the stupidest of us knows.[450]

And,

> What the wars and the weather (are we in for another of those periodic ice ages?) and the atomic bomb have really done is to remind us forcibly of the sort of world we are living in and which, during the prosperous period before 1914, we were beginning to forget. And this reminder is, so far as it goes, a good thing. We have been waked from a pretty dream, and now we can begin to talk about realities.[451]

Pushing the theme further, Lewis writes again in *The Screwtape Letters* of the potential of imminent death to open participants to God. In that work, Lewis writes from the point of view of a senior devil training an apprentice how to corrupt a human soul. When the junior devil expresses hope that the ugliness of war will make it easier to guide human subjects to despair in great numbers, the senior devil offers a correction:

> We may hope for a good deal of cruelty and unchastity. But if we are not careful, we shall see thousands turning in tribulation to [God], while tens of thousands who do not go so far as that will nevertheless have their attention diverted from themselves to values and causes which they believe higher than the self… consider too what undesirable deaths occur in wartime. Men are killed in places where they knew they might be killed and to which they go, if they are all of [God's] party, prepared.[452]

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[450] "Learning in War-Time," WG, 62.
[451] "On Living in an Atomic Age," PC, 94.
[452] SL, 14.

The senior devil later concludes, "In the last war, thousands of humans, by discovering their own cowardice discovered the whole moral world for the first time."[453] Lewis sees potential for moral development in the threat of death, including through war.

Among the other "realities" Lewis chooses to talk about, is the fact that human death occurs in some specific physical fashion. "What can any of us do for one another except give a handshake and a good wish, and hope to do as well when our own time comes to be under fire,"[454] he says. Lewis grants fictional characters capacity to analyze their own physical deaths, such as Orual, who wonders in *Till We Have Faces* "on which dangerous edge the horse would slip and fling us down a few hundred feet into a gulley; or what tree would drop a branch on my neck as we rode under it; or whether my wound would corrupt and I should die that way."[455] In Narnia, a young man gives himself up for lost and begins "to wonder whether lions killed you quickly or played with you as a cat plays with a mouse and how much it would hurt."[456] These may have been the sort of thoughts Lewis experiences in the time between battles on the line.

Lewis's fictional sketches of death may have also been influenced by his friends. Lewis spent much time in the interwar years in the company of comrades who continued to press the topic of death into their academic conversations. "I don't know how, but we fell to talking of death – on the material side – and all the other horrors hanging over one," Lewis records of an evening out to see a fellow combat veteran. "The Doc said that if you stopped to think, you couldn't endure this world for an hour. I left him and walked home. Flashes and bangs from Oxford where they were celebrating Armistice night."[457] Theological ramifications often surfaced during these death-centered conversations, such as when "we talked about fears and whether the death of a person one really cared for wd. abolish the horror of the supernatural or increase it."[458]

Lewis's views of the supernatural come to take a position of prominence in his theological writings as a Christian. It is worth noting, then, that Lewis's earliest recorded thoughts on the matter are heavily influenced by war and his emotions at the loss of a good

[453] SL, 86.
[454] Letter of 5 Aug 1929 letter to his father, CL I, 806.
[455] TWHF, 199.
[456] HB, 29.
[457] Entry of 11 Nov 1922, AMR, 180.
[458] Entry of 26 Jan 1927, AMR 586.

friend. “The house here is the survival, tho’ altered by continual rebuilding, of a thirteenth-century castle,” Lewis writes to his father from a convalescent home in 1918, while recovering from shell wounds. “We have one or two fine old paintings and a ghost. I haven’t met it yet and have not much hope to – indeed if poor Johnson’s ghost would come walking into this lonely writing room this minute, I should be glad enough.”[459]

One result of his manifold writings on death is that Lewis spends sufficient time in rumination on the subject to develop an idea of what he thinks death *should* be like. A detailed scene from *Out of the Silent Planet* offers:

> Those three with the grey muzzles whom they have helped into the boat are going to Meldilorn to die. For in that world, except for some few whom the *hranka* gets, no one dies before his time. All live out the full span allotted to their kind, and a death with them is as predictable as a birth with us. The whole village has known that those three will die this year, this month; it was an easy guess that they would die even this week. And now they are off, to receive the last counsel of Oyarsa, to die, and to be by him ‘unbodied.’ The corpses, as corpses, will exist only for a few minutes; there are no coffins in Malacandra, no sextons, no churchyards, or undertakers. They valley is solemn at their departure, but I see no signs of passionate grief. They do not doubt their immortality, and friends of the same generation are not torn apart. You leave the world, as you entered it, with the ‘men of your own year.’ Death is not preceded by dread or followed by corruption.[460]

Lewis imagines a death where “friends of the same generation are not torn apart.” He envisions death free of fear, untainted by betrayal. Each element of this ideal death suggests that something is not right, not as it should be, in the deaths experienced in World War I, a conclusion strongly reminiscent of moral injury.

The subject of death occupies Lewis throughout his post-war life and directly intersects with Lewis’s ideas of soul and humanity. As Lewis writes of a fictional character:

> He had never till now been at close quarters with death. Now, glancing down at his hand (because his hands were cold and he had been automatically rubbing them), it came to him as a totally new idea that this very hand, with its five nails

[459] Letter of 20 Jun 1918 to his father, CL I, 388.
[460] OSP, 157.

> and the yellow tobacco-stain on the inside of the second finger, would one day be the hand of a corpse, and later the hand of a skeleton… on any view, this body – this limp, shaking, desperately vivid thing, so intimately his own – was going to be returned into a *dead* body. If there were such things as souls, this cared nothing about them. The choking, smothering sensation gave the body's view of the matter with an intensity which excluded all else.[461]

Again, Lewis turns to the "choking, smothering sensation" to describe death.[462] It is clear Lewis thinks frequently, at length, and in detail about death. It is straightforward to extend his personal musings into his fictional characters. It is significant that these characters offer glimpses of Lewis's ideas of tripartite humanity, as well as his conclusions about the primacy of choice in how they react to the threat of imminent death.

2.8 Lewis on suicide

Lewis reaches repeatedly to a particular type of death – suicide - across genres and time, from philosophical exploration to jesting in personal letters. It is clear that suicide is a topic Lewis thinks about and sees fit to write on, though his motives remain hazy to ascertain. Much of what Lewis writes comes across as the sort of "gallows humor" combatants often employ. Difficult to understand outside of the war-fighting community, this approach to humor de-fangs the terrifying realities it deals with, opening conversations that would otherwise be taboo. Lewis does so in a way that other war poets, such as Sassoon and Owen, do not. Lewis also provides a window into how World War I veterans were clearly dealing with complex questions. Lewis's thoughts are evidence for the larger argument that moral injury and its existential effects are felt in significant ways from World War I, onward. In this manner Lewis is consistent with Sassoon, Owen, and many, many others. While definitive conclusions are elusive, because suicide represents a pressing issue among twenty-first century veterans, there is direct modern utility in curating Lewis's ideas.

[461] THS, 241.

[462] See the subsection "Lewis on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder" in "Lewis on Moral Injury."

Lewis makes no definitive statements to suggest he was ever suicidal, nor does he directly mention the suicide of war-time comrades, though he does record friends struggling with suicidal thoughts. The closest Lewis comes to sharing resonance of suicidal thoughts within his own experience is in a letter to his father:

> It is always rather 'shocking' – in the original literal sense of the word – to find how closely our states of mind depend on the states of our bodies. One reads now and then in the paper of people who have committed suicide through 'depression after flu' and one always thinks it rather absurd until one's own turn comes. However, it is unhealthy to chew the cud of these bad things.[463]

The last line of the passage presents a Lewis who seems to view avoidance as a viable strategy for keeping depressive thoughts at bay.

Lewis does think about his own death, sometimes in ways that resonate with what modern psychological terms might deem close to suicidal ideation. In a diary entry of the 1920s, for example Lewis writes, "I began again to think of the pleasures of death, as I used to: not melodramatically, as of suicide, but with the longing for the state of an old, successful man of genius, sitting with all his work behind him, waiting to drop off."[464] Lewis's remarks suggest an evolution of his personal desire to live, and an enhanced capacity to imagine a death that is not violent or sudden but comes gently and naturally, at the end of a good life. Lewis is unclear whether he mentions suicide as an example of a "melodramatic" approach to death or in reference to his previously held thoughts; either way, the inclusion is attention-grabbing. Elsewhere, Lewis's remarks carry a tone of resignation. On the eve of World War II, for example, Lewis confesses:

> The flesh is weak and selfish and I think death would be much better than to live through another war. I have even, I'm afraid, caught myself wishing that I had never been born… The process of living seems to consist in coming to realise truths so ancient and simply that, if stated, they sound like barren platitudes. They cannot sound otherwise to those who have not had the relevant experience: that is

[463] Letter of 6 Mar 1924 to his father, CL I, 620.
[464] Entry of 8 Sep 1923, AMR, 345.

> why there is no real teaching of such truths possible and every generation starts from scratch.[465]

Lewis's wish that he had "never been born" falls into the category of "passive suicidal ideation" the DSM-V now includes in diagnostic criteria for suicidal tendencies. Though Lewis's remarks rapidly segue into the philosophical, they reveal a level of isolation Lewis seems to be feeling as his own "relevant experience" of World War I causes him to feel hopeless about the future on the eve of another war.

In addition to his philosophical reflections, Lewis seems comfortable mentioning suicide in casual conversation. In multiple personal letters to his father and brother he shares news of a woman hospitalized upon reported suicidal attempts, and muses over the merits of suicide by starvation.[466] Lewis also mentions the suicidal ideation of a close family friend in a diary entry of July 4th, 1923. Recalling moves to many houses in the years following 1919 and listing them in his diary, Lewis records "Ivermore, a very jolly little house… there Rob came to stay with us in a very sad state of nerves, contemplating suicide."[467] There may be an educational motive for Lewis's free inclusion of suicide in his writings; suicide occupies an accepted place in the classical literature Lewis studied, especially in warrior castes throughout antiquity, who embraced the idea of death before dishonor to the end. As Lewis pens Orual's recollection in *Till We Have Faces*, "I remembered that conversation which his friends had with Socrates before he drank the hemlock, and how he said that true wisdom is the skill and practice of death."[468] Another culturally-influenced mention of suicide as relates to a code of honor appears in Narnia; there, upon discovering they have unknowingly consumed morsels of a Talking Stag served for dinner, Puddleglum says "We've brought the anger of Aslan on us… that's what comes of not attending to the signs. We're under a curse, I expect. If it was allowed, it would be the best thing we could do, to take these knives and drive them into our own hearts."[469]

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[465] Letter of 8 May 1939 to Dom Bede Griffiths, CL II, 258.

[466] See letters of 9 Jul 1927 to Warnie and of 12 Aug 1927 to his father (CL I, 706-7 and 717, respectively).

[467] Entry of 4 Jul 1923, AMR, 335. "Rob" is Dr. Robert Askins, a second brother of Mrs. Moore who upon completion of his medical degree from Trinity College Dublin is commissioned a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1915. Rob serve throughout the Great War and is mentioned in dispatches as late as August 1919, according to editor Walter Hooper's biographical notes included in AMR.

[468] TWHF, 321.

[469] SC, 129.

Perhaps most unexpected to a modern reader are Lewis's repeated jokes about suicide. Lewis writes – all in letters to Arthur Greeves during war years, interestingly - "My father seemed in very poor form when I got home, and fussed a lot about my cold: so everything is beastly, and I have decided – of course – to commit suicide again;"[470] and "P.S. – Haven't heard from my esteemed parent for some time; has he committed suicide yet?;"[471] and "Cheer up & write soon & don't shoot yourself yet."[472] Jocular mentions of suicide in exchanges with Arthur edge into the theological in passages like this one:

> Later on you ask me why I am sad, and suggest it is because I have no hope of a 'happy life hereafter'. No; strange as it may appear I am quite content to live without believing in a bogey who is prepared to torture me forever and ever if I should fail in coming up to an almost impossible ideal (which is a part of the Christian mythology, however much you try to explain it away). In fact I should think it horrible to feel that if life got too bad, I daren't escape for fear of a spirit more cruel and barbarous than any man. Then you are good enough to ask me why I don't kill myself. Because – as I have said to you before – in spite of occasional fits of depression I am very well pleased with life and have a very happy time on the whole. The only reason I was sad was because I was disappointed in my hope that you were gradually escaping from beliefs which, in my case, have always considerably lessened my happiness: if, however, it has the opposite effect on you, tant mieux pour vous![473]

Lewis does not articulate what contributes to his self-described "fits of depression." Though Lewis rapidly diverts attention from his remarks about depression to a joke, he seems comfortable discussing suicide and depression with his friend. Less overtly jesting but still tongue-in-cheek are some of Lewis's remarks against Naturalism,[474] a topic of mighty debate in England during the interwar period:

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[470] Letter of 18 Sep 1916 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 222.

[471] Letter of 2 Jun 1919 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 454.

[472] Letter of 14 Jul 1919 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 461.

[473] Letter of 18 Oct 1916 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 235.

[474] Naturalism holds science to be the best means of understanding the world, including man's role in it, and that there is nothing supernatural or unique about man. Naturalism denies a requirement for God in any interpretation of existence. Lewis engages in in-depth dialogue with many of Naturalism's tenets in *Miracles*, among other places.

> Should we arrive at the conclusion that 'nothing ever has existed or will ever exist except this meaningless play of atoms in space and time'…. In this situation there are, I think, three things one might do:
> (1) You might commit suicide. Nature which has (blindly, accidentally) given me for my torment this consciousness which demands meaning and value in a universe that offers neither, has luckily also given me the means of getting rid of it. I return the unwelcome gift. I will be fooled no longer.[475]

The structure of Lewis's remarks positions suicide as a choice. His melodramatic tone highlights, however, the irrationality of a suicidal act against the backdrop of the full human experience, though suicide could be the rational conclusion of a series of beliefs.

Eventually, mention of suicide occupies a place in Lewis's intellectual pursuits. In this passage from *The Discarded Image*, for example, Lewis supposes:

> That this prohibition makes part of Christian ethics is indisputable; but many, not unlearned, people have been unable to tell me when or how it became so… certainly references in later writers to suicide or to the unlawful risking of one's own life seem to be written with the speech of Africanus in mind, for they draw out the military metaphor which is implicit in it.[476]

Lewis seems to seek out information about suicide, researching its origins and tracing its development. His motivations remain unclear, as Lewis produces no academic work focused on suicide or that discusses suicide in depth, but the specification that he asks "many" people how Christianity came to prohibit suicide is an attention-grabbing word choice.

Overall, Lewis's inclusion of suicide in many genres of writing creates a cumulative impression of intentionality, especially in his fiction. Consider *Till We Have Faces*, a work based on the mythological tale of Psyche and Cupid that Lewis subtitles "A Myth Retold." The main character, Orual, weaponizes suicide as leverage to force her sister, Psyche, to act in certain ways. Orual then seeks release from shame and emotional pain in death by what is today called "secondary suicide," the deliberate creation of a situation that will result in her death at the hands of another. In this case, she takes risk in combat situations she voluntarily enters. Near the end of her life, Orual says of her wish to end her life on her own times, "It was all foolishness, though.

[475] "On Living in an Atomic Age," PC, 95.
[476] DI, 25.

The sword was too heavy for me now. My grip – think of a veined, claw-like hand, skinny knuckles – was childish. I would never be able to strike home; and I had seen enough of wars to know what a feeble thrust would do."[477] Though the mythological tale of Psyche does include an attempt by Psyche to end her life to reach the underworld and fetch a box of beauty for her captor Venus, the nuances and emotional depth Lewis lends the topic are of his own contrivance.[478]

Lewis weaves together his conceptions of the soul and personal choice into a suicidal scene in The Ransom Trilogy. In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis creates a character who chooses to embrace the belief that the human experience is nothing more than a series of chemical reactions; this character takes even the idea of mind to be a chemically-produced illusion, and considers "the body and its movements the only reality."[479] When the character comes in contact with the "naked and bloodied corpse" of a colleague who dies in a violent battle, Lewis notes "the chemical reaction called shock occurred."[480] The character's response is to lock himself in a room and light it on fire. Though "that tiresome illusion, his consciousness, was screaming to protest," Lewis writes:

> Like the clockwork figure he had chosen to be, his stiff body, now terribly cold, walked back into the Objective Room, poured out the petrol and threw a lighted match into the pile. Not till then did his controllers allow him to suspect that death itself might not after all cure the illusion of being a soul – nay, might prove the entry into a world where that illusion raged infinite and unchecked. Escape for the soul, if not for the body, was offered him. He became able to know (and simultaneously refused the knowledge) that he had been wrong from the beginning, that souls and personal responsibility existed.[481]

Here Lewis graphically illustrates what happens when the living deny their souls – the reality that they are souls does not change due to their personal disbelief. The theological element demands consideration. Again, Lewis provides a dead or dying character another opportunity to recognize their errors and choose to believe differently; his illustration incorporates themes of

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[477] TWHF, 315.
[478] For the original tale, see *Bulfinch's Mythology*, "Cupid and Psyche."
[479] THS, 355.
[480] THS, 355.
[481] THS, 356.

soul, humanity, truth, and will. Again, Lewis gives readers a character who refuses to die to himself and welcome freedom for his soul. In the end, Lewis directly links "souls" and "personal responsibility" against a backdrop of suicide undertaken in the face of violence that overwhelms capacity to cope.

Lewis continues to intermix inner turmoil, choice, and suicide in Narnia, where a young girl reacts to news of an arranged marriage by taking "a sharp dagger [her] brother had carried in the western wars," [482] saddling her horse, and riding out to a place where she can "drive the dagger into her heart." At this crucial moment her horse reveals itself to a be a Talking Horse of Narnia, who rebukes her mistress, saying "'O my mistress, do not by any means destroy yourself, for if you live you may yet have good fortune but the dead are dead alike.'" The girl believes she has lost control of her faculties, and feels "full of shame" at her loss of control. The horse speaks again, and the girl responds:

> And now my wonder was so great that I forgot about killing myself… and when we had talked together for a great time hope returned to me and I rejoiced that I had not killed myself. [483]

The scene includes the element of shame and question of madness that appears elsewhere in Lewis's writings linked to moral injury. Here, though, "wonder" alleviates both concerns and outweigh the desire for death, a clear illustration of Lewis's ideas about how imagination and beauty have a role in moral healing. In the end, wonder results in "hope" and "rejoic[ing]" on the part of the suffering, overwhelming suicidal desire.

2.9 Lewis treatment of environmental and animal destruction in war

Suicide is not the only specialized kind of death Lewis plumbs in detail over time. For two reasons, it is worth bringing into clearer focus Lewis's treatment of other particular kinds of death often overlooked – that is, environmental and animal destruction in war. First, illuminating

[482] HB, 39.
[483] HB, 39.

how Lewis's war experience informs his conceptualization of landscapes and fictional animal characters is important in laying the groundwork for concluding conversation about Reepicheep the Mouse, from *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Second, the potential of violent destruction of beautiful places to cause inner pain is a facet of moral injury given far less emphasis than other considerations of combat-related moral injury, and Lewis speaks into the void in a meaningful way.

Witnessing and participating in violent destruction of nature, including animals, is a form of physical harm caused by war that creates unique potential for moral injury. Clinical psychotherapist Edward Tick summarizes, "Plato said that beauty is the food of the soul. Its importance to the soul's well-being cannot be overestimated; nor can the damaging effect of beauty's distortions engendered by the hideousness of war."[484] If fought in beautiful places, or places that once were beautiful, the extreme contrast between a soldier's purpose in that locale and what that place "should" be is often extremely disorienting. Then, too, does destruction of a land that looks like home carry presumed greater potential to cause pain; many Great War soldiers record in letters home how much the country the western front reminds them of the fields and flowers of England.

World War I is noteworthy in modern popular memory for a trench system that continues to mark the landscape more than a century later. There was stark contrast between the landscape directly around the trenches and the lands beyond. Historian John Keegan describes the larger area where Lewis fought:

> The chief effect of two years of bombardment and trench-to-trench fighting across no man's land was to have created a zone of devastation of immense length, more than 400 miles between the North Sea and Switzerland, but of narrow depth: defoliation for a mile or two on each side of no man's land, heavy destruction of buildings for a mile or two more, scattered demolition beyond that. At Verdon, on the Somme and the Ypres salient whole villages had disappeared, leaving a smear of brick-dust or a pile of stones on the upturned soil. Ypres and Albert, sizable small towns, were in ruins, Arras and Noyon badly damaged, the city of Rheims had suffered heavy destruction and so had villages up and down the line. Beyond

[484] Tick, *War*, 129.

> the range of the heavy artillery, 10,000 yards at most, town and countryside lay untouched. The transition from normality to the place of depth was abrupt.[485]

Lewis validates Keegan's description, writing in his war-time poetry of "bloody fields, sad seas, and countries desolate,"[486] "the jaws of a sacked village"[487] and a time when "suddenly the earth grew black with wrong,"[488] then condemning "the Power who slays and puts aside the beauty that has been."[489]

Lewis feels and reacts to the environmental destruction occurring around him, making a direct link between destruction of beauty and the perceived nature of the Divine. Lewis writes in his war-time poetry of a "world deform," past a "golden age" when "maid and man and beast and tree and spirit in the green earth could thrive," now existing on a "downward track" where a "Power who slays and puts aside the beauty that has been," "has not left one valley, one isle of fresh and green."[490] In the years immediately following World War I, Lewis continues to emphasize the link between landscape and the divine. In the narrative poem *Dymer*, Lewis writes that against "the sound of gun-fire and the gleam of flame, the black sky between the housetops framed was all we had to tell us that the old world could not die and that we were no gods."[491] Again, Lewis uses landscape to convey a sense of hopelessness, destruction, and violent ruin while making a point about the divine.

Later in his career, Lewis continues to craft fictional landscapes that in their details seem to point strongly to World War I. Lewis writes of a destroyed mountain as "all bare rock, raw earth, and foul water: trees, bushes, sheep, and here and there a deer, floated in it."[492] Elsewhere Lewis describes "a ruinous land. The ragged stumps of broken trees rose out of endless clay naked of flower and grass: the slobbered humps dividing the dead pools. Against the gray a shattered village gaped."[493] Though Lewis does not distinctly attribute to his combat experience

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[485] Keegan, *First*, 310. The landscape Keegan describes may be familiar to soldiers from the U.S. and UK who spent time in the long war in Afghanistan. After about a decade, nations began establishing restaurants, shops, and other amenities in the largest bases, while in the mountains men still lived in holes and fought for their lives. "Afghanistan – experiences may differ" became the slogan of many tongue-in-cheek jokes amongst troops.

[486] "Alexandrines, SIB, line 3.

[487] "French Nocturne (Monchy-Le-Preux)," SIB, line 5.

[488] "De Pofundis," SIB, line 10.

[489] "Ode for New Year's Day," SIB, line 25.

[490] "Ode for New Year's Day," SIB, 19.

[491] *Dymer*, Canto IV, stanza 21 and 22.

[492] TWHF, 198.

[493] *Dymer*, Canto IX, stanza 24.

apologetic formation of his ideas of beauty and play as arguments for God's existence, similarities in his descriptions close to and further removed from war make it reasonable to suggest the imagery is formed from his own lived experience.

Closely linked to the subject of environment is the plight of animals in a war zone. Though Lewis writes about animals in his boyhood, because he turns to animals as characters and vehicles of meaning throughout his writing life, it is worth considering the role war may play in his development of the same. A closer look at Lewis's reaction to animal destruction during World War I, and how themes emerge in his later writing, can also open a window into development of Lewis's theological values, because theological perspective influences how soldiers react to the creatures around them. Whether a soldier believes animals have souls might, for instance, impact whether and to what degree they feel pain at coming across a "balloon horse,"[494] as Lewis refers to dead horses around the trenches and roads of the western front, left to rot and now so bloated their stomachs have the shapes of balloons.

The link between Lewis's war-time experience of animals and his later writing seems strongest regarding horses. The year Lewis arrives at the front, 1917, is historically considered the worst year of the war for horses and mules, who had been part of the war effort from the beginning. In 1914, for instance, heavy dependency on the horse was reflected in staff officers' estimates that there was approximately one horse to every three men in the army.[495] In the spring of 1917, unusually cold weather near Arras, where Lewis would later fight, would push the death toll of Army horses close to 30%. An anonymous officer writes that "horses perished like flies. You could count them nearly by the score on the road."[496] It is not decisively known what role horses played in Lewis's war experience. While junior officers were taught to ride in the first year of the war, in case they were elevated in rank to captain and made company commander, which required riding,[497] Lewis makes no direct remarks about horsemanship. He is close enough to equines, however, to conclude "horses, even in battle, tread on human beings very much less than you would suppose."[498] His somewhat macabre observation evidences the

[494] Letter of 1 May 1922 to his father, CL I, 589.
[495] Keegan, *First*, 73.
[496] As reported by Richard van Emden, *Tommy's Ark*, 190.
[497] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 56.
[498] HB, 191.

coarsening effects of a battlefield. Lewis's word choice also suggests that sometimes in the panic and chaos of battle horses *do* tread on humans, a presumably horrible occurrence to witness.

Illuminating the equine facet of war makes it seem less a fanciful coincidence when Lewis eventually pens an entire book in *The Chronicles of Narnia* from the war horse's point of view, *The Horse and His Boy*. Perhaps the work constitutes in some part Lewis's lending of a nuanced credibility and nobility to the animal's contribution to the war effort. Then, too, Lewis's presentation in Narnia of animals who talk, fight, and follow Aslan roaring into heaven right alongside the human characters can be received as evidence of ensoulment. While as a Christian Lewis is quite clear that he believes animal and human souls to be fundamentally different, Lewis places clear value on animal life. Looking through a lens of value back at the environmental and animal destruction Lewis and his fellows in arms both caused and suffered from during World War I reveals an often-overlooked facet of combat-related moral injury it is reasonable to conclude Lewis experienced, and one that may have shaped the way he later considers questions of soul.

2.10 Lewis on the fraternity of arms

The difficulty and strain of war easily leads to the conclusion that participants must abhor it. Lewis, however, finds himself "surprised that I did not dislike the Army more. It was, of course, detestable. But the words 'of course' draw the sting… One did not expect to like it. Nobody said you out to like it. Nobody pretended to like it. Everyone you met took it for granted that the whole thing was an odious necessity, a ghastly interruption of rational life. And that made all the difference. Straight tribulation is easier to bear than tribulation which advertises itself as pleasure. The one breeds *camaraderie* and even (when intense), a kind of love between the fellow-sufferers." Lewis's characterization of participation in war as "a ghastly interruption of rational life" is a sentiment with direct connection to moral injury.

Though Lewis never explicitly calls himself as a "soldier" after the war, suggesting he deliberately assigns war a nominal place in his personal identity, Lewis does consider himself part of the fraternity of arms. Throughout his post-war life Lewis often refers to himself and fellow combatants as "we" or "us," calling "our generation, the generation of the returned

soldiers."[499] Lewis frequently engages in "war reminiscences" with fellow soldiers. In 1922, Lewis records, "We sat in the garden after lunch. Stevenson talked of his job at Le Touquet during the war where they had a whole mess of coding interpreting experts. He said that in the end, after the duds had been eliminated, it came to consist entirely of classical scholars. As a similar example of strange abilities used for war purposes, Mrs. S. mentioned a futurist painter who was employed on doing 'dazzled' ships…"[500] In 1923, Lewis writes of "talking of Masefield and then to war reminiscences between Gordon, Strick, Coghill and me."[501] He also records talk of "wounds, pensions, income tax, and Farquharson" with his tutor, F.P. Wilson.[502] As late as 1926, near the end of his diary keeping, Lewis spends the evening enjoying "some very amusing talk in the smoking room, chiefly by Dixon and Benecke, on their war experiences."[503] While unclear whether Lewis seeks out such fellowship or these arise spontaneously that Lewis sees fit to record them in his diary pints to their significance. In his fiction, Lewis lends the same penchant to characters who dream of a day "while we sat in the sun and talked of our old battles."[504]

Lewis evidences ideological commitment to both military duty and his brothers in arms, though Lewis describes himself as a "futile officer," saying "they gave commissions too easily then."[505] Close friend and decorated World War I pilot Leo Baker finds it "difficult to imagine him in charge of a platoon in the trenches."[506] Lewis has moments, however, that translate his moral convictions into actionable leadership. To his father's efforts to have Lewis moved to an artillery unit, for instance, where his father believes Lewis will be safer but where Lewis knows his lack of mathematical prowess will be a detriment, Lewis replies "would it not be very wrong for mere reasons of safety, to push me into a responsible position for which I know I am absolutely unfit? If you are fortunate (and how few fathers are today) in having one son in a

[499] SBJ, 251.
[500] Entry of 7 May 1922, AMR, 41.
[501] Entry of 1 Jun 1923, AMR, 321.
[502] Entry of 28 Jun 1923, AMR, 332.
[503] Entry of 3 May 1926, AMR, 514.
[504] TWHF, 273.
[505] SBJ, 240.
[506] Baker, "Near the Beginning," in *Remembering*, 68.

perfectly safe job, do you think we should try to alter the natural cause of events for the sake of the other?"[507]

Once on the front, Lewis responds to his father's continued efforts to secure a transfer by explaining he has "become very much attached to this regiment," where he has "several friends whom I should be very sorry to leave and am just beginning to know my men and understand the work."[508] That same letter, of December 1917, is the first time Lewis refers in writing to the men he fights with as "*my* men." The possessive pronoun emphasizes ownership. Lewis also expresses a desire to appear courageous in the eyes of his colleagues, elaborating to his father that his commanding officer, Lt. Colonel Majendie, "is a splendid fellow for whom I have great admiration, and I should be sorry to cut so poor a figure in his eyes as I must do in trying to back out as I get nearer to the real part of my job."[509]

Lewis's emotional response to his comrades in arms persists. Lewis later publishes *Spirits in Bondage* under a pseudonym in recognition of "a natural feeling that I should not care to have this bit of my life known in the regiment. One doesn't want either officers or men to talk about 'our b-y lyrical poet again' whenever I make a mistake."[510] A few weeks later, Lewis tells his father, "The more I think of it the less I like anonymity. If it wasn't for the army I'd let my own name take its chance… Of course we must always remember that the people who are most likely to talk of 'our b****y poet' are also the least likely to hear anything about it; they don't haunt bookshops, nor do they read literary papers."[511] Lewis's sensitivity to his fellows' opinion extends to his fiction, like when "three conquerors stood staring at one another and panting, without another word, for a long time," post-combat, but one "had very wisely sat down and was keeping quiet; she was saying to herself, 'I do hope I don't faint – or blub – or do anything idiotic.'"[512]

Despite their father's disapproval of their service, a shared experience of war seems to have cemented a strong relationship between Lewis and his older brother, Warnie. Lewis talks to Warnie, a Sandhurst graduate and career soldier who fought in both World Wars, about war

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[507] Letter of 22 Jul 1918 to his father, CL I, 328. Lewis's brother, Warnie, attended Sandhurst and shipped out to World War I in 1914; he also served in World War II.

[508] Letter of 13 Dec 1917 to his father, CL I, 347.

[509] Letter of 13 Dec 1917 to his father, CL I, 348.

[510] Letter of 18 Sep 1918 to his father, CL I, 400.

[511] Letter of 3 Oct 1918 to his father, CL I, 401. Lewis struck through the curse word in his own letter.

[512] SC, 185.

culture more than any other correspondent of record. During the early 1930s Warnie is stationed in China under prolonged threat of violence. "I will refrain from asking you any particular questions," Lewis writes his brother, "because I remember from war experiences that questions from home are always based on a misunderstanding of the whole situation."[513] Lewis says something similar to Leo Baker writing "All this may be silly chat – as letters from home so often were to a man in the front line, which, I know, is where you are at present."[514] Lewis's own writings of war dramatically increase during this time, and a closer look at them illuminates the persistent way Lewis's Great War experience shapes his perspective. Lewis talks to his brother candidly, alluding to the knowledge of war he and his brother share in passages like these:

> I also heard at the same binge a very interesting piece of literary history from an unexceptionable source – that the hackneyed 'A German officer crossed the Rhine' was being sung at undergraduate blinds in 1912. What do you make of that? Can it date from the Franco Prussian war? Or is it a German student song made in anticipation of Der Tag about 1910? The latter would be an interesting fact for the historian. I never heard the ballad as a whole, but think it is poor – in fact, nasty… any parts I have ever heard of the 'German Officer' relate quite possible happenings that have really nothing funny about them.[515]

The concept of combat as fraternal and bonding makes its way into Lewis's fiction. After a communal hunt in *Out of the Silent Planet*, for example, Lewis's human lead character, Dr. Elwin Ransom, depicts shared victory with otherworldly creatures: "They stood shoulder to shoulder in the face of an enemy, and the shapes of their heads no longer mattered."[516] In Narnia, Lewis describes the ship's company getting up, "all with swords drawn, and formed themselves into a solid mass with Lucy in the middle and Reepicheep on her shoulder. It was nicer than the

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[513] Letter of 15 Feb 1932 to Warnie, CL II, 45-46.

[514] Letter of 28 Apr 1935 to Leo Baker, CL II, 162.

[515] Letter of 25 Dec 1931 to Warnie, CL II, 27. A "blind" is a drinking party. Lewis is most likely referring to the song "Three German Soldiers Crossed the Line," an explicit song about three German soldiers who cross the line of battle to engage in drunken debauchery, including the rape of many women. Soldiers rape the daughter of an innkeeper so brutally she nearly dies, then continue to rape her until she comes back to life. The Germans are shot by the innkeeper and marched to hell. The song evolves over many decades and variations are readily found in French, German, and English; a French version is thought to have been popular as early as the 1830's. Several versions tell of the German soldiers giving the same treatment to the devil and his wife as they do the innkeeper's daughter. At least one tells of the daughter becoming a prostitute and giving birth to a son who later engages in the same behavior, including rape of his mother, sister, the devil and the devil's wife.

[516] OSP, 82.

waiting about and everyone felt fonder of everyone else than at ordinary times."[517] Placement of the most vulnerable members of the party, Lucy and Reepicheep, in the middle is a tactically accurate detail Lewis takes time to include. Also in Narnia, Lewis describes a king and his unicorn as loving "each other live brothers and each had saved the other's life in the wars."[518] In *Till We Have Faces*, characters "hold together and stand the closer, like soldiers in a hard battle."[519] Later, a queen expands on jealousy of her chief soldier's wife by asking "Has she ever crouched beside him in the ambush? Ever ridden knee to knee with him in the charge? Or shared a stinking water-bottle with him at the thirsty day's end? … Was there ever such a glance between them as well-proved comrades exchange in farewell when they ride different ways and both into desperate danger?"[520] The wife in turn describes queen and soldier as "sharing the councils, the dangers, the victories, the soldier's bread, the very jokes."[521]

The term "fraternity of arms" is not meant to be a glamorous one. The intimacy that comes from living and fighting with fellows breeds as much interpersonal conflict as in any other family. Lewis demonstrates familiarity with the dynamics of small unit living in illustrations like this one in Narnia, describing a failed battle plan:

> It was a gloomy company that huddled under the dripping trees to eat their scanty supper. The gloomiest of all was Giant Wimbleweather. He knew it was all his fault. He sat in silence shedding big tears which collected on the end of his nose and then fell off with a huge splash on the whole bivouac of the Mice, who had just been beginning to get warm and drowsy. They all jumped up, shaking the water out of their ears and wringing their little blankets, and asked the Giant in shrill but forcible voices whether he thought they weren't wet enough without this sort of thing. And then other people woke up and told the Mice they had been enrolled as scouts and not as a concert party, and asked why they couldn't keep quiet. And Wimbleweather tiptoed away to find some place where he could be miserable in peace and stepped on somebody's tail and somebody (they said afterward it was a fox) bit him. And so everyone was out of temper.[522]

[517] VDT, 96.
[518] LB, 16.
[519] TWHF, 79.
[520] TWHF, 265.
[521] TWHF, 297.
[522] PC, 94.

Lewis's tableau also conveys how military cultures are often more interpersonally "flat" than social structures. There exists no necessary correlation between social class and personal courage, resilience, and other traits prized most highly in war. Giants and mice are one and the same. Upon return to their homes, however, combatants are expected to return to "normal" social standards of interaction. In England, that meant soldiers who stood beside one another in life and death on a World War I battlefield returned to a society that did not allow them to intermix. Social stratification may account to some degree for what section six, "Open the Gates for me!" presents as Lewis's choice to immortalize a particular enlisted soldier as the fictional character "Reepicheep" in Narnia.

The Reepicheep argument is not intended to suggest Lewis looks back with an adulterated aura of glamour upon his fellows. Lewis's portrait of another man, Wallie, captures the complicated relationships that often exist in war. Lewis describes Wallie as "the best of us," attesting "I doubt whether any man fought in France who was more likely to go straight to Heaven if he were killed."[523] Lewis also says, however, he "did not enjoy the short time I spent in the company he commanded." Lewis singles Wallie out as "the only man I met who really longed for fighting," and says "Wallie had a genuine passion for killing Germans and a complete disregard of his own or anyone else's safety." Lewis categorizes Wallie as ignorant of the "neighbourly principles which, by the tacit agreement of the troops, were held to govern trench-warfare."[524] Lewis finds the shared wartime experience softens him, however, toward the memory of bullies who abused him as part of the established English boarding school culture. "Peace to them all," Lewis writes in his autobiography. "A worse fate awaited them than the most vindictive fag among us could have wished. Ypres and the Somme ate up most of them. They were happy while their good days lasted."[525]

Lewis's candid portraits of his comrades in arms provide a valuable window into the shared experience of moral injury. Lewis records of a friend named "Segar," for instance:

> Segar told me of his experiences when torpedoed in the Mediterranean. It was a story of panic and bad conduct worse than any I have heard in the war. The Captain shot himself. Segar, in the water, approached a boat with three men in it:

[523] SBJ, 237.
[524] SBJ, 236-237.
[525] SBJ, 114.

> one a man with his jaw shot away, the other a padré temporarily mad, the third unhurt. This one said 'Go away, you're making me sea sick' and taking off his boots hammered Segar's hands till he let go of the ropes. He was afterwards picked up by a tug…[526]

Lewis shares more of Segar in a letter to his brother, writing "He brings about him the air of a bar parlour: to sit with him is to be snug and jolly and knowing and not unkindly, and to forget that there are green fields or art galleries in the world. All this is the side he shows us day by day: but there is more behind, for he is a war wreck and spends his nights mostly awake."[527] Even fond reminisces are not free of the language of pain, it would seem. As a result of his exposure to the fraternity of arms, Lewis becomes a man who "hated casual contacts; human contact must, for him, be serious and concentrated and attentive, or it was better avoided. It might be for a moment only, but that was its invariable quality."[528]

2.11 Lewis on the enemy and shared identity

Lewis's body of work reveals extensive thought given over time to another group of people who know the experience of war and bear arms in it - his nation's declared enemies, the men he fights. Lewis's war-related musings about Germans are coherent in tone with what eventually becomes Lewis's philosophy of universal moral values, and in keeping with Jonathan Shay's conclusion that how a combatant relates to their enemy is a vital of component to either protecting them from or exacerbating moral injury.[529] Lewis's choice to illuminate commonalities with the men he fights rather than differences also suggests that elements of the experience of war, including potentially combat-related moral injury, can be credibly viewed as transcending differences in culture or time. Ultimately, Lewis concludes that "hostility is a relation and an enemy is not a total stranger."[530]

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[526] Entry of 2 Jun 1926, AMR, 541.
[527] "Magdalen College" Appendix, entry "Segar, Robert," AMR, 644-645.
[528] Erik Routley, "A Prophet" in Remembering C.S. Lewis, 110.
[529] Shay, *Achilles*, 202-203.
[530] Per., 135.

Anecdotally, Lewis seems to recognize essential similarities between his own side and that of the enemy early in his exposure to military culture, in a way that breaks and resists dehumanization of that same enemy. Lewis's notice of likeness gains expression as early as 1917 during training, when he remarks to his father, "I am finding out that the military ideal in our army differs from the German one only in degree and not in kind."[531] Though the modifier of difference "in degree" still leaves plenty of room to dehumanize the man on the other side of the gun, the next year Lewis references Ephesians 6:12 when he writes from the trenches, "The conditions at home are almost as bad as anything we once fabled of starvation in Germany: spirits will be more pacific every day on short commons: there seems to be 'spiritual wickedness in high places'."[532]

Lewis may have been predisposed to identify sameness, thanks to philosophical training received in his youth. Lewis offers a vignette of his boyhood tutor, dedicated atheist Kirkpatrick, drawing a verbal sword against a houseguest parroting popular language used to discuss World War I in its early years: "The commonest metaphors would be questioned till some bitter truth had been forced from its hiding place," Lewis records. "'These fiendish German atrocities –'But are not fiends a figment of the imagination?' – 'Very well, then; these brutal atrocities –' 'But none of the brutes does anything of the kind!' – 'Well, what am I to call them?' 'Is it not plain that we must call them simply *Human*?'"[533] Lewis shares the dialogue in an autobiography published in the 1950s, and the late date suggests the interaction was a formative one for a young Lewis reporting to war.

Sharp humor and wit surface during convalescence from his war wounds, when Lewis muses in a letter from his hospital bed that "Perhaps even now a Teutonic unter offizier is sleeping in my blankets and improving his English on my bit of books. Which reminds me, though the reproach is usually the other way, on the only occasion when we took any prisoners, I was able to talk a little German to their officer, though he could speak no English to me."[534]

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[531] Letter of 22 Jul 1917 to his father, CL I, 328.

[532] Letter of 22 Feb 1918 to his father, CL I, 362. Ephesians 6:12 reads "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rules of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

[533] SBJ, 168.

[534] Letter of 12 Jun 1918 to his father, CL I, 378-379. In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis relays "How I 'took' about sixty prisoners – that is, discovered to my great relief that the crowd of field-grey figures who suddenly appeared from nowhere, all had their hands up – is not worth telling, save as a joke." (SBJ, 241).

When Lewis asks his father for money for a new uniform and boots to replace those lost when he was wounded, he jests "There was also a revolver which I have not replaced. Perhaps indeed the whole bill should be sent in to 'A firer of gun, name and location uncertain'!"[535] The wry tone continues in Lewis's post-war description of an encounter with a young German in 1927:

> He turned out to be more like a comic picture of a German in a war time Punch than you would have thought it possible … I asked if he had served in the war. He replied after deep thought… 'Ach… I could not bring to my mind the reality of that life… so I became very ill'. I wish I'd known that tip in 1919. I refrained from asking him the German for 'to swing the lead'.[536]

Here Lewis accepts a visit from an enemy's countryman, apparently harboring no immediate ill will based on the gentleman's nationality. What tone of judgment does exist in the telling reflects the gentleman's failure to serve in arms, rather than the nation for which he might have borne them.

As post-war years continue to march by and time lengthens, Lewis's thoughts about the commonalities between men fighting as enemies become more philosophical. In a 1931 letter he muses to a close friend:

> Haven't you noticed how people with a fixed hatred, say, of Germans or Bolshevists, resent anything which is pleaded in extenuation, however small, of their supposed crimes. The enemy must be unredeemed black.[537]

Lewis's musings extended beyond his circle of intimates, becoming a teaching point in national broadcasts for all England to hear. In a World War II-era broadcast that becomes part of *Mere Christianity*, Lewis tells the nation:

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[535] 3 Nov 1918 letter to his father, CL I, 414.

[536] Letter of 30 Mar 1927 to his father, CL I, 681. Lewis records the same event in his diary on February 24th 1927: "This morning the German whom Harwood asked me to be civil to, named Kruger, arrived, looking more like a war cartoon of a German than I would have believed possible. As he was already engaged to dine at the house and was leaving Oxford early in the morning, I couldn't entertain him. He stayed till about 12.30 and departed, promising to come and see me in the evening. He made one glorious remark, when he described his war experience by saying 'I could not connect myself with that life – I could not grasp the reality of that war, that soldat: so I became very ill.'" (AMR 607).

[537] Letter of 17 Jan 1931 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 951.

> I have often thought to myself how it would have been if, when I served in the First World War, I and some young German had killed each other simultaneously and found ourselves together a moment after death. I cannot imagine that either of us would have felt any resentment or even any embarrassment. I think we might have laughed over it.[538]

By his own admission in the *Mere Christianity* passage, Lewis "often" engages in deliberate thought about commonalities between declared enemies, highlighting the prolonged, even permanent timeline over which moral injury can shape thoughts. The timing of his remarks suggest that Lewis believes it important those involved with this next, second World War consider the same. During World War II, Lewis writes:

> I am chary of doing what my emotions prompt me to do every hour; i.e., identifying the enemy with the forces of evil. Surely one of the things we learn from history is that God never allows a human conflict to become unambiguously one between simple good and simple evil?[539]

In these lines, Lewis holds up the implicitly human tendency to identify their own cause as "good" and the enemy's as "evil." Lewis states directly that his own emotions trend "every hour" toward condemning the enemy as evil and implicitly acknowledges the difficulty of moderating his own emotional responses. Here, Lewis does not advocate for resistance of good/evil categorization on overtly theological grounds, but instead urges the audience to reject overly simplistic conclusions about the men on the other side of the fight because he finds such conclusions are historically and spiritually untrue. The distinction matters because it both recognizes the complexity inherent in war and combat-related moral injury while creating space in the moral healing process for seemingly contradictory perceptions to simultaneously be honored as true to the combatant's lived experience.

Lewis does provide a moment of laughter and shared humanity in a fictional illustration of the same sentiment when combatants meet in *Till We Have Faces*. There lead character Orual, a warrior queen and veteran of many fights, narrates:

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[538] MC, 119.

[539] Letter of 16 Apr 1940 to Dom Bede Griffiths, CL II, 391.

> I have seen something like this happen in a battle. A man was coming at me, I at him, to kill. Then came a sudden great gust of wind that wrapped our cloaks over our swords and almost over our eyes, so that we could do nothing to one another but must fight the wind itself. And that ridiculous contention, so foreign to the business we were on, set us both laughing, face to face – friends for a moment – and then at once enemies again and forever.[540]

Lewis seems to understand that harboring feelings of hatred, resentment, or similar toward the enemy can be damaging to the one who holds those emotions. Later in the work, Orual observes, "Something began to grow colder and harder inside me. And this also is like what I've known in wars: when that which was only *they* or the *enemy* all at once becomes the man, two feet away, who means to kill you."[541] Later still, Lewis writes of Orual's inner reflections during battle, "it was the strangest thing in the world to look upon him, a man like any other man, and think that one of us presently would kill the other. *Kill*; it seemed a word I'd never spoken before."[542] Through Orual, Lewis gives readers a glimpse of what happens when an idea planted in war becomes a gruesome reality. In Orual, all the ideas and words of war boil down to a person, right in front of her, who will either kill her or be killed by her. There are no other choices. Lewis publishes *Till We Have Faces* in 1956, nearly 40 years after he fights on the front in World War I. The span of time matters because it grants significance to the facets of war Lewis chooses to portray. These passages in TWHF are more than a hundred pages apart in the printed books of standard size readily available today. That means nearly 40 years after he presumably experiences it himself, Lewis finds the disconnect between idea and lived experience important enough to illustrate it twice in the same book. The words he chooses are 'they,' 'enemy,' and 'kill.' These are words that govern individual acknowledgement of a sense of humanity in the other, and how combatants bear the weight of extinguishing that humanity having seen it. Lewis makes no attempt to reconcile the two. In acknowledging the contradiction to be "the strangest thing in the world," however, Lewis creates space for something like the naming of trauma that Shay believes foundational to moral healing.

[540] TWHF, 298-9.
[541] TWHF, 138.
[542] TWHF, 248.

2.12 Lewis and sociocultural identity

If accepted that war culture is formative physically, emotionally, and mentally, by extension the same must be acknowledged as influential in how individuals choose their words, illustrate thoughts and ideas, and interact with each other and the world external to the military. Lewis sometimes calls the process a "hardening."[543] This hardening can make it difficult for combatants to reintegrate post-war into social structures that value "softer" codes of conduct, as English culture of his time certainly did. Lewis experiences sociocultural turmoil on numerous levels, including through shifting social categories with which he identifies as a result of his war-time experiences. Today it is increasingly hypothesized that combat-related moral injury may be strongly reflected in choices surrounding identity, making Lewis's story particularly poignant. Looking at Lewis through a sociocultural lens reveals a combatant who walks through great anxiety to healing, and therefore may be highly relatable to those struggling to feel connected to community after their own experience of war.

In England, Lewis experiences war as shaping social alienation in complex ways. The Great War sparked immense change in English society, within and external to the military. British historians like Charles Messenger and John Lewis-Sempel, among others, present in detail how staffing the British Army officer corps nearly entirely from public school men at the beginning of the war created a unique cultural environment, and in many ways influenced how war was waged.[544] Most specific to Lewis, as the years went by and the war lengthened, the character and content of the officer corps changed dramatically, from a professional class of soldiers in 1914 to an overwhelmingly civilian force by 1918. The working class obtained commissions in greater numbers; by 1918 approximately 40 percent of officers came from working- and lower-middle-class populations.[545] The cumulative effect meant a soldier like Lewis, who was fairly affluent and therefore in a privileged social position, now operated within the military in a flattened class structure that did not exist in the civilian world he will return to.

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[543] Lewis notes the effects of battle on many of his fictional characters, such as Lucy's observation of Peter after his army defeats the White Witch, fighting beside Aslan: "The next thing that Lucy knew was that Peter and Aslan were shaking hands. It was strange to her to see Peter looking as he looked now – his face was so pale and stern and he seemed so much older" (LWW, 178). Similar commentary is made about Prince Caspian, of whom it is observed soon after the begins to make battle plans that "he already began to harden" (PC, 84).

[544] See Holmes's *Tommy* and Lewis-Stempel's *Six Weeks* for thorough exploration.

[545] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 60.

The exposure was a strong contributor to post-war social isolation, known today to affect symptoms of moral injury, PTSD, or both. In Lewis's case, the complexity of his social experience may have contributed to his observations about commonalities in humanity that eventually leads to some of his theological beliefs.

Lewis's evolution of language over the course of the war reveals some of the changes wrought by immersion in the flattened military social structure. Lewis's pre-war letters tend to evaluate men by their intellectual interests, as evidenced by their literary tastes and what books they read. Lewis writes many times from 1913-1916, before he reports to military training, of the importance of "mixing with other gentlemen."[546] Lewis initially assesses his training unit entirely in terms of which "lot" they fall into – "jolly good chaps" pursuing commissions with "naïve conceptions of how gentlemen behave;" "cads and fools… [who] drop their h's spit on the stairs and talk about what they're going to do when they get to the front – where of course none of them has been;" and his "own set, the public school men and varsity men with all their faults and merits 'already ascertained'."[547] As Lewis's military training progresses, so too shift the social categories with which he identifies, perhaps because "It is when we are doing things together that friendship springs up – painting, sailing ships, praying, philosophizing, fighting shoulder to shoulder."[548] Lewis writes less and less of "gentlemen," instead introducing two academic colleagues not in uniform, who otherwise meet the "gentlemen" descriptor, with the caveat "of course they should both be serving."[549]

Lewis develops a lifelong tendency to make explicit associations between men he meets and their service records, or lack thereof. Lewis often directly translates his findings into assessments of their character to inverse correlation and his degree of pleasure at their company to positive. Over a span of many years, Lewis consistently notes in his diary when he meets men who also served, such as this entry: "At tea in his rooms, besides us three, were Coghill's younger brother (a subaltern, his guest)," also referred to as "the soldier brother."[550] Lewis notes a new acquaintance "is an American and has not been to the war." [551] Lewis later describes a

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[546] Letter of 7 Jun 1913 to his father, CL I, 23-24.

[547] Letter of 10 Jun 1917 to his father, CL I, 317.

[548] "Equality," PC, 11. Lewis elaborates on the philosophical development and tenets of friendship at greater length in *The Four Loves*.

[549] Letter of 10 Jun 1917 to his father, CL I, 318.

[550] Entry of February 9, 1923, AMR, 258-9.

[551] AMR, 339.

colleague's nervous habits as having "saved him from the war."[552] Of a friend headed to the Sudan, Lewis summarizes, "He has all the virtues of a regular subaltern, a country gentleman, and an aesthete, with the faults of none of them."[553] Lewis presents as a man increasingly socially isolated after the war, who seeks comfort in the company of those who also served and feels marked negative emotions toward men who did not serve. Lewis describes Hugo Dyson, for example, who would become an intimate friend and key figure in Lewis's conversion to Christianity, as "far from being a dilettante as anyone can be: a burly man, both in mind and body, with the stamp of the war on him, which begins to be a pleasing rarity, at any rate in civilian life."[554] In Lewis's description is suggestion that "the stamp of war" on Dyson might be an element that allows Lewis to feel relaxed in Dyson's presence, and perhaps contributes to Lewis's later willingness to consider Christianity as presented by Dyson.[555] In a striking change from his pre-war sentiments, Lewis departs the front believing "In a circle of true Friends each man is simply what he is: stands for nothing but himself. No one cares twopence about anyone else's family, profession, class, income, race, or previous history."[556]

The complexity of the post-war social experience is important in understanding the lived experience of combat-related moral injury. Lewis's own efforts to "find room" in post-war society result in a wide array of emotional experiences. Lewis speaks directly to the frequently frustrating failure of attempts by combatants to return to "civilized" society when he writes, "In the last war, we often found that the man who was 'invaluable in a show' was a man for whom in peacetime we could not easily find room except in Dartmoor."[557] Feelings of separateness pervade Lewis's daily life. On news of the Armistice, for example, Lewis reacts to the celebrations that break out around him:

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[552] AMR, 315.

[553] Entry of 16 Jun 1926, AMR, 553.

[554] Letter of 22 Nov 1931 to his brother, CL II, 16.

[555] The other key figure in the all-night conversation that Lewis credits with his conversion to Christianity is J.R.R. Tolkien, who fought for several years in World War I, including at the Somme.

[556] FL, 89.

[557] "The Necessity of Chivalry," PC, 3. Dartmoor is an area in southwest England, near Devon, today protected as a national park. The area's elevated landmass has made it the site of military actions and training for centuries, including establishment of permanent artillery ranges (http://dartmoor.gov.uk). Dartmoor is also home to Dartmoor Prison, built to house prisoners during the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812. The Dartmoor began housing violent British offenders in 1920 and did so throughout the decades Lewis lived and wrote (http://www.dartmoor-prison.co.uk).

> The man who can give way to mafficking at such a time is more than indecent – he is mad. I remember five of us at Keble, and I am the only survivor: I think of Mr. Sutton, a widower with five sons, all of whom have gone. One cannot help wondering why. Let us be silent and thankful.[558]

As post-war ceasefire takes hold, Lewis remarks:

> The town is expecting the news of the peace and preparing for it with all kinds of modern fireworks which 'make a noise exactly like a heavy shell'. I don't know that I am very fond of that kind of noise. Meanwhile they are starving and torturing in Russia and the Polish women are out digging trenches against Hindenburg's invasion. Should one laugh – or cry?[559]

Lewis's profound physical, emotional, and sociocultural discomfort are today considered hallmarks of moral injury, PTSD, or both. The sense of social disconnect is not limited to high occasions, such as the Armistice. Even seemingly casual social interaction can be shaped by a combatant's experience of war. Of an outing to bathe, for example, Lewis records:

> A beautiful bathe (water 63 degrees) but very crowded. Amid so much nudity I was interested to note the passing of my own generation: two years ago every second man had a wound mark, but I did not see one today.[560]

Sometimes the social disconnect borders on the absurd, such as Lewis experiences during a conversation with Foord-Kelsie, a gentleman with whom Lewis spends hours in a car during a day trip. Foord-Kelsie is a mutual acquaintance of both Lewis and his brother, Warnie, and they fall to talking of Warnie's then-station in China. Of that multi-hour conversation, this is the only part Lewis sees fit to record and share with his brother:

> … he pointed out that the combatants were firing at each other not at the Settlement. I replied that shells, once fired, didn't discriminate on whom they fell. To which he answered 'Oh but you know modern artillery is a wonderful thing.

[558] Letter of 17 Nov 1918 to his father, CL I, 416-417.
[559] Letter of 29 Jun 1919 to his father, CL I, 458.
[560] Entry of 23 May 1922, AMR, 52.

> They can place their shells with the greatest possible nicety.' This from him to me, considering our relative experience, is worthy of [our father] at his best.[561]

The reference to their father comes because the Lewis brothers often jest about what they see as their father's tendency to make ridiculous statements; they consider their father to often cut an absurd figure. Foord-Kelsie is apparently unaware that Lewis had been blown up and nearly killed during World War I by a British shell that fell short and did kill the man standing next to him.

Lewis's wartime experiences not only govern how he reacts to social situations, they alter Lewis's impression of others. For example, post-war Lewis writes of being disappointed in a former schoolmaster he had been previously impressed by. "Is it my own fault," Lewis wonders, "that so many of my own acquaintances I have run up against since leaving my shell at Bookham 'Please me now'?" He concludes, "I suppose these things are to be expected."[562] Lewis does seem taken aback, however, by the marked degree of social disconnect he feels, typified in experiences like his first forays into "civilized" society after being wounded and sent to hospital:

> I passed many a stuffy old couple whom I remembered well, though none of them recognized me. It was like being a ghost: I opened the door of Kirk's garden almost with stealth and went on past the house, to the vegetable garden and the little wild orchard with the pond, where I had sat so often on hot Saturday afternoons, and practised skating with Terry when the long frost began two years ago.[563]

The contrast between Lewis's pleasant memories and his post-war social status as "the ghost" calls to mind the poem "Spooks." Included in *Spirits in Bondage*, the piece was therefore either written or edited by Lewis about the same time as the letter shared above. In the poem, Lewis writes in first person of being a ghost and coming again to the house of a beloved "after long years of wandering and pain."[564] The poet stands "out beneath the drenching rain," unable to enter and unsure whether "some secret sin or old, unhappy anger" holds him apart. The poet suddenly realizes he is actually a "homeless wraith," "killed long since and lying dead." In light

[561] Letter of 20 Mar 1932 to Warnie, CL II, 61.
[562] Letter of 16 Feb 1918 to his father, CL I, 357.
[563] Letter of 20 June 1918 to his father, CL I, 385.
[564] "Spooks," SIB, line 3, 15.

of his new perspective, the "warmth and light" the poet longs to be part of in his "true love's house" transforms to realization that a lamp "burned within, a rosy light, and the wet street was shining in the rain."[565] Lewis never comments on his personal connection to "Spooks," and rarely on the personal import of *Spirits in Bondage* at all, but speculative connection seems warranted.

2.13 Lewis, his father, and Arthur Greeves

It is worth more closely considering how Lewis's intimate relationships are impacted by his war experience, as both a point of specific interest to Lewis scholarship and a means of illustrating the depth of relational isolation the experience of war can create. Changes in Lewis's relationships with his father, Arthur Lewis, and childhood best friend, Arthur Greeves, can be considered a foundational shift in how Lewis relates to the world and the people in it, a hallmark of combat-related moral injury. Though relational evolution does not explicitly validate moral injury, it does demonstrate the strength of combat's effect on Lewis. "A man who has been in another world does not come back unchanged," Lewis states simply. "When the man is a friend it may become painful: the old footing is not easy to recover."[566]

Lewis scholarship commonly espouses as the primary cause of tension in adult Lewis's relationship with his father Lewis's long-term relationship with Mrs. Moore, the mother of a fellow soldier with whom Lewis lives for many years. Looking at Lewis's life through the lens of combat-related moral injury, however, makes it clear military service and war-time experiences contribute heavily to the rift between Lewis and his father, and are perhaps an even stronger cause for division in their relationship. Lewis's father is quite against his son's decision to don a uniform, and also opposed the choice of Lewis's older brother, Warnie, to attend Sandhurst Military Academy and spend a career in the Army. Their father often mocks the Army and Army life, referring to any expenditure of talent to those ends as a "waste" of such magnitude it "made him sick to think of."[567] Over the course of the war, Lewis's communication

[565] "Spooks," SIB, 15.
[566] Per., 10.
[567] AMR, 219.

with his father dramatically declines. Lewis's letters to his father of that period are noteworthy for their brevity and slight tone of loneliness, with indirect appeal for parental support, as evidenced in passages like this one:

> Just another hurried line to tell you that I am still safe and well. We have had a fairly rough time, though we were not really in the thick of it. I have lost one or two of my best friends and in particular a fellow called Perrett who used to be at Malvern, and who got a bit in the eye. It is a long time since I heard from you.[568]

Arthur Lewis twice refuses his son's requests to visit him during the war, and the relational pain is pronounced. The first time, when Lewis ships to France from training with less than 48 hours' notice,[569] is a story of botched telegrams and hasty departures. The second instance, however, strikes the younger Lewis as much more deliberate. When wounded by a shell and sent to hospital for months of recuperation, Lewis repeatedly begs his father for a visit, a request well within the logistical and financial means of his father. Arthur Lewis simply never comes. After the war, Arthur Lewis records a significant fight between them in his diary, writing that Lewis "has one cause of complaint against me that I admit – that I did not visit him while he was in hospital."[570] Lewis also references the argument, penning in a letter to his father, "it would have been much easier for me to have left those things unsaid. They were as painful to me as they were for you."[571] Their relationship would not recover whatever degree of closeness it once held.

Perhaps the most pointed example of change in Lewis's pre- and post-war relationships is found in his friendship with Arthur Greeves. Lewis and Greeves grow up in the same area in Ireland and become friends over a shared passion for literature. Neither seemed to have other close friendships in their youth. They maintain consistent and frequent correspondence throughout Lewis's years in boarding school in England. Lewis credits Greeves with instilling in

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[568] Letter of 8 Apr 1918 to his father, CL I, 363.

[569] As Lewis-Stempel reports in *Six Weeks*, the journey from London to the French front could take four days or more. Some soldiers stood staunch in their assertion that the Channel crossing was one of the worst aspects of service, though good weather and a good ship could make for a pleasant crossing. Apart from overseas transport, the ordeal included lengthy and taxing rail travel "up the line" undertaken by any means the army found possible, including use of livestock cars, broken compartments, and similar (70-77).

[570] Arthur Lewis's diary is now part of the "Lewis Papers." This passage is included as a note in CL I, 462.

[571] Letter of 20 Oct 1919 to his father, CL I, 470.

him an appreciation of classic English novelists, saying Greeves influenced his literary tastes far more profoundly than the inverse.[572] More generally, Lewis points to Greeves as a source of teaching of the "Homely," delight in things right around, such as "ordinary vegetables that we destine to the pot."[573]

Greeves does not serve in World War I due to heart issues, though as an Irishman he was not required to. The evolving and dramatic differences in their life experiences strain the relationship between Lewis and Greeves immensely, at least from Lewis's point of view. Early in military training, Lewis's frustration is evident in increasingly terse sentences, such as closing a September 1917 letter to his father by instructing him to "tell Arthur I simply *can't* write."[574] Inherent is the insinuation that Greeves is writing Lewis, but Lewis is not writing him back. Lewis pointedly refers to himself in a letter to his closest childhood friend as a "slave," and to Greeves as a "freeman." "I hope that you, who have more time to yourself, will give me longer letters than you get," Lewis directs, "just as, when I get to the trenches, tho' I may not be able to write to you at all, I shall hope to hear from you at regular intervals. This may seem a one-sided bargain: yet surely it is fair, that when one of us has escaped and the other has got into this military nonsense, the freeman should make some allowances for the slave." [575]

Lewis writes Greeves less and less as his time at war progresses. When Lewis arrives at the front and does send letters, he vacillates between reminiscing about days gone by and seeming resentment of Greeves. In February 1918, for example, writing from a hospital bed where he is recovering from trench fever, Lewis tells Greeves, "you are lucky you know: it must be grand to look forward to an endless prospect of regular nights' sleep & comfortable chairs & good meals & books & everything decent & civilized."[576] Lewis writes Greeves not at all in the months directly around his combat wounding in April 1918; only letters from Lewis to his father survive from that period. When Lewis does pick up a pen, his words are sharp. "I think you are as much to be envied as anyone I know," Lewis tells his friend in August 1918, with his own return to the front thought to be eminent. "You live in comfort, surrounded by interests, in pleasant society, and are not a slave of the state and do not have the menace of France hanging

[572] SBJ, 186.
[573] SBJ, 193.
[574] Letter of 10 Sep 1917 to his father, CL I, 335.
[575] Letter of 10 Jun 1917 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 318-319.
[576] Letter of 2 Feb 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 353.

over your head… How many men to-day, living in holes and mud heaps, driven, hunted, terrified, verminous, starved for sleep, hopeless, would give their very souls to change places with you even for twenty-four hours."[577] Lewis strikes a softer note only a few months later, writing while still in hospital:

> But how I love to hear you say 'I came across so-and-so in a book this morning': it conjures up such visions of those old happy hours when I sat surrounded by my little library and browsed from book to book. You, who have never lost that life, cannot understand the longing with which I look back to it. I knew then that those were the good days, but I think now that I didn't prize them enough.[578]

Words like "lost" and "longing" hit at Lewis's depth of feeling. Lewis evidences a sense of mourning over his shifting relationship with Greeves, and awareness that it is changing. "Shall we ever be the same again?" Lewis asks. "To think of the things we've done… and now – well, umph. However, we may have good times yet, although I have been at a war… You talk about the days of our book-discussing as being far off, but indeed I think they're the only thing that has survived."[579] Though Lewis's friendship with Greeves continues for the remainder of their lives, it clearly bears marks of war. The relational distance, isolation, resentment, and frustration Lewis displays may resonate with other combatants struggling interpersonally post-war.

2.14 Lewis and books as a source of truth, beauty, and goodness

Lewis's relationship with books, a key component of his friendship with Greeves, also undergoes great change pre- and post- war in ways in keeping with modern conceptions of moral injury. While at first glance that statement may sound elitist, especially in Lewis's day, when having a large family library was a sign of fairly significant monetary means, it matters because tracing Lewis's evolving relationship with books demonstrates how combatants can experience something very much like moral injury in response to a shattered idea or concept. The "ought to

[577] Letter of 31 Aug 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 393-394.
[578] Letter of 3 Jun 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 377.
[579] Letter of 12 Feb 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 355.

be" can be damaged in any relationship, including with other people, sociocultural ideas, and/or the Divine.

To pre-war Lewis, books represent the intellectualism he considers hallmark of the best of humanity. Lewis heads to war deeply concerned about losing his mental prowess, a cornerstone of his personal identity, "amid all this damned military show,"[580] and jests that his primary concern is that he will "come back from the war a great empty-headed military prig!"[581] Throughout military training Lewis makes "every effort to cling to the old life of books, hoping that I may save my soul alive."[582] Lewis's use of the word "soul" is noteworthy, as is his positioning of the soul as something that must be "save[d]". The concurrent mention of books and soul, though of undetermined levity, is an interesting signpost to Lewis's later ideas of humanity and moral healing. To pre-war Lewis, books fill a spiritual role, bringing joy and holding an inherent promise of at least intellectual salvation.

The depth of Lewis's relationship with books meets the parameters of "combat-related moral injury." Before the Great War, books hold a prominent and well-articulated place in Lewis's life. After the death of his mother when he was a boy, Lewis recalls finding his only moments of joy in his family's seemingly vast treasure trove of books. When he begins attending boarding schools, Lewis seeks refuge from bullies in the school library, considered "off-limits" for hazing and antics. By the time he is 17 years old, then living and studying in the home of his strongly agnostic private tutor, Lewis chastises his dearest childhood friend for referring to books and music as "'only' books, music, etc., just as if these weren't the real things!"[583] By November of that year, having committed to joining the British Army when he comes of age, Lewis declares "even if music fails I still have books!"[584] The last statement suggests books are part of Lewis's plan for emotional self-preservation in the upcoming challenges of war.

The power to sustain that Lewis hopes will come from books quickly fades in the face of war. By February 1918, only a few months after his arrival in the trenches, Lewis calls efforts to enjoy books as he once did an increasingly "desperate" attempt to "keep in touch with a life beyond the one which we lead" as combatants.[585] In a personal letter, Lewis exhorts his best

[580] Letter of 10 Jun 1917 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 321.
[581] Letter of 10 Jun 1917 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 320.
[582] Letter of 22 Jul 1917 to his father, CL I, 328.
[583] Letter of 4 Jul 1916 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 205.
[584] Letter of 15 Nov 1916 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 253.
[585] Letter of 16 Feb 1918 to his father, CL I, 358.

friend to "not think I've lost the taste for all that life,"[586] and hopes that reading a copy of *Boswell Vol. II* he acquires in the trenches might "keep [him] in touch with all the quiet literary pleasant things in the world."[587] Several months later, having returned to the line, incurred grievous wounding, and been evacuated again to convalesce, thoughts of books are forefront on Lewis's mind. Lewis directs friend Arthur Greeves to the library in his childhood home in Ireland, to "go there frequently & see that [the books are] alright,"[588]though he asks little else of his friend. Four months later, still in hospital, Lewis laments feeling "that everything is dead… a sort of impossibility of getting on solidly with any serious book in the way we used to do."[589]

In the years immediately post-war, Lewis evidences dejection, anger, and frustration with books. These are all emotional experiences considered common in the perceived betrayal that can contribute to moral injury. By June 1922, Lewis notes he seems "almost to have lost the possessive love of books," and sells a number of volumes from his library.[590] Later that year, exhausted by weeks of caring for a family friend driven hysterical in part by wartime service as a medical officer, Lewis exclaims "isn't it a damned world – and we once thought we could be happy with books and music!"[591] Lewis speaks broadly about how books inform his perception of the world. "Once the world was full of books that seemed boring because they gave answers to questions one hadn't asked," he pines. "Every day I find one of these boring books to be really boring for the opposite reason – for failing to answer some question I have asked."[592]

As years pass, Lewis gradually looks for the significance he once placed in books in other places, including theology. In the process, Lewis finds books redeemed, concluding God "speaks also through Scripture, the Church, Christian friends, books, etc."[593] Considered in this light, changes in Lewis's relationship with books as a result of war might more accurately be described as an evolution or transformation, rather than a degradation characterized entirely by desperation and loss. To cite a micro-example, during a period in hospital for trench fever, for instance, Lewis reads a volume of Chesterton's essays, whom Lewis describes as making "an immediate

[586] Letter of 31 Dec 1917 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 449.
[587] Letter of 2 Feb 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 353.
[588] Letter of 23 May 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 372.
[589] Letter of 31 Aug 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 395.
[590] Entry of 23 Jun 1922, AMR, 72.
[591] Letter of 22 Apr 1923 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 606.
[592] Letter of 17 Jan 1932 to Warnie, CL II, 43-44.
[593] Letter of 20 Jun 1952 to Genia Goelz, CL III, 226.

conquest of me."[594] Lewis says he likes Chesterton "for his goodness," and later suggests reading Chesterton plants a seed for his later conversion to Christianity. "A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful in his reading,"[595] Lewis recalls. The anecdote is important because Lewis's evolving relationship with books demonstrates how perceived sources of loss or injury can be instrumental elements of the moral healing process.

2.15 Lewis, "The Doc," and *The Screwtape Letters*

Lewis's evolving willingness to face mental pain rather than suppress it is heavily influenced by his experience as caretaker of "Doc Askins," a man in the throes of "war neurasthenia." The episode takes place over several months in 1923, years after Lewis's own departure from the front and far from the guns of war.[596] The timing is significant, in that it demonstrates the earlier assertion that the war experience, and by extension moral injury and healing, is highly individualized and can be prolonged over time. In Lewis's case, mention of "The Doc" emerges in the narrative poem *Dymer* and the autobiographical *Surprised by Joy*. Details resonant with Lewis's descriptions of the Doc Askins episode reappear in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. And, perhaps most compellingly, it is during the Doc Askins episode that Lewis first records a language of choice – that is, conceptualizing a person not in control as a "patient" – he later leverages strongly in *The Screwtape Letters*,

Dr. John Hawkins Askins was the brother of Mrs. Moore, with whom Lewis set up house upon his return from World War I in 1918. By 1923, then, when these events occurred, Lewis has lived with Mrs. Moore and her daughter, Maureen, for several years.[597] Mrs. Moore's brother

[594] SBJ, 233.

[595] SBJ, 234.

[596] Letter of 22 Apr 1923 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 605.

[597] Lewis scholars and enthusiasts are likely familiar with at least the general outlines of Lewis's relationship with Mrs. Moore. Mrs. Moore is the mother of "Paddy" Moore, a young man Lewis befriends during officer training at Keble College, summer 1917. Prior to departure for the front, the young men are overheard by Paddy's sister, Maureen, to promise to care for one another's sole surviving parent – Lewis's father and Moore's mother – should either be killed in the war. Paddy was reported missing, presumed killed, in March 1918, though the news will not reach Lewis or Mrs. Moore for many months. Lewis sets up house with Mrs. Moore when he returns from the war in late 1918, remaining loyal to her until her death in 1951. Lewis's early letters allude to Mrs. Moore in romantic terms, though by the end of her life he refers to her as a mother; the nature of their relationship remains a topic of great speculation.

is a frequent visitor to the Lewis-Moore household, taking part in dinners, croquet, and other activities, and providing modest medical treatment to his sister for her various ailments. Lewis describes "The Doc" as "a man whom I had dearly loved, and well he deserved love,"[598] and as the "most unoffending, the gentlest, the most unselfish man imaginable."[599] Askins was commissioned a lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1915 and wounded in January 1917. It appears to be well known among family and friends that he struggled mentally after the war, devoting an increasing amount of professional and personal time and energy to psychoanalysis in his post-war years. On February 21st, 1923, Askins' gait and "abstracted talking" arouse his sister's concerns. Resultant of an unknown nexus, by February 23rd Askins succumbs to what Lewis calls a "sudden attack of war neurasthenia."[600] Lewis describes the events that follow in a letter:

> He was here for nearly three weeks, and endured awful mental tortures. Anyone who didn't know would have mistaken it for lunacy – we did at first: he had horrible maniacal fits – had to be held down. We were up two whole nights at the beginning and two, three, or four times a night afterwards, all the time.… After three weeks of Hell the Doc was admitted to a pensions hospital at Richmond: and at first we had hopeful accounts of him. But the poor man had worn his body out with these horrors. Quite suddenly heart failure set in and he died…tho to me the horrors he suffered here were much more heartrending than his death could ever be.[601]

Lewis provides additional detail in twenty-three printed pages in his diary from the time,[602] a staggering volume for a half-hearted diarist who otherwise has to be encouraged to put his pen to the task. In these pages Lewis recalls he was many times left alone with Askins, including during fits. Chloroform, injections of "some strong narcotic, not morphia, I forget what,"[603] and "Horlick's with a sleeping powder in it"[604] was used to control Askins. Lewis, often the only other man on the premises, physically restrains Askins on multiple occasions "at an enormous

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[598] SBJ, 248. Lewis also alludes to Askins as "a man whom I loved" in the preface to *Dymer*.
[599] AMR, 269.
[600] Letter of 22 Apr 1923 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 605.
[601] Letter of 22 Apr 1923 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 605-606.
[602] AMR, 269-292.
[603] AMR, 270.
[604] AMR, 275.

cost of will and muscle."[605] An ex-policeman is put on notice in case of escalated violence, "since next time… the Doc might decide to murder someone."[606]

The strain on Lewis during this period is enormous. Lewis records "getting frightfully nervy; never having seen madness before, I was afraid of every thought that came into my own head."[607] He begins to refer to his home as "this house of nightmare,"[608] and writes of "try[ing] hard to detach myself from the atmosphere in which we have now lived for what seems eternity."[609] On several occasions he takes a bus into the College where he works and studies to complete basic acts of hygiene, "our own lavatory being now inaccessible in the morning for fear of waking the Doc."[610] Lewis virtually abandons work and writing during this time, forced to confide in his superiors the reason he is missing assignments. Lewis says Wilson, his tutor, "was very sympathetic. He agreed with me about the absurd slowness of getting things done through the Ministry of Pensions and cited examples from his own experience."[611] Despite his tutor's sympathy, there is a negative professional impact on Lewis. Weeks later, Lewis relays Wilson "quite understood the position of course, but said that all this waste of time was a very serious thing for me."[612] From Miss Wardale, another tutor, Lewis records no response.[613] Attempts to work are described as ineffective, for "I was very sleepy and nervy and the noise of scenes going on upstairs was worse than if I had been in them."[614] Lewis says after one instance of being left alone with Askins, he tries to eat "tea and a little bread and butter: but went upstairs and was sick as soon as I had swallowed it."[615]

Lewis directly compares the level of stress in his home during the Doc Askins period to combat, confessing "I couldn't stick the dining room any longer and went and smoked cigarettes in the lobby upstairs for the windiest hour and a half I have spent except under fire,"[616] and

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[605] AMR, 278.
[606] AMR, 271.
[607] AMR, 271.
[608] AMR, 273.
[609] AMR, 276.
[610] Entry of 5 March, AMR. Lewis also notes "I went into College for necessary reasons after breakfast" in his entry of 9 March (289), and the same on 11 March.
[611] AMR, 275.
[612] AMR, 286.
[613] AMR, 276, 286.
[614] AMR, 280.
[615] AMR, 271.
[616] AMR, 284.

feeling "pretty bitter against [the Doc's brother] for… leaving us to hold the front line."[617] Ousted from his bedroom by the presence of additional people in the home, Lewis shares he is "up late and very sore from the sofa, to which I don't seem to get any more accustomed – as one rapidly did to much harder beds, in France, say."[618] Also as he did with Great War challenges, Lewis chooses not to disclose "the Askins trouble" to his father when he finally writes him, instead "account[ing] for my silence by a lie. I said I had had the flu – which I consider justifiable because I have been going through something very much worse."[619]As the days grind by, Lewis's frustration, anger, and exhaustion become increasingly apparent in his diary. Of the Doc's wife, also residing in the Lewis-Moore household during this time but of little to no help with her own husband, Lewis says "To be short, we must endure her for his sake: but, there's no two and sixpenny whore from a garrison town and no oily old gipsy woman who wouldn't be a more welcome guest."[620] The rough statement, with sentiments that would readily be deemed racist or sexist today, is worth noting as evidence of Lewis' level of emotional duress and as an example of how the coarseness of war culture can rise to the surface in times of stress.

Even at the height of his personal frustration and fatigue, Lewis emphasizes kindness in his dealings with Askins, in a manner that demonstrates how Lewis gives primacy to relationships between fellow veterans. Lewis criticizes Askins's brother, Rob, for being "very impatient with him and bullying rather than masterful, which only excites the poor fellow more."[621] Lewis writes with a high degree of emotion in these diary pages, saying "I had to hold his hands a good deal. Sometimes he talked quite sensibly for several minutes: expressed gratitude to us in a way that would break your heart."[622] Lewis also notes "speaking soothingly when he got scared."[623] A critic might say Lewis's level of empathy is unexpected; if so, perhaps Lewis's patience speaks to the level of understanding inherent between brothers in arms. Doc Askins' is not the only World War I veteran whose breakdown Lewis records, nor is the Doc the only sufferer to find shelter at the Lewis-Moore home. In 1922, Lewis's friend and decorated combat veteran Leo Baker suffers a "break down" of unrecorded cause and without articulated

[617] AMR, 287.
[618] AMR, 290.
[619] AMR, 299.
[620] AMR, 274.
[621] AMR, 291.
[622] AMR, 271.
[623] AMR, 272.

symptoms apart from a high temperature in the physical body. Baker spends a handful of days at home with Lewis, about which not many details are recorded.[624] The cumulative impression is one of Lewis as a man well acquainted with the inner effects of war, willing to support others and fully acknowledging that such support is often needed.

After several weeks, Lewis, Mrs. Moore, and the Doc's brother convene what Lewis calls "a council of war,"[625] during which they decide the best course of action is to pursue hospitalization for the Doc at a war hospital for neurasthenia. To do so, a pensions examiner needs to meet with Askins and confirm the root cause of his state is war-related. The pensions examine causes no little amount of stress for Lewis, because within their circle debate swirled surrounding root cause of Askin's state. "They concluded that it might possibly be mere hysteria, partly constitutional, partly from the war... the poor man thought that his syphilis had come awake and was going to drive him mad."[626] As Lewis explains, "if they ruled that the present trouble was syphilitic they would not only take him, but would cut his pension. And this was more likely to happen if they saw we were panicking to get him out of the house… our only hope was that [the examiner] would decide 'this man has had syphilis and is therefore liable to insanity: but his present trouble is neurasthenia induced by worrying about that possibility, and by the war.'"[627] It is unknown whether Askins actually had syphilis. Years later, Lewis would add a notation in his diary that reads "I am convinced that the whole story, like that of the syphilis and the hell complex, were all equally delusions."[628] Askins is ultimately accepted into treatment for war neurasthenia and leaves the Lewis-Moore household for a war pensions-run hospital on March 12, 1923. After no small administrative confusion, Lewis transports Askins "by the by, to Richmond in the end, and not to Henley."[629] After the Doc's departure, Lewis hypothesizes in his diary that "spiritualism, together with Yoga and undigested psychoanalysis seem to have hastened and emphasized the Doc's collapse. On the very first Friday [of his three weeks at the Lewis-Moore house] he said himself that [Leo] Baker had told him long ago he was a fool to have anything to do with them. I at any rate am scared off anything mystical and

[624] AMR, 73-79.
[625] AMR, 281.
[626] AMR, 271.
[627] AMR, 281.
[628] Footnote 32, AMR, 277. There editor Walter Hooper observes the note "appears to have been made some years after the text on which it comments."
[629] AMR, 290.

abnormal and hysterical for a long time to come."[630] Lewis's real-time consideration of how the Doc's spiritual beliefs may have contributed to his breakdown is important. Lewis was very much an atheist at the time, and though it will be many years before Lewis draws direct lines between theology and moral healing, the importance of choice as a vital element in well-being begins to develop during the Askins episode as connected in at least some way to spirituality.

A most interesting use of language emerges during these weeks in Lewis's letters and diary, as Lewis begins to refer to the Doc as "the patient," first in lower case and then as a proper noun – "the Patient."[631] Lewis enthusiasts will likely immediately call to mind one of Lewis's later works, *The Screwtape Letters*. Published serially in *The Guardian* in 1941 and as a book in 1942, *The Screwtape Letters* consists of thirty-one letters from a senior devil to an apprentice working to secure the soul of a certain human, referred to by the devils as "the patient." It is entirely possible the views of Hell Lewis presents in *The Screwtape Letters*, and the idea of painting someone afflicted by the tortures of hell as a "patient," is born somewhere in Lewis's mind during the weeks with Doc Askins. Only one other use of the term "the patient" readily appears in Lewis's pre-*Screwtape* writings, other than in the context of the Doc's breakdown. A decade after his weeks with the Doc, Lewis writes in *Out of the Silent Planet* that a horseman on a bolting horse differs from a landsman in a sinking ship in that "either may be killed, but the horseman is an agent as well as a patient."[632] The idea of a "patient" as a person not in control of outcomes in their own life, at the mercy of forces seen and unseen around them, bears clear line to Lewis's theology of choice and seems to solidify in those terms in the Doc Askins days.[633] There is also clear connection here to moral injury, particularly Shay's assertion that perceived loss of control is a critical consideration in occurrence of moral injury.

Less than a month after the Doc's admittance to the hospital, Lewis receives a letter announcing his death from heart failure. Lewis's reaction is in keeping with what is known today about "shutting down" as a recognized symptom of moral injury, PTSD, or both.[634] In response

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[630] Entry of 17 Mar 1923, AMR, 295.

[631] AMR, 288.

[632] OSP, 87.

[633] In addition to *The Screwtape Letters* and *Out of the Silent Planet*, Lewis employs the word "patient" in imagery connected to discussion of individual well-being in *Letters to Malcolm*, *Mere Christianity*, and *That Hideous Strength*, likely among others.

[634] Askins dies on 6 Apr 1923 (AMR, 305). Lewis receives a letter from Rob, Askins's brother, with the news on 7 Apr.

to the news, Lewis records only "I forget most of that day."[635] His diary entries for the following week are lumped together as a single note. Lewis shares fragmented details of the funeral, recording "Rob had remarked 'a ditch at the back of Ypres is better than this' – I think he was right." Following the funeral, Lewis notes "a period of laziness, depression, irritation and constant anxiety about the future during which I gave up my diary together with most other things." He calls this "the fidgety atmosphere I have got into,"[636] and remains erratic in his diary keeping in the months following. Lewis's emotions surrounding the weeks with the Doc influence his intellectual pursuits. "I read the whole of Santayana's article on Lucretius," Lewis shares. "In my present mood, still remembering the Doc, Santayana's almost aggressive sanity is very attractive, but I suspect it is but one more cul de sac."[637]

An interesting detail emerges during the Doc's funeral that Lewis later employs in his fiction. During the funeral, Lewis comments specifically on "wreaths and other grisly things – it is a natural idea of course, but why should lilies be spoilt forever by these associations?" Lilies are not "spoilt forever" – Lewis redeems them at least twice in Narnia. Once, a ship's crew sails into a sea of lilies as they near the edge of the world, on their search for Aslan's blessed country. "There seemed to be no end to the lilies," Lewis writes. "Day after day from all those miles and leagues of flowers there rose a smell which Lucy found it very hard to describe; sweet – yes, but not at all sleepy or overpowering, a fresh, wild, lonely smell that seemed to get into your brain and make you feel that you could go up mountains at a tun or wrestle with an elephant."[638] Later in the same book, the warrior character Reepicheep abandons his sword forever by flinging it "far away across the lilied sea."[639] Though impossible to prove, speculation connection seems warranted.

Lewis internalizes the events with Doc Askins as hyper personal. While lilies might have later been redeemed, during the chaos of the Doc Askins episode Lewis concludes "for

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[635] AMR, 305.

[636] AMR, 305-306.

[637] AMR, 299. George Santayana was a Spanish-American philosopher who lived and wrote during the early twentieth century (lived 1863 – 1952), making him a contemporary of Lewis's. Santayana was an atheist with a deep appreciation for the Catholic rituals he grew up with, who wrote widely on an array of topics and is generally considered a pragmatist.

[638] VDT, chapter 16, "The Very End of the World."

[639] VDT, 244. For an in-depth discussion of Reepicheep, see section five, "Open the Gates for Me: Reepicheep, and other conclusions that are beginnings."

painfulness I think this beats anything I've seen in my life."[640] Lewis admits "the worst thing I had to contend with was a sort of horrible sympathy with the Doc's yellings and grovellings – a cursed feeling that I could quite easily do it myself."[641] Decades later, Lewis expands the element of personal connection between himself and the Doc in his autobiography. There most of the detailed agonies of the weeks with Askins escape presentation, as does explicit mention of Askins's death. Because the dedicated subject of his autobiography is a telling of his spiritual journey over many decades, Lewis offers instead a concise summation to that end:

> It had been my chance to spend fourteen days, and most of fourteen nights as well, in close contact with a man who was going mad. He was a man whom I had dearly loved, and well he deserved love. And now I helped to hold him while he kicked and wallowed on the floor, screaming out that devils were tearing him and that he was that moment falling down into Hell. And this man, as I well knew, had not kept the beaten track. He had flirted with Theosophy, Yoga, Spiritualism, Psychoanalysis, what not? Probably these things had in fact no connection with his insanity, for which (I believe) there were physical causes. But it did not seem so to me at the time. I thought I had seen a warning; it was to this, this raving on the floor, that all romantic longings and unearthly speculations led a man in the end.[642]

Lewis also mentions Askins in his preface to the 1950 edition of *Dymer*, a long poem originally published in 1926 that, with the war-time book of poetry *Spirits in Bondage*, constitutes Lewis's primary writing before his conversion to Christianity. *Dymer* is particularly interesting for its compositional history, and how the timing of each draft aligns with Lewis's World War I experience. Lewis first worked on a draft in prose, 1916-1917, which does not survive. By 1918 he was attempting his story in poetic form as "The Redemption of Ask." In 1922 he began the version now known, completed in 1925 and published in 1926. In that late preface to *Dymer*, decades after the incident with Askins, Lewis says:

> … as far as I was anything, I was an idealist, and for an idealist all supernaturalisms were equally illusions, all 'spirits' merely symbols of 'Spirit' in the metaphysical sense, futile and dangerous if mistaken for facts…I was now quite sure that magic or spiritism of any kind was a fantasy and of all fantasies the

[640] AMR, 282.
[641] AMR, 271.
[642] SBJ, 248.

> worst. But this wholesome conviction had recently been inflamed into a violent antipathy. It had happened to me to see a man, and a man whom I loved, sink into screaming mania and finally into death under the influence, I believed, of spiritualism.[643]

Holding the two sets of descriptive material against each other – Lewis's "real time" diaries and letters of 1923 and his recollections of the 1950s - reveals clear lines from the Doc Askins episode to Lewis's evolving commitment to personal choice. Over time, Lewis directly attributes the Doc's state to his spiritual beliefs, and Lewis writes less and less of the place of war in the Doc's experience. The evolution signposts what will become Lewis's approach to moral healing.

2.16 Madness in Lewis's fiction

Whether inspired by the Doc, other events, or some combination thereof, Lewis will explore the "terror of madness"[644] as a consequence of losing control for a lifetime, most prominently in his fiction. Discussion of madness bubbles repeatedly into Lewis's Ransom Trilogy, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *Till We Have Faces* in ways that often resonate with the language of moral injury. Potentially as a result of his war-related experiences, Lewis comes to view the capacity for madness as something that exists within everyone, and can be controlled only through sustained personal choice.

Lewis's Ransom Trilogy paints a nuanced picture of the human psyche difficult to envision apart from personal experience, such as what Lewis went through with The Doc. The main character, Dr. Elwin Ransom, is said to be modeled after J.R.R. Tolkien, a fellow combatant-turned-professor and part of Lewis's close circle of friends, but bears noteworthy

[643] Lewis, "Preface" to the 1950 edition of *Dymer*, reprinted in Jerry Root's *Splendour in the Dark: C.S. Lewis's Dymer in his Life and Work*, with *Dymer: Wade Annotated Edition* annotations by David C. Downing (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 13.

[644] Per., 13.

resemblance to Lewis himself.[645] Published under the threat of and during World War II and set in a time of war, in these volumes Lewis writes of Ransom:

> He was quite aware of the danger of madness, and applied himself vigorously to his devotions and his toilet. Not that madness mattered much. Perhaps he was mad already, and not really on Malacandra but safe in bed in an English asylum. If only it might be so!... there his mind went playing the same trick again. He rose and began walking briskly away. The delusions recurred every few minutes… he learned to stand still mentally, as it were, and let them roll over his mind. It was no good bothering about them. When they were gone you could resume sanity again.[646]

Here Lewis depicts control as not the absence of delusions or mental confusion, but a choice and ability to prioritize and return to sanity. Lewis does not attach judgment to any who might feel mental turmoil, but instead frankly considers "the horrible surmise that those whom the rest call mad have, all along, been the only people who see the world as it really is."[647]

Lewis grants to other fictional characters the burden of self-control as protection against madness. Many years later, in *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis describes Orual's inner dialogue in lines like these: "So I set my wits against it and bestirred myself. Whatever happened I must watch and be sane."[648] Orual says "And, as well as I could, I locked a door in my mind. Unless I were to go mad I must put away all thoughts."[649] The theme of madness as an "either/or" question surfaces again in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In the first book written in the series, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Lucy's tale of wandering into Narnia is met with concern by her siblings, who posit "she seems to be either going queer in the head or else turning into a most frightful liar."[650] The Professor's immediate support of Lucy's sanity opens the children to an entire realm of possibility they would have lost, had they allowed their notions of madness to

[645] Though Lewis notes in the preface to *Perelandra* that "All the human characters in this book are purely fictitious and none of them is allegorical," he offers details about Ransom that seem to fly in the face of his claim, such as the revelation that Ransom is "a sedentary scholar with weak knees and a baddish wound from the last war" (124). Lewis does introduce a narrator named "Lewis" in the second volume of the trilogy, perhaps to quiet speculation about to what extent Dr. Ransom is an autobiographical sketch. Definitive conclusions, while enjoyable to speculate about, are of course impossible to reach.

[646] OSP, 53.

[647] Per., 12-14.

[648] TWHF, 193.

[649] TWHF, 208.

[650] LWW, 45.

interfere. "'Madness, you mean?' said the Professor quite coolly. 'Oh, you can make your minds easy about that. One has only to look at her and talk to her to see that she is not mad.'"[651] Elsewhere in the *Chronicles*, character Puddleglum bemoans the perceived fate of an English child adventuring in Narnia by saying "Ah, poor Pole. It's been too much for her, this last bit. Turned her head, I shouldn't wonder. She's beginning to see things."[652] Lewis's characters are aware of the possibility of madness, a facet difficult to imagine apart from Lewis's own experience. Lewis repeatedly grants them capacity and opportunity to choose how to react to perceived madness.

One fictional character warrants specific attention as an example of how Lewis melds lived experience and philosophical examination into imagery painted in the language of war and strongly suggestive of moral injury. In *Perelandra*, the Un-Man is a diabolical figure who inhabits the physical body of Weston, an intellectual exploiting science in the name of Nazi-ish ideas of human progress. Weston develops spaceships and takes to the galaxy, professing a desire to subjugate all planets to man. Weston justifies his motives by believing God and the devil "are both pictures of the same Force." Lewis tells readers Weston's conclusion, reminiscent of The Doc's, is "the most horrible mistake a man can fall into,"[653] because that mistake paves the way to much greater evil. Lewis extends the fictional conversation, asking Weston "How far does it go? Would you still obey the Life-Force if you found it prompting you to murder me?... Or to sell England to the Germans?"[654] Ultimately, these dualistic beliefs are what open Weston to be inhabited by demonic forces. The possession is not a clean break, however. Lewis allows the humanity in Weston to break through the Un-Man on occasion, offering vivid descriptions of changes in tone of voice and facial expression that recall his earlier descriptions of Doc Askins. Lewis's descriptions are often animalistic. "The body that had been Weston's threw up its head and opened its mouth and gave a long melancholy howl like a dog,"[655] Lewis writes, "and then it would end in the canine howl."[656] Animalism is an important part of Lewis's ideas of tripartite humanity and one he directly links to self-control, or lack thereof, as will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

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[651] LWW, 45-48.
[652] SC, 222.
[653] Per., 78-81.
[654] Per., 82.
[655] Per., 104.
[656] Per., 111.

Possessed by those forces, Weston-as-Un-Man tortures and kills a myriad of creatures on Perelandra. The first time Ransom comes across a severely, gruesomely wounded animal, a frog, his reaction is very much like how moral injury as conceptualized today. Ransom describes seeing something "dead or spoiled" as "like a blow in the face," capturing the emotional impact in physically visceral terms. Lewis continues, in words evocative of betrayal:

> It was like the first spasm of well-remembered pain warning a man who had thought he was cured that his family have deceived him and he is dying after all. It was like the first lie from the mouth of a friend on whose truth one was willing to stake a thousand pounds. It was irrevocable…[657]

Lewis's character experiences a permanent inner change, though he cannot articulate it. "He himself," Lewis writes, "in that same instant, had passed into a state of emotion which he could neither control nor understand."[658] The first emotive word Ransom does think of is "shame," a foundational experience of moral injury. Lewis writes:

> The thing was an intolerable obscenity which afflicted him with shame. It would have been better, or so he thought at that moment, for the whole universe never to have existed than for this one thing to have happened. Then he decided, in spite of his theoretical belief that it was an organism too low for much pain, that it had better be killed…. And when at last the mangled result was quite still and he went down to the water's edge to wash, he was sick and shaken. It seems odd to say this of a man who had been on the Somme; but the architects tell us that nothing is great or small save by position.[659]

Lewis's choice to end a passage evocative of moral injury with a direct mention of the Somme seems significant. So, too, seems Lewis's illustration of how killing can leave one "sick and shaken," even when the circumstances seem justified, to the point of merciful, and the individual perpetuating the act has prior experience with killing. In the end, exposure to morally injurious events reveals Lewis's character abandoning previously held beliefs about the lowliness of a particular type of creature in favor of universality of experience. Lewis also gives readers

[657] Per., 92.
[658] Per., 93.
[659] Per., 94.

"obscenity" of violence that creates shame by association, and a human willing to drive himself to physical sickness to carry out another obscene act he believes the best course of action in the moment. Finally, Lewis depicts Ransom as still susceptible to inner pain, unprotected from continued pain of killing, though perhaps tactically proficient at the task through previous exposure.

2.17 Summary

Taken together, Lewis's accounting of his experience of war and his fictional portrayals reveal Lewis to be a man who thinks deeply about mental anguish in a variety of ways, over a long period of time, from a place of deeply impactful lived experience, in the language of war. Lewis comes to focus on interconnectedness of pain and potential for healing, rather than granting primacy to any particular form or manifestation. All told, Lewis emerges as a man whose theology of choice, rooted on the importance of personal will in a tripartite humanity, exists as personal response that meets the parameters of moral injury and offers valuable insight for those considering combat-related moral injury from a chaplaincy care perspective.

3. Lewis's Tripartite Model of Humanity

"Men are different. They propound mathematical theorems in beleaguered cities, conduct metaphysical arguments in condemned cells, make jokes in scaffolds, discuss the last new poem while advancing to the walls of Quebec, and comb their hair at Thermopylae. This is not *panache*; it is our nature."[660]

- C.S. Lewis, October 1939

"People often talk as if the 'annihilation' of a soul were intrinsically possible. In all our experience, however, the destruction of one thing means the emergence of something else… To be a complete man means to have the passions obedient to the will and the will offered to God: to have been a man – to be an ex-man or 'damned ghost' – would presumably mean to consist of a will utterly centred in itself and passions utterly uncontrolled by the will."[661]

- C.S. Lewis, 'The Problem of Pain,' 1940

"Every time you make a choice you are turning that central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow-creatures, and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is heaven: that is, it is joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other."[662]

- C.S. Lewis, 1940s radio broadcast

[660] "Learning in War-Time," WG, 50. Preached at St. Mary the Virgin on 22 October 1939, at the invitation of leadership to help quiet the unrest in the Oxford student population as a result of World War II.

[661] PoP, 127-128.

[662] MC, 92.

If the premise that the experience of war is foundationally formative is accepted, then that same experience of war must be considered as holding some degree of explanatory power for the evolution of Lewis's theological beliefs throughout his post-war maturation into Christianity. Of particular interest to a study of moral injury and healing are Lewis's thoughts on what constitutes humanity, whether he considers that humanity something that can be altered or lost, and, if so, how to regain humanity and what language he uses to talk about the process. Lewis embraces a trichotomist model; that is, a view of man as made up of three parts, with soul and spirit two distinctly identifiable elements. Looking through the trichotomist lens Lewis holds up at questions surrounding combat-related moral injury and healing introduces a way to conceptualize both experiences that may be formative for healing.

Over time Lewis systematically develops a set of religious beliefs with ramifications for moral healing that are philosophical consistent, conforming to the Scripture Lewis believes, and in alignment with the Christian doctrine he defends. Lewis's tripartite conception of humanity assigns the function of making choices to a specific part, the spirit. Lewis sees man as mutable and illustrates man's choices in the opening quotation to this section as "slowly turning" the spirit "into a heavenly or hellish creature." The implication for moral injury is that while a combatant might encounter events that wound, or even cause events that wound, they can also make choices that heal. Choices made toward healing place a combatant "in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself," while failure to do so entrenches a person in a "state of war." This state of war is marked by "madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness," all recognized symptoms of moral injury that reoccur in Lewis's writing throughout his post-war life. Ultimately Lewis finds the conceptual language of theology uniquely suitable for approaching moral injury and healing.

3.1 Where theological anthropology meets moral injury

Ideas about what constitutes humanity, what happens when human beings act in ways that "imprison" their humanity, and how to set free and regain something thought bound or lost belong in the academic realm of theological anthropology. Theological anthropology can be thought of as pursuit of enhanced comprehension of the human experience and the meaning of

that experience in terms of man's relationship to the Divine. Theological anthropology takes as a basic conviction the assertion that the human person is fully understood only from a theological perspective. Explicitly Christian anthropology subordinates claims about humankind to claims about God; or, as theologian David Kelsey lays out, "the claims about human beings that are nonnegotiable for Christian faith are claims about how God relates to human beings. These claims are as follows: (a) God actively relates to human beings to create them, (b) to draw them into eschatological consummation, and (c) to reconcile them when they are alienated from God."[663]

Today there is a strong movement in modern scholarship to acknowledge humans as ensouled and better describe combat-related moral wounding in terms like "soul wound"[664] or "spiritual wounding." Secular scholars, theologians, and combat veterans increasingly agree that "the suffering of moral injury is grounded in the basic humanity of warriors,"[665] and the experience of war is something that "invades, wounds, and transforms our spirit."[666] "It is important for us to imagine a soul, even if we are not religious," says U.S. Marine Doug Anderson, "because its spaciousness allows for us life's imponderables."[667] In linking questions of soul and moral injury through theology, Lewis might be thought of as in company with modern writers such as Brian Powers, Brad Kelle, Rita Brock, Joseph MacDonald, Michael Yandell, and others. Lewis is noteworthy, however, for the depth of his inclusion of pre-modern theological texts and his personal perspective in approaching them. Some thinkers turn to the experience of moral injury to learn about the human soul. American Vietnam veteran Doug Anderson, for instance, points out "perhaps the strongest argument for [a soul's] existence is that you can damage it, imprison it. Lose it."[668] Others use theories of soul to better explain moral injury. American Brian Powers, for example, a theologian who fought in both Iraq and Afghanistan, contends:

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[663] Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence Vol. I*, 8.

[664] The term "soul wound" is most readily employed and associated with American researcher Rita Brock.

[665] Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini. *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), xvi. Brock, born in Japan, became the adopted daughter of an American World War II veteran as a young girl. She often shares that her interest in the field of moral injury began due to its practical implications on her family.

[666] Edward Tick, *War and the Soul: Healing our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2005), 1.

[667] Anderson, "Something like a Soul" in *Moral Injury: A Reader*, 134.

[668] Doug Anderson, "Something like a Soul" in *War and Moral Injury: A Reader*, 131-136.

> Suffocation of the soul can be viewed theologically as the suppression and distortion of the spirit of life: violence wounds one's ability to live in harmony with God, oneself, and others.[669]

Perhaps because he was an atheist during his time on the battlefield, Lewis seems to draw conclusions about humanity from his lived experience and observations, rather than interpreting his experience through pre-existing theological commitments. The distinction matters because from an apologetic standpoint, Lewis's earliest ideas about humanity and inner wounding conceptually emerge from philosophy and then proceed to theology over time, an approach that may resonate with sufferers reluctant to consider theological paths toward moral healing that begin with the assumed inerrancy of Scripture. This is the same Lewis, after all, who once roars at a friend during a philosophical debate in the years close to World War I, "You can't start with God. *I don't accept God!*"[670]

3.2 Lewis's place in theological history on bipartite-tripartite opposition

Before plumbing Lewis's views about humanity and holding them up as a lens through which to consider moral injury and healing, it is worth pausing to acknowledge ways in which his position(s) might be considered unique, even contentious, in theological history. Because Lewis did not extensively footnote his own writing and was renowned for the volume of reading he pursued, connections are sometimes a bit of excavation. While robust extrapolation of

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[669] Brian Powers, *Full Darkness: Original Sin, Moral Injury, and Wartime Violence* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 4.

[670] Leo Baker, "Near the Beginning" in *Remembering C.S. Lewis*, 66. Baker and Lewis met in 1919, both aged twenty-one, having "both seen active service as commissioned officers in France, been wounded, and had the subsequent experiences of operations and months in a hospital." Baker observes that Lewis's "fundamental atheism was a new experience," Lewis "profoundly distrusted [his] interest in mysticism," and "under the circumstances one can well be amazed that [their] friendship matured so quickly and was of such importance to Lewis as his letters show." Baker continues to note "for a considerable time I was his closest friend" (66-67). Of Baker, Lewis writes, "I hardly know how to describe him. He got a decoration in France for doing some work in an aeroplane over the lines under very deadly fire: but he maintains that he does nothing, for he was 'out of his body' and could see his own machine with 'someone' in it, 'roaring with laughter'. He has a bad heart. He was a conscientious objector, but went to the war 'because this degradation and sin might be just the very sacrifice which was demanded of him'." (Letter of 19 Jun 1920 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 495.) In his "Afterword" to the third edition of *The Pilgrim's Regress*, Lewis describes his religious journey as "from 'popular realism' to Philosophical Idealism; from Idealism to Pantheism; from Pantheism to Theism; and from Theism to Christianity," an evolution that takes place over more than a decade.

theological history exceeds the primary objective of this project, it is useful to place Lewis in at least a broader context.

There are three primary philosophical schools of thought about what constitutes humanity. A monistic or "unitary" position denies existence of soul or spirit as necessary for the human experience and establishes the brain as having explanatory power for any perception of soul or spirit in the individual experience. The monistic position is not an explicitly Christian one, nor is it considered by other religions, and was not endorsed by Lewis. A bipartite or "dichotomist" interpretation of humanity affirms that man is made of two parts, physical and other than physical; in a bipartite view, the terms "soul" and "spirit" are often used interchangeably to denote the immaterial element. The bipartite view is accepted by Islam with comparative consensus, but is debated in other religions. A tripartite interpretation concludes that humanity is comprised of three parts – body, soul, and spirit – and that soul and spirit are distinct, with unique ramifications for how humans relate to God, themselves, and others. Within both the bipartite and tripartite schools of thought are an array of ideas about how the parts of humanity relate to one another and, in an explicitly Christian view, how original sin impacts those internal relations and shapes the human experience, including how the material physical body does or does not reside in tension with the immaterial. Hinduism and Buddhism are in strongest resonance with the tripartite stance. Both Christian and Jewish communities continue to debate a bipartite and tripartite interpretation today.

In the Christian community, the debate over bipartite and tripartite models of humanity is largely secondary. Few theologians take a direct argument for one over the other, and those that do tend to do so as necessitated by a more pressing theological issue. The tripartite position can be generally considered orthodox, and was the prevalent stance of early Church fathers. Lewis's views are in keeping with thinkers like Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and others, as well as pre-Christian philosophers such as Plato. A trichotomist view of humanity was also embraced by the Gnostics, manichaeans, and apollinarians, whose heresies in other areas meant the wider swath of their beliefs became subjects of Church debates. In the fourth century, the trichotomist school gradually became discredited in favor of a bipartite position. The decline is often traced back to Apollinaris of Caesarea, whose eventual denial of the full and complete humanity of Christ (in that the human mind of Jesus of Nazareth was replaced by the divine Word) sparked a staunch backlash to his body of thought. Augustine, who

is widely considered to have upheld a bipartite position, may have done so as one extremely influential example of reaction to Apollinaris; Augustine's writings on the subject are somewhat mixed and remain a subject of scholarly debate. Roman Catholic writings most often cite the Eighth Council of Constantinople in 869 A.D. as a definitive rejection of tripartite interpretation.[671] Ludwig Ott's 1954 *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* declares trichotomism "incompatible with Church dogma." [672] Most recently, the subsection "Body and Soul but Truly One" in Pope John Paul II's modernization of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explicitly endorses a bipartite interpretation of humanity.[673]

The theological history of bipartite-tripartite opposition in Protestant Christianity is just that – one of opposition. During the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, rejection of trichotomy more fully emerged, influenced in no small part by the thirteenth century work of Thomas Aquinas, from whom many Reformers borrowed heavily. Other Reformation thinkers, such as Martin Luther, seem to leave room in their work for support of the trichotomist idea of human nature. The twenty-first century has seen the door open a bit toward trichotomy, especially in movements such as Pentacostalism, which favor a tripartite position. Others, such as the Lutheran Church, refuse to take a position, citing inherent mysteries of the Godhead. Despite debate, from the Reformation, onward, the bipartite position became the clear stance of the Protestant church, largely driven by Reformation-era desire to move away from what was perceived to be extra-Biblical mysticism.

Lewis's experience of war may hold explanatory power for his robust and voluminous writings on the nature of humanity. The time and place in which he lived are important to keep in mind, however, in considering how he may have come to his conclusions and why he felt compelled to devote time and energy to the theological topics that he did. Lewis was an Irishman who fought in the British Army at the turn of the twentieth century, which means he was not only immersed in a sociocultural environment wrestling with the role of religion and spirituality, his country of origin was embroiled in conflicts that often split down Catholic and Protestant lines. Lewis's language often reflects inner wrestling in a way that can be tricky for a modern reader to trace, and at times he seems inconsistent with himself. While Lewis's eventual

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Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Fort Collins, Co.: Roman Catholic Books, 1954), 97.
[672] Ibid., 96.
[673] Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 103-104.

conclusions about the nature of humanity place him in what is today a theological minority, his conclusions do reflect dedicated thought over a sustained period of time, which makes tracing those thoughts of value to a greater conversation about moral injury and healing. Ultimately, Lewis emerges in the spectrum of theological thinkers as not fully bound by tradition but not as free as Karl Barth or, after him, Jurgen Moltmann, whose work may be useful to future projects in bringing Lewis fully forward into modern dialogue.

3.3 Lewis on man in three parts

Lewis's writings on humanity both explicitly and implicitly emphasize internal and external unity and alignment. Choices made willingly with the spirit enliven the soul, the part of man intrinsically capable of relating to God, and are enacted through the physical body. Body, soul, and spirit can work in harmony or at odds. Misaligned, as Edward Tick offers in a resonant description, "the soul at war is characteristically distorted along all its essential functions."[674] Appropriately oriented, the three parts interact in a proportioned way, focusing man outward, toward others and the Divine.

Of particular importance in Lewis's theological commitments about humanity is his emphasis on individuality. To Lewis, choice is ultimately and always an "inside job" that reflects direct relationship with a personal Creator God. Lewis's strong focus on human ontology, specifically the relationship between body, soul, and spirit, may reflect the early twentieth century's widespread "turn toward the self" that prompted increased attention to questions about how and why humans are, and what they should be.[675] Lewis's ideas resonate strongly with theologians like nineteenth century German theologian Frederich Schleiermacher, whose work is foundational in the modern field of hermeneutics. It is difficult to imagine a scholar like Lewis having not read and studied Schleiermacher; translation of Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*, for example, was undertaken in 1924. Schleiermacher turns strongly to the self in conceiving of faith as what he calls "God-consciousness," and emphasizes the inherently individualistic

[674] Tick, *War*, 285.

[675] For in-depth discussion, see Marc Cortez's *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*.

relationship between created soul and Creator God.[676] But the "should" that seems to fascinate Lewis, whether or not inspired by Schleiermacher, is also synonymous with the "ought to be" of moral injury. Kelsey notes "'ought' implies 'can'."[677] This is all language strongly evocative of and readily linked to conversations about moral injury and healing, again affirming the utility of theological language in conceptualizing moral injury.

Lewis offers multiple illustrations of how the parts of man interact, most of which can be readily traced as inspired by the wide array of scholars he studied. Lewis's varied conceptualizations may prove helpful to moral injury practitioners seeking new ways to articulate inner pain. In *The Abolition of Man*, for example, transcribed from Lewis's appearances over three nights at the Riddell Memorial Lectures at Durham University in February 1943, Lewis says:

> The head rules the belly through the chest – the seat, as Alanus tells us, of Magnanimity, of emotions organized by trained habits into stable sentiments. The Chest-Magnanimity-Sentiment – these are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral man and visceral man. It may even be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal.[678]

The "Alanus" Lewis refers to is Alain de Lille, a twelfth-century French philosopher. Lewis liberally includes Alanus in his well-known study of medieval literature, *The Allegory of Love,* published in 1936, and in the collection of essays published in 1966, after his death, as *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Lewis is heavily critical of Alanus's writing style, calling him an "over-decorated writer,"[679] but shares with Alanus a mutual embrace of the tripartite notion of humanity.[680] Lewis extends conceptualization of tripartite humanity into his fiction. In *The Screwtape Letters*, for example, Lewis presents a senior devil mentoring an apprentice in how to corrupt the human soul. The senior devil says:

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[676] See Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, "Second Division: The Manner in which Fellowship with the Perfection and Blessedness of the Redeemer expresses itself in the Individual Soul," 476-524.

[677] Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence Vol I*, 87.

[678] AOM, 24-25.

[679] AOL, 132.

[680] Lewis disagrees with various theories of soul Alanus put forth over his lifetime, including segmentation of the soul into anywhere from two to seven faculties, or more. Lewis and Alanus do, however, share an affinity for the topic.

> Think of your man as a series of concentric circles, his will being the innermost, his intellect coming next, and finally his fantasy… It is only in so far as they reach the will and are there embodied in habits that the virtues are really fatal to [the devil]. I don't of course, mean what the patient mistakes for his will, the conscious fume and fret of resolutions and clenched teeth, but the real centre, what [God] calls the Heart.)[681]

Lewis may be here inspired by Stoic conceptualizations of circles of willing, perhaps more specifically by fragments from Hierocles, who envisions in concentric circles areas of responsibility toward the self, gods, family, and community.[682] In applying these classical ideas to inner pain, however, Lewis reaches for the language of war. When injury occurs, Lewis says, "reason and appetite must not be left facing one another across a no-man's-land. A trained sentiment of honour or chivalry must provide the 'mean' that unites them."[683] The term "no-man's land" is distinctly evocative of World War I. Whether Lewis employs war language because he is speaking to a World War-era audience, because that is the language in which he himself thinks, or some combination thereof, Lewis here in a single sentence brings the Platonic idea of a "mean" to a modern landscape in a deeply personal way that might resonate with readers suffering inner pain today. If it does resonate, then through Lewis the reader gains a bridge into an entire world of classical thought that may help and support them on a journey to moral healing.

Lewis is clear that he sees all experiences as having potential to heal or hurt, another Platonic idea readily traced through millennia of philosophers between them, including Aristotle, Socrates, and others, and one that appears in the Scriptures in the Pauline letters, among other places. Lewis speaks often of the body, mind, and lived experiences as "raw material," emphasizing that the spirit determines what is done with such material. "The deepest likings and impulses of any man are the raw material, the starting point,"[684] Lewis says. "However much you improve the man's raw material, you have still got something else: the real, free choice of the man. We see only the results which a man's choices make out of his raw material. But God

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[681] SL, 18.

[682] See Ralph Wedgwood's "Hierocles' Concentric Circles" in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, Volume LXII.*

[683] DI, 57-58.

[684] SL, 38.

does not judge him on the raw material at all, but on what he has done with it."[685] Lewis's summation is reminiscent of the "little marks on the soul" he sees as contributing to moral injury.[686] Lewis categorizes experiences large and detailed alike as "raw material." His refusal to grant significance to one over the other reinforces the previously presented position that events leading to moral injury may be impossible for third party observers to articulate. "Like most of the other things which humans are excited about," Lewis says, "such as health and sickness, age and youth, or war and peace, it is, from the point of view of the spiritual life, mainly raw material."[687] Lewis's conclusion carries within it the suggestion that there is inherent within humanity potential and capacity to make choices that transform harmful events into personally strengthening ones.

3.4 Lewis on the physical body

Lewis takes a dualistic view of the body and soul, believing them irrevocably mixed as part of divine creation, but distinct. In modern theological anthropological terms, Lewis might most closely be considered a "substance dualist" – as theologian Marc Cortez explains, someone who affirms "a form of dualism that presents a more 'holistic' understanding of human persons. These thinkers seek an ontology that maintains the basic commitments of substance dualism (i.e., two ontologically distinct substance that are conceivably separate) while still affirming the functional interdependence of the entire person."[688] Lewis affirms a model that acknowledges the potential of both physical body and soul to influence each other and the decisions the human as a total creature then makes. The practical implication here is that through Lewis's philosophical approach, both moral injury and moral healing can be conceptualized as processes that could be initiated equally credibly physically or immaterially, but which influence each other and the suffering individual as a cohesive whole.

[685] MC, 90-91.
[686] See section "Lewis on moral injury as an issue of soul" in "Lewis on Moral Injury."
[687] SL, 57.
[688] Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 73.

When human responses are initiated by the physical, Lewis sees the relationship between body and soul as one in which "the body teaches the soul."[689] Lewis acknowledges the strength of the body to influence the immaterial and encourages individuals to give appropriate attention to their physicality. Humans "constantly forget," Lewis writes, "that they are animals and that whatever their bodies do affects their souls."[690] Not all pulls from the physical body are as laden with philosophical or theological implication, however; Lewis recognizes how a pseudo-animalistic drive to survive can vigorously influence human action. "Having once tasted life," Lewis says, "we are subjected to the impulse of self-preservation. Life, in other words, is as habit-forming as cocaine."[691] Lewis's free link between humanity and animalism lays the foundation for his later ideas about how loss of humanity, including in combat scenarios, can be imagined as a devolution into animalism.

Lewis's body of work leaves the impression that Lewis is less interested in the physical body, than in philosophical questions of soul and spirit. Lewis does, however, articulate what seems to be his personal opinion in the somewhat jesting observation that:

> Man has held three views of his body. First there is that of those ascetic Pagans who called it the prison or the 'tomb' of the soul, and of Christians like Fisher to whom it was a 'sack of dung', food for worms, filthy, shameful, a source of nothing but temptation to bad men and humiliation to good ones. Then there are the Neo-Pagans (they seldom know Greek), the nudists and the sufferers from Dark Gods, to whom the body is glorious. But thirdly we have the view which St. Francis expressed by calling his body 'Brother Ass'. All three may be – I am not sure – defensible; but give me St Francis for my money.[692]

Lewis concludes by saying of this own body that "I have a kindly feeling for the old rattle-trap."[693] The fond sentiment, offered in a personal letter during the last years of Lewis's life, catches the attention of a reader who recalls Lewis's frustrations with his changed physical condition after incurring shell wounds during World War I, which impacted his physical capacity for the remainder of his life. While it is impossible to know whether Lewis's softening toward

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[689] LTM, 113.
[690] SL, 11.
[691] SBJ, 141.
[692] TFL, 129.
[693] Letter of 26 Nov 1962, LAL, 116.

his physical body can be attributed to graceful aging, reflective of increased inner peace as his spiritual maturation continues, or some combination thereof, Lewis's ultimately grateful tone for his physical body might be read as hopeful by combatants struggling today with combat-related moral injury, physical war wounding, or both.

In some of the last writing of his life, Lewis is distinctly theological in his observations of how the physical human body relates to the soul when he writes:

> The body ought to pray as well as the soul. Body and soul are both the better for it. Bless the body. Mind has led me into many scrapes, but I've led it into far more. If the imagination were obedient the appetites would give us very little trouble. And from how much it has saved me! And but for our body one whole realm of God's glory – all that we receive through the senses – would go unpraised. For the beasts can't appreciate it and the angels are, I suppose, pure intelligences. They *understand* colours and tastes better than our greatest scientists; but have they retinas or palates? I fancy the 'beauties of nature' are a secret God has shared with us alone. That may be one of the reasons why were made – and why the resurrection of the body is an important doctrine.[694]

Here Lewis is explicitly Christian in linking human physicality to concepts of natural theology, *imago Dei*, and physical resurrection of the body of Christ. In a letter from the same span of years, Lewis confirms in first-person language, "through [the physical body] God showed me that whole side of His beauty which is embodied in colour, sound, smell and size."[695] While Lewis gives clear intellectual and academic preference to exploring ideas of soul and spirit, he repeatedly affirms the physical experience of being human as a potential source of divine revelation. Lewis's assertion that the body can influence inner workings suggests that in Lewis's view both moral injury and moral healing may include significant physical components.

3.5 Lewis on soul

[694] LTM, 21.
[695] Letter of 26 Nov 1962, LAL, 116.

While the physicality of the human experience can be related to animals, Lewis is clear he affirms the human soul as unique among creation. Like many theologians before him, Lewis considers the soul to be the part of man with capacity to reason, an ability unique to man imbued by a Creator God who wishes man to use reason to see and draw closer to Him. In keeping with Lactantius, Gregory of Nyssa, Irenaeus, and others, Lewis directly links commentary on soul to what today is thought of as questions of consciousness or mind, and affirms the soul is the seat of specifically moral reasoning.[696] Given his scholastic pedigree and reputation for study, it is justifiable to presume Lewis read Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Making of Man*, arguably the best early discourse on the soul in this regard. In that work, Gregory asserts "that the form of man was framed to serve as an instrument for the use of reason"[697] and "that the soul proper, in fact and name, is the rational soul, while the others are called so equivocally: wherein also is this statement, that the power of the mind extends throughout the whole body in fitting contact with every part."[698] Gregory's assertions move directly into arguments about consciousness and *imago Dei*, again making his work a vitally important foundation for approaching Lewis. Taken together, the aforementioned aspects of soul also make the soul the seat of personal identity. *"What is a soul?*" Lewis writes in response to a reader's question in 1944. "I am. (This is the only possible answer: or expanded, 'A soul is that which can say I am')."[699]

A word about an opposing view - Lewis's assertion may bring to a reader's mind the position of Thomas Aquinas, who concludes "my soul is not me."[700] Lewis disagrees with Aquinas in significant enough ways, in sufficiently numerous areas that Lewis can be defensibly viewed as stopping short of embracing Thomism, or the theology of Aquinas and his followers.[701] Lewis describes himself as "a poor Thomist"[702] and a primary effect of Aquinas as "dig[ging] new chasms between God and the world, between human knowledge and reality,

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[696] See *The Divine Institutes* by Lactantius, Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, and Irenaeus's *On Humanity and the Image and Likeness of God*, among other works by these authors.

[697] Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, "Chapter Headings."

[698] Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, "Chapter Headings."

[699] Letter of 1950 to Mrs. Frank Jones, CL III, 32. The idea is a classical one - first century Greek philosopher Epictitus defined the soul as the 'me' at the center of the individual human experience (Tick, *War*, 17).

[700] Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings.* Selected and translated by Timothy McDermott. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

[701] For more, see Justin Buckley Dyer's and Micah Watson's *C. S. Lewis on Politics and the Natural Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 192.

[702] "Christianity and Culture," CR, 184.

between faith and reason."[703] While Lewis's relationship with Aquinas warrants further exploration, the key points to this project are that Lewis's departure from Thomas on the role of soul in the human experience represents theological consistency in Lewis's perspective, and constitutes an important theological stake in the ground that separates Lewis from some thinkers in other schools, including Thomists, on how to conceptualize the human soul.

Establishing the soul as the seat of identity, as Lewis does, has vital ramifications for moral injury and healing because to do so suggests that while the soul may incur pain, wounding, or harm, in a theological model an individual's identity is not in and of itself that pain, wounding, or harm. There is something else, something bigger, more wholistic, that the individual can choose to emphasize; that bigger thing is closer to who they are as created creatures, than what wounded them. Lewis presents the relationship between body and soul as existing at an inner "frontier," imagery that avoids the Gnostic condemnation of the physical body as evil but preserves capacity for the body and soul to be at odds. "God and Nature have come into a certain relation," Lewis writes. "They have, at the very least, a relation – almost, in one sense, a common frontier – in every human mind."[704] Lewis says at this "frontier" choices are made with potential to shape both reason and the physical body:

> The relations which arise at that frontier are indeed of a most complicated and intimate sort. That spearhead of the Supernatural which I call my reason links up with all my natural contents – my sensations, emotions, and the like – so completely that I call the mixture by a single word 'me'.[705]

Again the "frontier" emerges as a space where choices foundational to personal identity are made. Lewis also refers to this frontier as "the mysterious point of junction and separation where absolute being utters derivative being,"[706] a description implying that in consideration of identity, the primary function of this "frontier" space is opportunity for man to acknowledge his relationship with God. Though his theological conclusions about the soul follow millennia of precedent, Lewis's view of the nature of the relationship between body and soul – that is, whether body and/or soul are inherently good or evil and how they interact - evolves over time in

[703] AOL, 110.
[704] MIR, 48.
[705] MIR, 48.
[706] LTM, 67.

ways that may reflect the influence of his war-time experience. During World War I, while still an atheist, Lewis articulates a Gnostic-toned view that "out here, where I see spirit continually dodging matter (shells, bullets, animal fears, animal pains) I have formulated my equation Matter = Nature = Satan."[707]

While a mature Lewis goes on to spend years of his life and a hefty volume of writing in apologetic defense of Christianity against Naturalism, which could be viewed as a sort of philosophical progression from his Gnostic-toned war-time comments, he seems to wrestle with the nature of the relationship between body and soul for many years post-war. Works such as *Miracles*, in which Lewis anticipates an array of arguments for Naturalism, both demonstrate how Lewis works through arguments he sees as potentially convincing to varying degrees and seem to signal a level of familiarity with early Church writing by thinkers such as Irenaeus, Augustine, and others. Lewis, who regularly reads and teaches Plato throughout his academic life, circumvents some philosophical problems of mind-body dualism by conforming Plato's "Principle of the Triad" to treatment of humanity and human nature. Plato attests "it is impossible that two things only should be joined together without a third. There must be some bond in between both to bring them together."[708] Lewis sees the principle ever at work, especially in the medieval literature he loves, wherein people are "endlessly acting on their principle; supplying bridges, as it were, 'third things' – between reason and appetite, soul and body, king and commons."[709] In the model of humanity Lewis embraces the spirit is the third thing, with potential to unite or divide. To Lewis, compartmentalization can be dire. "Hell is a state of mind," Lewis says. "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."[710]

Should a man become shut up within their own mind, which can be thought of as one way to envision moral injury or PTSD, Lewis sees a way out. Lewis defines "consciousness" as capacity to both have experiences and be aware that one is having them, which means someone suffering is both aware of their experience and capable of changing it. As he teaches:

[707] Letter of 23 May 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 371.
[708] DI, 43, quoting *Timaeus* 31b-c.
[709] DI, 44.
[710] GD, 70.

> Suppose that three sensations follow one another – first A, then B, then C. When this happens to you, you have the experience of passing through the process ABC. But not what this implies. It implies that there is something in you which stands sufficiently outside A to notice A passing away, and sufficiently outside B to notice B now beginning and coming to fill the place which A has vacated; and something which recognises itself as the same through the transition from A to B and B to C, so it can say 'I have had the experience ABC.' Now this something is what I call Consciousness or Soul… The simplest experience of ABC as a succession demands a soul which is not itself a mere succession of states, but rather a permanent bed along which these different portions of the stream of sensation roll, and which recognises itself as the same beneath them all.[711]

Lewis continues to say that in man and man alone, is there "a 'self' or 'soul' or 'consciousness' standing above the sensations and organising them into an 'experience' as we do,"[712] language again reminiscent of Schleiermacher's writings on "God-consciousness." In other writings, Lewis attests "Matter enters our experience only by becoming sensation (when we perceive it) or conception (when we understand it). That is, by becoming soul."[713] The idea that the soul is the seat of meaning-making is an important one for moral healing. Lewis here embraces a premodern and pre-Reformation[714] theology in which, as Kelsey articulates, "grace was understood as a substance that is infused into subjects' creaturely substance and empowers them to do what they cannot otherwise do… God's grace is not fundamentally an instrument of remediation but a fresh creative act by God that has reality and value in its own right and is not simply a disposable instrument with mainly utilitarian value."[715] Kelsey's take creates space for an experience of moral healing so comprehensive and complete, it transcends the painful nuances of moral injury. At the same time, the temptation to approach God for healing a transactional undertaking is prohibited. A sufferer must choose to allow wholistic grace.

Lewis clarifies 'soul' as meaning "chiefly the imagination & emotions,"[716] and more specifically takes imagination to be a fruit of consciousness. Though Lewis embraces the Christian tenet that the consciousness of man is severely limited in its ability to comprehend

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[711] PoP, 133-135.

[712] PoP, 136.

[713] LTM, 165.

[714] During the Reformation, John Calvin notably re-interprets the nature of grace from an infused to imputed righteousness; see Chapter 17 in Calvin's *The Institutes*.

[715] Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence,* 91.

[716] Letter of 1944 to Mr. Lyell, CL 2, 632.

God, he gives primacy to imagination in the attempt to do so. "No one is more convinced than I that reason is utterly inadequate to the richness and spirituality of real things," Lewis writes:

> …Nor do I doubt the presence, even in us, of faculties embryonic or atrophied, that lie in an indefinite margin around the little finite bit of focus which is intelligence – faculties anticipating or remembering the possession of huge tracts of reality that slip through the meshes of the intellect. And, to be sure, I believe that the symbols presented by imagination at its height are the workings of that fringe and present to us as much of the super-intelligible reality as we can get while we retain our present form of consciousness.[717]

To Lewis, the soul makes man capable of organizing and envisioning experiences. Lewis sees imagination as a byproduct of consciousness, and one with important ramifications to moral healing. A combatant must be able to imagine a future of healing, to pursue it. After all, the soul constitutes consciousness's freedom from nature,[718] and "the assumption that things which have been conjoined in the past will always be conjoined in the future," Lewis writes, "is the guiding principle not of rational but of animal behaviors."[719]

3.6 Lewis on spirit

Lewis believes the human experience is marked by possession of a physical body and soul often experienced by an individual as warring and at odds; both can be affected by moral injury. Lewis sees a third part of man, the spirit, fulfilling a unifying function and capable of directing and shaping both body and soul; this is the part that must be engaged for moral healing. The spirit is empowered by God-given free will. As such, the spirit is the seat of potential to make moral change for better or worse; the spirit makes man mutable.[720] "By central self or spirit I mean chiefly the Will – the ultimate choosing part," Lewis says. "It changes itself by its

[717] Letter of 28 Oct 1926 to Cecil Harwood, CL 1, 670.
[718] Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence Vol I*, 92.
[719] MIR, 30.
[720] Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence Vol I*, 29.

own actions"[721] and is "capable of being good or evil, and of being regenerated."[722] While "regeneration" is a word that requires first breaking down the subject, it is an inherently promising one for moral healing.

In keeping with the Latin "spiritus," Greek "pneuma," and Hebrew "ruach," all of which have to do with breath, life, and wind, Lewis's illustrations of spirit evoke mental images of a diffusive something that pervades the entire being. Lewis defines "spirit" and the related "spiritual":

> 'Spiritual' is often used to mean simply the opposite of 'bodily' or 'material'. Thus all that is immaterial in man (emotions, passions, memory, etc.) is often called 'spiritual'…Immaterial things may, like material things, be good or bad or indifferent. Some people use 'spirit' to mean that relatively supernatural element which is given to every man at his creation – the rational element. That is, I think, the most useful way of employing the word. Here again it is important to realise that what is 'spiritual' is not necessarily good. A Spirit (in this sense) can be either the best or the worst of created things. It is because Man is (in this sense) a spiritual animal that he can become either a son of God or a devil.[723]

Here, Lewis links his definitions to personal choice, and immediately telescopes those choices out to broad theological questions of good and evil. Lewis presents spirit as granting capacity to man, through which man is free to make choices that can swing him from one end of the spectrum to another. Lewis also directly confronts a tendency to define terms only by their opposite, more commonly understood as the "apophatic tradition" or "negative revelation," that Kelsey considers common and problematic in premodern Christian anthropologies.[724]

Lewis grants the spirit sufficient firepower to control both body and rational mind, through spirit resolving at least some of the tension he sees as present at the inner "frontier." "Whenever we think rationally we are," Lewis says, "by direct spiritual power, forcing certain atoms in our brain and certain psychological tendencies in our natural soul to do what they would never have done if left to Nature."[725] The notion of "direct spiritual power" is an important one

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[721] Letter of 1944 to Mr. Lyell, CL 2, 632.
[722] Letter of 1944 to Mr. Lyell, CL 2, 632.
[723] MIR, 278-279.
[724] Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence Vol I*, 30.
[725] MIR, 205.

for moral healing. Extending Lewis's model means that both body and soul could potentially be unified, made whole, as a result of choices made through the spirit. "Forcing" is an action word. Lewis is Augustinian in his emphasis on action as the ultimate marker of moral success and indicative of internal spiritual health. "The peace of the rational soul," Augustine writes, "is the duly ordered agreement of cognition and action."[726] Lewis agrees, writing, "Let him do anything but act. No amount of piety in his imagination and affections will [have an impact if kept] out of his will."[727] Augustine, however, also concludes that man is not capable of ordering cognition and action absent divine re-orientation.[728] Again, over years Lewis follows suit, determining that in relationship to God man "must be an agent as well as a patient."[729] In some of the last writing of his life, Lewis says that while praying he is "asking that I may be enabled to do it. In the long run I am asking to be given 'the same mind which was also in Christ.'"[730]

Though to Lewis moral healing results of actionable choices, it is important to note that Lewis nowhere falls into the twentieth century existentialist camp that stresses decision and personal choice against a backdrop of a completely subjective human experience. Kelsey provides the following useful terms in his explanation of how the modern period has produced new types of analysis of self-relation:

> Where 'self-affirmation' seems to presuppose that one already knows what one really is and needs only to affirm it, and 'self-recognition' seems to presuppose that one does not initially know what one really is and needs to get some distance on oneself in order to recognize it, 'self-choosing' seems to presuppose that one is being presented with several possible ways of being a subject and one needs to decide which one to choose.[731]

Kelsey attributes the overarching philosophy to work by Soren Kierkegaard and/or some of Keirkegaard's pseudonymous authors; Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher who, like Lewis, emphasized the lived experience over the theoretical and the importance of choice. The distinction between different ways of relating to the self matters to moral injury and healing

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[726] Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIX, chapter 13.
[727] SL, 39.
[728] See Augustine's *On the Trinity* and "A Treatise on the Spirit and The Letter," among other writings.
[729] LTM, 33.
[730] LTM, 33.
[731] Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence Vol I*, 108.

because under the philosophical paradigm of self-affirmation, as Kelsey again summarizes, "a subject is a moral agent constituted by a self-relation that has the concrete form of an abiding dialectical conflict between the subject as nature and the subject as spirit… as spirit, a subject is capable of two types of freedom from nature's causal nexus: cognitive and moral."[732] Kelsey identifies the philosophical root of the dichotomy between subject as nature and subject as spirit as neo-Kantian, exemplified by the work of nineteenth-century theologian Albrecht Ritschl. Extrapolated to combat-related moral injury, self-affirmation holds explanatory power for moral injury and offers a path toward moral healing. Self-recognition may have some merits in evaluation of moral injury, but risks separating the physical and metaphysical selves in a way that only heightens symptoms of moral injury, PTSD, or both. Self-choosing may encompass the felt experience of moral injury sufferers at the height of distress, but offers no readily identifiable path toward moral healing. The Christian model Lewis embraces, which "self-affirms" a man's status as created creatures made for relationship with a loving god, is one appropriate to a discussion of both moral injury and moral healing.

Lewis's conceptualization of spirit has limitations when extrapolated to today. A logical extension of Lewis's chosen model of tripartite humanity, which views the ability to deliberately and rationally choose as foundational to human nature and humanity, is to ask whether Lewis believes individuals who lack such capacity due to neurobiological limitation are still considered possessing of full humanity. Combat veterans who have incurred significant physical injury, including but not limited to traumatic brain injury, could certainly fit into this category. Lewis does not address the topic explicitly, nor was the issue of personhood a prominent question of the intellectual landscape of his day. Lewis assumes in his philosophical scenarios and hypothetical illustrations subjects with full cognitive ability to reason. Nowhere, however, does Lewis imply that individuals lacking full biological cognition are in any way "less than." Lewis does write strongly and prolifically on the importance of human dignity and Christian love. It stands to reason Lewis would approach a conversation about personhood, including that of horrifically wounded and neurobiologically impaired combat veterans, from an inclusive theological perspective.

[732] Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence Vol I*, 86.

3.7 Lewis on physicalism, the Fall, and moral injury

In the twenty-first century there is a considerable effort in neuroscience to develop ways of thinking about the human person that do *not* involve presumption of an immaterial soul. Known as the "physicalist movement," many arguments in this space center around consciousness. Physicalists attempt to conclusively demonstrate that the idea of a soul is scientifically unnecessary to understanding consciousness, though the idea of souls may still be true and contribute to understanding not defensibly classified as scientific.[733] Physicalists often consider composition of the brain to hold explanatory potential for things like "soul." For example, the human brain is approximately 80% comprised of neocortex while the brains of, say, a chimpanzee contain about half as many cells as humans in the same area. Fish and amphibians lack a neocortex completely, and other creatures fall somewhere on the spectrum.[734] A physicalist would likely say the neocortex is where Lewis's "choosing part" lives as a biological function, rather than a theological act of free will with complex relational ramifications. The physicalist field, however, also widely acknowledges consciousness to be a mystery, including how human minds and hearts arrive at the moral judgments and experiences that they do. Physicalism does not hold explanatory power for moral injury or offers hope for moral healing.

Lewis anticipates movements such as physicalism in numerous writings and remains clear on his position:

> If Nature when fully known seems to teach us (that is, if the sciences teach us) that our own minds are chance arrangements of atoms, then there must have been some mistake; for if that were so, then the sciences themselves would be chance arrangements of atoms and we should have no reason for believing in them. There is only one way to avoid this deadlock… we must simply accept it that we are spirits, free and rational beings, at present inhabiting an irrational universe, and must draw the conclusion that *we are not derived from it*.[735]

[733] See *Neuroscience and the Soul: The Human Person in Philosophy, Science, and Theology*, edited by Thomas Crisp, Steven Porter, and Gregg Ten Elshof, for comprehensive treatment.

[734] Felipe Mora-Bermudez, et. al. "Differences and Similarities Between Human and Chimpanzee Neural Progenitors during Cerebral Cortex Development," in *eLife*, September 26, 2016. Doi:10.7554/eLife.18683.

[735] "On Living in an Atomic Age," WG, 99.

Lewis does not explicitly address the failure of physicalist ontology to account for lived experience, though his writings on the importance of finding out what something is *like* could be pressed into such a purpose.[736] Physicalism is criticized for its inability to account for what academia calls "phenomenal consciousness" – that is, as Marc Cortez defines, "the qualitative feel that we associate with certain mental experiences… there is something that it is like to experience the taste of an orange, the sight of a sunset, or the feeling of a headache. Although fruits, sunsets, and pains are all physical things, the experience of them does not seem to be so."[737] Physicalism is unable to account for the nature of experiences like war, moral injury, and moral healing.

Lewis briefly comments on human neurological function and development within his theological discussion of the Fall, where he provides a speculative overview of the changes inflicted upon man's cerebral and psychic capacity as a result of original sin. Lewis's view of physical change resulting from the Fall is one of many heavily debated theories about evolution from a Christian perspective. According to David Kelsey, the major theological anthropological themes surrounding original sin involve fallenness, a shared condition in which humans find themselves. This traditional analysis features being born into guilt and bondage as resulting conditions of original sin.[738] Both guilt and bondage are prominent themes in the moral injury and healing. To Lewis, the question of physical changes resultant of the fall matter because answers must hold explanatory power for a trichotomistic model of humanity. Lewis endorses evolution of a perfected "animal form" that preceded humans, with opposable thumbs, "jaws and teeth and throat capable of articulation, and a brain sufficiently complex to execute all the material motions whereby rational thought is incarnated." This creature becomes human when, "in the fullness of time, God caused to descend upon this organism, both on its psychology and physiology, a new kind of consciousness which could say 'I' and 'me', which could look upon itself as an object, which knew God, which could make judgments of truth, beauty, and goodness." God's gift of consciousness is not limited to the brain but "ruled and illuminated the whole organism, flooding every part of it with light." Paradisal man can identify truth, beauty, and goodness, which suggests the presence of or innate knowledge of their opposites and/or

[736] See the section "Combat, culture, and war as philosophical experience
[737] Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 83.
[738] Kelsey, *Eccentric*, 423-33.

perfected moral reasoning.[739]In Lewis's account, which is strongly resonant with his Austrian contemporary, Martin Buber, man as originally conceived by God is united in himself and with his Creator. Buber, himself strongly influenced by Kiergegaard, was renowned for his 1925 *I and Thou*, a philosophical work that presents human existence as a form of unceasing encounter incurring at all times in one of two forms: I-Thou or I-It. The former, I-Thou, is largely conceived of as the God relationship. I-Thou is possible in its full potential only when devoid of willing; an individual must be open and welcome, free of self-driven desires and motivations, and God will enter into relationship. In Buber's account, the perfect balance of the I-Thou relationship is not limited to the Divine, but can also occur when man interacts with others, with nature, and with spiritual beings. Achieving such a balance, however, does not necessarily come readily or is easily maintained by fallen man. Lewis says the power of self-control is one "the first man had in eminence. His organic processes obeyed the law of his own will, not the law of nature. His organs sent up appetites to the judgement seat of will not because they had to, but because he chose … The new consciousness had been made to repose in the Creator, and repose it did."[740] The notion of reposing in the Creator is strongly resonant of Buber's notion of I-Thou. It is reasonable to presume Lewis was familiar with his contemporary Buber's work, or that Buber and Lewis were influenced by some of the same sources; either way, the resonance is an interesting example of Lewis interacting with thinkers of his time.

Lewis describes the Fall of man as an ontological leap when a tripartite human nature emerges and presumably with it, potential for inner discord, misalignment, and moral injury. Lewis writes of the Fall:

> … up to that moment the human spirit had been in full control of the human organism… But its authority over the organism was a delegated authority which it lost when it ceased to be God's delegate… I doubt whether it would have been intrinsically possible for God to continue to rule the organism *through* the human spirit when the human spirit was in revolt against Him. At any rate He did not. He began to rule the organism in a more external way, not by the laws of spirit, but by those of nature… The process was not, I conceive, comparable to mere

[739] PoP, 72-73. Lewis explores what creatures who are "all consciousness" might be like through his fiction, with creation of the eldida of the Ransom Trilogy.

[740] PoP, 72-73.

> deterioration as it may now occur in a human individual; it was a loss of status as a *species*. What man lost by the Fall was his original specific nature.[741]

Lewis further describes post-fall man as experiencing "a radical alteration of his constitution, a disturbance of the relation between his component parts, and an internal perversion of one of them."[742] Augustine describes the Fall as the moment when the will turns from God, to the self, a commitment that resonates through Lewis's ideas about moral healing. From this "perversion" comes inner and outer conflict, including war and moral injury.

3.8 Lewis on animalism in combat and the berserker state

Epitomized by the image of humans acting without moral restraint, "animalism" refers to the physical violence that can occur when men subordinate characteristics distinctly attributed to humanity, such as the ability to reason and make moral judgments, to overwhelming biological sensations. Literary examples of combatants describing themselves and others as animals on the battlefield are seemingly endless. The theme of succumbing to animalism is one that first appears in Lewis's work during World War I and remains prominent throughout the nearly fifty years of writing that follow. During World War I, Lewis pronounces himself a "wolf" and refers to comrades in arms as "fellow-brutes that once were men."[743] Lewis also regularly employs imagery of rats and mice, describing animal fear, for example, as "the recoil of the organism from its destruction; the smothery feeling; the sense of being a rat in a trap."[744] Lewis is unique from others who write about war and animalism, however, in the intellectual and emotional

[741] PoP, 77-78.

[742] PoP, 79.

[743] "French Nocturne (Monchy-Le-Preux)," SIB, 7. Wolves are referenced in several poems in *Spirits in Bondage*, and are mentioned in *Present Concerns* and *Till We Have Faces*. Lewis uses a wolf as an instrument of destruction in *That Hideous Strength* and gives them a recurrent role in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, where wolves choose to play both good and evil parts in various books and scenes. Lewis also recalls a nightmare in which "a sheep and a wolf were caught together and the wolf was eating the sheep. The wolf then disappeared from my dream and one of my friends began to cut up the sheep which screamed like a human being but did not bleed. Afterwards we proceeded to eat it" (entry of 25 Apr 1923, AMR, 311). Lewis is in good classical company by envisioning wolves – as far back as Homer, readers see Achilles, too, refer to himself as a "wolf" in numerous passages.

[744] GO, 13. The "smothery feeling" is recurrent in Lewis's writing. For more, see the subsection "Lewis on PTSD."

attention he gives the imagery of animals during his post-war writing career. As his ideas develop over time, Lewis's beliefs about man's potential to devolve into an animal state through his own choices and actions link directly to his ideas about moral healing.

Lewis is clear animals are not inherently bad, and that man and animals share many things in common; here Lewis parallels Athanasius and Lactantius, among others.[745] "Nothing in Man is either worse or better for being shared with the beasts," Lewis articulates. "When we blame a man for being 'a mere animal', we mean not that he displays animal characteristics (we all do) but that he displays these, and only these, on occasions when the specifically human was demanded. (When we call him 'brutal' we usually mean that he commits cruelties impossible to most real brutes; they're not clever enough.)"[746] Lewis continues:

> If by saying that man rose from brutality you mean simply that man is physically descended from animals, I have no objection. But it does not follow that the further back you go the more *brutal* – in the sense of wicked or wretched – you will find man to be. No animal has moral virtue: but it is not true that all animal behavior is of the kind one should call 'wicked' if it were practised by men. On the contrary, not all animals treat other creatures of their own species as badly as men treat men. Not all are as gluttonous or lecherous as we, and no animal is ambitious.[747]

To act "like animals," then, to push aside rationality, causes pain through denial of primary identity as human beings with ability to reason and control. Though "as Christians we must believe… somewhere under [the] surface there lurks, however atrophied, a human soul,"[748] evidence of humanity can be obscured through wrong moral actions. Keeping the baser animal nature at bay is a constant undertaking of individual choice. In addition to the wolves of his wartime poetry, Lewis is still issuing caution about the animalistic potential of man in works as seemingly unrelated and far-flung as Narnia. There a boy literally turns into a dragon as a result of selfish greed and must be "undragoned" to regain his humanity.[749]

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[745] See Athanasius's *On the Incarnation*, for a translation of which Lewis wrote an introduction, and Lactantius's "On the Worksmanship of God, or the Formation of Man."

[746] TFL, 41.

[747] PoP, 67.

[748] "Religion and Rocketry," WLN, 90.

[749] VDT, 101.

Animalism as related to war takes a specific form, closely linked to ideas of control, or abandonment thereof. Loss of control can be involuntary and sudden, a sort of breaking in the face of complex, sustained, endlessly hammering stress; involuntary and cumulative, a gradual coarsening that complies over time; or willfully chosen, a giving in to brutality, chaos, and darkness. The ultimate loss of control in the context of war is the berserker state. "Going berserk," which also appears in literature as "baresark," denotes a seeming complete loss of control on the part of the warrior, who exhibits no regard for the biological safety of themselves or others. The term in a Norse one that most closely means "bare shirt," or to go into battle without armor. It is reasonable to assume the Northern-loving Lewis was exposed to the concept in literature before the war. The word "berserk" makes its way into his war-time poetry, where Lewis writes:

> For those decay; but not for that decays
> The yearning, high, rebellious spirit of man
> That never rested yet since life began
> From striving with red Nature and her ways.
>
> Now in the filth of war, the baresark shout
> Of battle, it is vexed. And yet so oft
> Out of the deeps, of old, it rose aloft
> That they who watch the ages may not doubt.[750]

In *Dymer*, which Lewis works on in various states over the years spanning before, during, and after World War I, ultimately publishing in 1926, Lewis writes of the protagonist:

> For nineteen years they worked upon his soul,
> Refining, chipping, moulding and adorning.
> Then came the moment that undid the whole –
> The ripple of rude life without a warning.[751]

Though Dymer the character is in a classroom, not on a battlefield, when his break occurs, the specificity of his age – nineteen years, the birthday on which Lewis arrives in France – and tone

[750] "Victory," SIB, lines 13-20.
[751] *Dymer*, Canto I, stanza 7.

of the passage is suggestive of the berserker state. Another character later says Dymer "went mad beneath his quiet face."[752]

A berserker state can lead to great feats of courage as well as catastrophic destruction. Should the outcome be the latter, potential for moral injury is increased because during a berserk state the combatant's identity as a human with rational control is seemingly lost. A 1991 study of American Vietnam veterans, for example, found among combatants who had killed a linear relationship between those who had killed while feeling out of control and later feelings of pervasive, intense guilt and suicidal ideation and action. No such relationship existed between those who killed while feeling in control.[753] Whether he personally experiences such loss of control or observes it in others, Lewis is familiar enough with the berserker state to write about it in scenes like this one, describing Orual's actions on two occasions in *Till We Have Faces*:

> One day Redival hit her. Then I hardly knew myself again till I found that I was astride of Redival, she on the ground with her face a lather of blood, and my hands about her throat.[754]

And,

> Nor did I ever do any notable deed with my own arm but once. That was in the war with Essur, when some of their horse came out of an ambush and Bardia, riding to his position, was surrounded all in a moment. Then I galloped in and hardly knew what I was doing till the matter was over, and they say I had killed seven men with my own strokes. (I was wounded that day.)[755]

The berserker state maintains a place in nearly all of Lewis's major works of fiction. In Narnia, a boy defends his traveling companion and two Talking Horses against a lion's attack while "half mad with horror… he had no weapon."[756] Lewis also specifically describes loss of control in battle:

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[752] *Dymer*, Canto IV, stanza 17.
[753] Hendon and Haas, "Suicide and Guilt," 589.
[754] TWHF, 30.
[755] TWHF, 258.
[756] HB, 144.

> When Tirian knew that the Horse was one of his own Narnians, there came over him and over Jewel such a rage that they did not know what they were doing. The King's sword went up, the Unicorn's horn went down. They rushed forward together. Next moment both the Calormenes lay dead, the one beheaded by Tirian's sword and the other gored through by Jewel's horn.[757]

Jonathan Shay, whose definition of moral injury is previously presented, devotes an entire chapter in his seminal work to the berserk state, exploring how triggers and characteristics have clinical importance in the study of combat-related pain. Shay identifies events most likely to drive combatants berserk as betrayal, insult, or humiliation by a leader; death of comrades; the experience of war wounding; being overrun, surrounded, or trapped; seeing the mutilated bodies of dead brothers-in-arms; and unexpected deliverance from perceived certain death.[758] Lewis's depictions of his characters losing control and elements of his personal story seem to mirror Shay's list. Lewis speaks specifically to the shame that can come after losing control, including in a fictional scene in Narnia. There, after the scene above in which they killed two Calormeres, King Tirian laments after "'To leap on them unawares, without defying them – while they were unarmed – faugh! We are two murderers, Jewel. I am dishonored forever.' Jewel dropped his head. He too was ashamed."[759] Despite his shame, Lewis depicts a Tirian who loses control on the battlefield again:

> When Tirian saw that brave Beast getting ready to fight for its life – and Calormene soldiers beginning to close in on him with their drawn scimitars – and no one going to its help – something seemed to burst inside him. He no longer cared if this was the best moment to interfere or not.[760]

While Lewis acknowledges the potential for going berserk in a wide array of characters, he in no way condones it. To the contrary, Lewis also consistently and repeatedly portrays individuals coming to the brink of abandon then making deliberate decisions and choices to regain their cognizance, including multiple scenes in each work featuring Ransom in the Ransom trilogy, Peter in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and Baria and Orual in *Till We Have Faces*. While

[757] LB, 27.
[758] Shay, *Achilles*, 80.
[759] LB, 30.
[760] LB, 128.

Lewis imparts these characters with self-control to a degree that may seem fantastical, his inclusion of both extremes underscores the importance he places on personal choice.

Implications of animalism for moral injury are more expansive than it may first appear. Acknowledgement that individuals can go berserk held wide sociocultural implications in a turn-of-the-twentieth century world. On the eve of World War I, the industrialized nations of Europe celebrated their shared conviction that scientific progress and mechanization would permanently evolve human society and over time, humans as creatures. When the guns went off and men became wolves, illusions of progress were shattered. Widespread disillusionment in government, community, and the Divine followed. "As sons of an age intoxicated with material, progress seemed to us perfection, the machine was the key to God-likeness," expounds German infantry soldier Ernst Jünger, who fought in the German trenches from the first day of World War I to the last. "But underneath that always polished and shining shell… we remained naked and raw like the men of the forest and the steppe. All this became clear when the war tore apart the communities of Europe… There, his instincts, too long curbed by society and its laws, became the only sacred thing and the last reason."[761] Being "naked and raw" is not confined to bullets flying in battlefield engagements. As late as the 9th of July on the eve of the Armistice, for example, Hart describes the German troops as "feeling like sheep driven to the slaughter. This was manifest in such signs as that they had ceased to trouble about burying or removing the dead, or digging latrines."[762] Lewis offers a simple summation about man's capacity to descend into animalism and the dangers thereof. "There may be two views about humans," he writes. "But there's no two views about things that look like humans and aren't… in general, take my advice, when you meet anything that's going to be human and isn't yet, or used to be human once and isn't now, or ought to be human and isn't, you keep your eyes on it and feel for your hatchet."[763]

[761] Ernst Jünger, *War as an Inner Experience*, 3. Or, as Julian Grenfall wrote from the Ypres trenches in 1914, killing is a means of "getting back to real things, bringing the elemental barbaric forces in ourselves into touch with the elemental barbaric forces of nature" (as quoted in *Six Weeks* by Lewis-Stempel, 105).

[762] Hart, *Thoughts*, 81-82.

[763] LWW, 82.

3.9 Summary

Establishing Lewis's trichotomist model of humanity, tracing his thoughts through decades of writing, and extending his conclusions to moral injury provides a functional way to conceptualize combat-related moral injury and healing. In the end, Lewis reminds students that "character is art, not nature – something that needs to be achieved, not something that can be relied upon to happen."[764] Over the course of many years Lewis ultimately concludes the Christian view is the only way to unite body, mind, and soul. Lewis finds Christianity takes "spirit" and "spiritual" to mean "the life which arises in such rational beings when they voluntarily surrender to Divine grace and become sons of the Heavenly Father in Christ."[765] "What we are talking about," expounds Lewis, "is not (as *soul* or *spirit* are) a part or element in Man but a redirection and revitalising of all the parts or elements… the regenerate life, the Christ that is formed in him, transforms every part of him: in it his spirit, soul and body will all be reborn."[766] To die to the self and be transformatively reborn is the path Lewis charts toward moral healing.

[764] "The Necessity of Chivalry," PC, 6.
[765] MIR, 279.
[766] MIR, 280.

4. Lewis on Moral Healing

"That is the picture – not of unmaking but of remaking."[767]

- C.S. Lewis, 'Miracles,' 1947

"The journey you go on is your pain, and perhaps your cure: for you must be either mad or brave before it is ended."[768]

- C.S. Lewis, 'Out of the Silent Planet,' 1938

[767] MIR, 244.
[768] OSP, 142.

Lewis is an example of how specific theological ideas about the nature of humanity can extend into combat-related moral healing in fruitful ways. Lewis, staunch advocate of a moral law and universally shared moral experiences, went to war asking the same questions many ask, mostly about what it means to be human and how to get back when men wonder if they still are. He comes to believe "the choosing part" of a tripartite human soul is that which should most concern combatants. Post-war, Lewis takes it as "*fact* that despair can capture and imprison a human soul,"[769] a conclusion that validates the intensity of moral injury. Man's "purity and peace [are] not… things settled and inevitable like the purity and peace of an animal," Lewis says. "[They are] alive and therefore breakable, a balance maintained by a mind and therefore, at least in theory, able to be lost."[770] Men must choose to orient themselves outward, toward other people and the Divine, if they wish to experience healing. Lewis reminds:

> In all of us God 'still' holds only a part. D-Day is only a week ago. The bite so far taken out of Normandy shows small on the map of Europe. The resistance is strong, the casualties heavy, and the event uncertain. There is, we have to admit, a line of demarcation between God's part in us and the enemy's region. But it is, we hope, a fighting line; not a frontier fixed by agreement.[771]

How Lewis grows from a rigid "treaty with reality," as he calls his initial attempt to keep his war in the tightly controlled place he thinks it belongs, to an integrated life of belief in Christ with "no treaty" is his story of healing. Making unceasing personal choices on his own individual "fighting line," including the choice to accept healing, is his story of living. Lewis's post-war writing career is an invitation to others to join the journey. Much of this invitation is couched in the language of imagination and presented through Lewis's fiction. To Lewis, philosophy has its limits, and in the end, all is choice. "The command, after all, was Take, eat: not Take, understand…. It is like taking a red coal out of the fire to examine it: it becomes a dead coal. To me, I mean. All this is autobiography, not theology."[772]

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[769] Letter of 29 Dec 1958 to Mrs. Hook, CL 3, 1026.
[770] Per., 59.
[771] LTM, 41-42.
[772] LTM, 141.

4.1 Lewis's "treaty with reality" and statements on "interference"

Tracing Lewis's use of the phrase "treaty with reality" throughout his work, along with the word "interference," which he often employs in conjunction, creates a primer of his personal journey of moral healing that may resonate with those suffering today. Over time, Lewis's singularly intellectual effort to establish a boundary between his outer experiences and inner impact gives way to wholistic recognition that for moral healing to occur, no such treaty can remain in place or even desired. Lewis here joins a long philosophical history of various categories of epistemology, or theories of knowledge. Epistemological discourse tends to center on how to delineate between truth and falsehood, and how man acquires knowledge. Lewis somewhat aligns with a noetic approach to understanding intellect. The term "noetic" was coined by philosopher American William James in the 1905 publication *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*,[773] and denotes indirect knowledge of universal truths through non-physical senses. While often embraced by atheists, noeticism can also be thought of as akin to Christian mysticism and plays a part in many theories of divine hiddenness. The concept also appears in thought pieces like John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, where he explores what he calls "sensitive knowledge," and Rene Descartes's '*Cogito Ergo Sum*' ("I think, therefore I am") from his 1637 *Discourse on Method*, among others.[774] Unique to Lewis, however, is the opportunity to trace his personal philosophical development from war through his post-war years. Studying Lewis creates something of a case study, which may be useful in applying these philosophical concepts in conceptualization of moral injury and healing in ways that resonate with suffering individuals today.

Lewis's first mention of his "treaty with reality" comes well in advance of his arrival at the western front. Once he decides to join the ranks of the British Army, in the months before he reports to training, Lewis records:

[773] The volume is a collection of lectures delivered by James during the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh, 1901-1902.

[774] See, respectively,

> I put the war on one side to a degree which some people will think shameful and some incredible. Others will call it a flight from reality. I maintain that it was rather a treaty with reality, the fixing of a frontier.[775]

In this passage, Lewis presupposes reality is something with which a treaty can be struck; that is, that reality can be fenced in, controlled, constrained. Lewis also implies the reality he expects to experience once he enters the war will be inherently painful. Though the nature and degree of pain are not elaborated upon, Lewis anticipates strife significantly enough to deliberately plan protection from it. Lewis's personal posture is distinctly related to a sense of control, a sentiment that fits into modern ideas about the interplay between perceived self-control and moral injury previously presented. Lewis does not explicitly address how well he perceives his "treaty" to stand up to the experience of war, but in the years immediately following those who knew him report Lewis often reacts defensively to attempts to bridge his self-created "treated with reality." A close friend says Lewis "lived in an enclosed world with rigid walls built by his logic and intelligence, and trespassers would be prosecuted."[776]

Lewis's determined clinging to his inner "treaty" gives rise to his employment of the word "interference" in conjunction with his memories of the years immediately following World War I. Lewis readily connects his experience, the word "interference," and conceptions of a Christianity he at that time resists when he later recalls in his autobiography:

> No word in my vocabulary expressed deeper hatred than the word *Interference*. But Christianity placed at the center what then seemed to me a transcendental Interferer. If its picture were true then no sort of 'treaty with reality' would ever be possible. There was no region even in the innermost depths of one's soul (nay, there least of all) which one could surround with a barbed wire fence… such, then, was my position: to care for almost nothing… and to believe in nothing but atoms and evolution and military service.[777]

The timing of this passage, penned in the 1950s, is significant. Decades after he becomes a Christian and as an established Christian apologist, a mature Lewis reflects back on his war-time experiences and settles upon the word "interference" to best describe his lived experience of

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[775] SBJ, 194.
[776] Baker, "Near the Beginning" in *Remembering*, 66.
[777] SBJ, 211-214.

relationship with the Divine. "Interference" means that Lewis perceived notions of Christianity as directly impacting his ability to preserve control. Again, the theme of control and whether to fight to retain it, or abandon control to a God who heals, takes a prominent place in Lewis's ideas of moral healing.

Part of the challenge in erecting a "treaty with reality" is that to do so requires determination of what constitutes reality, again bringing Lewis directly into the philosophical category of epistemology. Interactions here are considerations of the philosophical category of epistemology and how humans individually and collectively know things about the world and man's experience in it to be true. Lewis acknowledges the difficulty in *The Screwtape Letters*. There, senior devil Screwtape teaches his apprentice how to approach combatants exposed to violence and further the corruption of reality that is suggested to begin in war:

> It turns on making him *feel*, when he first sees human remains plastered on a wall, that this is 'what the world is *really* like' and that all his religion has been a fantasy. You will notice that we have got them completely fogged about the meaning of the word 'real.' They tell each other, of some great spiritual experience, 'All that *really* happened was that you heard some music in a lighted building'; here 'real' means the bare physical facts, separated from the other elements in the experience they actually had. On the other hand, they will also say 'It's all very well discussing that high dive as you sit here in an armchair, but wait till you get up there and see what it's *really* like': here 'real' is being used in the opposite sense to mean, not the physical facts (which they know already while discussing the matter in armchairs), but the emotional effect those facts will have on a human consciousness…our business is to keep the two going at once so that the emotional value of the word 'real' can be placed now on one side of the account, now on the other, as it happens to suit us… Your patient, properly handled, will have no difficulty in regarding his emotion at the sight of human entrails as a revelation of reality and his emotions at the sight of happy children or fair weather as mere sentiment.[778]

[778] SL, 89-90. Confusion between reality and "sentiment" is also a prominent theme in *Abolition of Man* and *That Hideous Strength*. Lewis does not directly mention seeing human remains plastered against a wall, though there is no reason to suspect the event lies outside his personal experience of war. In pure speculation, there may be a connection in this reference to Lewis's brother. Lewis's elder brother Warnie, a career soldier trained at Sandhurst who fights in World War I and World War II, writes their father that in walking the grounds of the Somme, "There was one particularly vivid picture which I shall never be able to forget – a boy asleep on a bank and the mess by his head was his brains." (As quoted by Don King in "Warnie at War (1914-1918)" in *VII: Journal of the Marion E.Wade Center*, 2018, Vol. 35 (2018), 87-110. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/48619575.

In this passage, Lewis plumbs the question of whether inner perceptions or outer physical ones constitute reality, an inquiry with personal implications for a man determining whether and how to preserve a "treaty with reality." Lewis's characters determine that inner and outer perceptions of reality can be at odds, and that the way to corrupt a human soul is to maintain the conviction they *are* at odds. Implicit in the dialogue is the conclusion that conjunction is inevitable, complete, and demanded, that the most truthful interpretation of reality acknowledges and unifies both inner and outer inputs. Lewis here plays with a standard trope in epistemological theory about propositional knowledge; that is, that idea knowledge must be justified true belief in order to be considered "real," as emerges in several of Plato's works and is later heavily discussed by Immanuel Kant.

Lewis allows themes of inner treaties and boundaries to permeate his fiction for years after writing *The Screwtape Letters*. Toward the end of his life, Lewis writes *Till We Have Faces*, a book he will later call one of his personal favorites. There Lewis presents his version of the tale of Cupid and Psyche, told from the point of view of Psyche's sister. "Psyche" is a word for "soul," specifically, the Koine Greek word often translated that way in the Septuagint and New Testament writings. The myth in its original form provides a conception of soul. Most noteworthy from a moral injury standpoint, however, is Lewis's choice to add elements that mirror his early struggle with control, inner frontiers, and personal choice. Lewis's story is one of hiding and of war, neither of which are elements in the original tale. Lewis gives Psyche a sister, Orual, a warrior queen. Like Lewis, Orual volunteers to be in the fighting positions in which she finds herself, and fights in many battles. Lewis crafts an Orual who gradually realizes and admits her selfish inner nature and role in causing pain to those around her. One night, Orual dons a veil in the face of her shame, describing the decision to mask as "a sort of treaty made with my ugliness."[779] "Treaty" is the same word Lewis employs to describe his original plan to endure World War I, and here he creates a direct link between treaties and shame. Orual's shame is another prominent theme in *Till We Have Faces*. Shame creates a direct barrier to Orual's happiness. The character is required to live in the weight of her shame and to acknowledge it, to

"Sandhurst," the popular name for the Royal Military College, was founded in 1801 as a British Army military academy for training infantry and calvary officers. Then in Buckinghamshire, in 1812 the College moved to Sandhurst, Berkshire.)

[779] TWHF, 205.

meet the gods without a mask, without a treaty, to finally experience relief. Elsewhere, Lewis concludes "Shame is like that. If you will accept it – if you will drink the cup to the bottom – you will find it very nourishing: but try to do anything else with it and it scalds."[780]

Lewis abandons his own mask slowly and over many years. He describes the journey as a spiritual and religious one directly linked to self-control, or abandonment thereof. "Every step I had taken, from the Absolute to 'Spirit' and from 'Spirit' to 'God'," says Lewis, "had been a step towards the more concrete, the more imminent, the more compulsive. At each step one had less chance 'to call one's soul one's own'."[781] He explains of his conversion to Theism in 1929 and the first night he prayed as an adult, "the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England":

> Total surrender, the absolute leap in the dark, was demanded. The reality with which no treaty could be made was upon me.[782]

"Treaty." "Reality." "Surrender." Lewis's relationship with these three words spans his earliest days in the military, through some of the latest writing of his life. Through these words, Lewis's shifting relationship with the triune Christian God mirror his journey of moral healing.

4.2 Lewis on the value of theological language

Lewis's linguistic precision is a hallmark of his work and another avenue through which he contributes to a modern study of moral injury. Lewis is a philologist and literary critic whose linguistic prowess offers an avenue of thinking about a persistent problem in the moral injury field – that is, the words chosen to describe it, the meaning ascribed those words, and how closely those words align with the lived experience of combat-related moral injury and healing. Lewis acknowledges that complex experiences like moral injury present a staggering challenge

[780] GD, 61.
[781] SBJ, 289.
[782] SBJ, 279.

to language, because "words are slow"[783] and "vague"[784] and "take too long."[785] Words also, however, have capacity to convey what something is *like*, the nature of an experience, because, as Lewis says, "you cannot use them without bringing in the whole atmosphere of the slum, the barrack-room, and the public school."[786] Articulating the nature of an experience that can separate and isolate, such as war, is a powerful first step toward healing connection.

Language is the space where numerous ideas about moral healing converge. Today it is known that language is among the first characteristics of humanity "lost" in the face of pain, giving rise to such phrases as "losing our tongues" or "speechless with horror." In the twenty-first century, psychiatrist Bessel Van der Kolk validated the turns of phrase with sufficient medical imaging and data to conclude "all trauma is preverbal."[787] Van der Kolk affirms, "trauma by nature drives us to the edge of comprehension, cutting us off from language based on common experience or an imaginable past."[788] As Van der Kolk notes, translation of experience in some way is therefore required simply to be able to talk about it. Lewis seems to agree, writing that sometimes, "the things I want to talk about have no vocabulary."[789] If words can be lost in the face of moral injury, it is logical to conclude that recovery of words holds potential to facilitate healing. This notion fits in neatly with approaches to moral healing that emphasize community and relational connection because the very purpose of words is connective. Implicit in the connective capability of words, however, is capacity of misuse to disconnect, isolate, and harm. Lewis illustrates the potential of words to be corrupted by morally injurious experiences when he muses, "I suspect that 'trench' was a delicious earthy word (like 'ditch'), before it was spoiled by the war associations."[790]

Long before becoming a Christian, Lewis affirms the utility of religious conceptual vocabulary in conversations about both moral injury and healing. Brian Powers describes the power of theological language as capacity to "explore and express the broken and violent realities of our world as well as how faith [can] speak softly – yet confidently – of real, tangible,

[783] Per., 33.
[784] Per., 30.
[785] THS, 316.
[786] "Prudery and Philology," PC, 115-6.
[787] Van der Kolk, *Body*, 43.
[788] Van der Kolk, *Body*, 43.
[789] "Hamlet: The Prince or the Poem?," SLE, 104.
[790] Letter of 3 Oct 1929 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 832.

and transformative hope in their midst."[791] Though it takes Lewis years to embrace the personal implications of Powers's assertion, the time and place Lewis lives in creates a high degree of comfort with theological language that might behoove modern studies of moral injury to emulate. The early twentieth century British army Lewis joins reflects a decidedly Christian social culture. Churches and theologians overwhelmingly support the Allies at war. Churchgoing is still considered a mark of middle-class respectability, even non-denominational courses teach Scripture in schools, and media publications are largely controlled by Christians and theistic in tone. The cumulative effect comes to be called "diffusive Christianity," what British historian Michael Snape describes as "an ethically based and non-dogmatic form of Christianity, one which derived its currency from a sense of religion's social utility and from an almost universal (if generally limited) measure of religious education."[792] Lewis relies heavily on the language of Scripture from his youth, reflective of a twentieth century English approach to education that prioritizes reading of classics and knowledge of Scripture as key to developing that ability. Lewis's original title for the war-time poems that became *Spirits in Bondage*, for instance, was *Spirits in Prison*, a reference to 1 Peter 3:19 a then-atheist Lewis says "seemed to give the old title its significance."[793] Though the set of poems in turns deny the Divine and rage against God for perceived ill nature, Lewis recognizes early that the Christian Scriptures offer a vehicle to describe his pain.

Lewis does not provide specific solutions about how to talk about moral injury or healing, though he does offer a caution against casual use of the word "trauma," a term readily employed in the moral injury field today and defined by Powers as "the psychic inability to make sense of [an] experience."[794] Lewis generally refrains from its use, save for one readily found comment in a non-fiction work that reinforces his distaste. "The others would get a *trauma* – Beelzebub, what a useful word! – by being left behind,"[795] senior devil Screwtape tells his

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[791] Powers, *Full Darkness*, xii.

[792] Michael Snape, *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 20-2.

[793] Letter of 18 October 1918 to his father, CL I, 409. Lewis changes the title from *Spirits in Prison* to *Spirits in Bondage* after his father reminds him of Robert Hitchens's 1908 book *Spirits in Prison* (see CL I, 399.). 1 Peter 3:18-20 reads: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

[794] Powers, *Full Darkness*, 3.

[795] "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," WLN, 69.

apprentice in Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*. The implicit caution of labeling as "traumatic" something that could come to be potentially considered morally formative, though extremely painful, is one to be mindful of in discussion of moral injury and healing. It is entirely plausible that a combatant may experience evolution of their memory of war and its associated implications over time as moral healing progresses, perhaps in ways significant enough to reduce resonance of the word "trauma" with how they now regard their experience. Lewis calls the process "the synthesis of change and continuity."[796] Lewis does not explicitly address so nuanced a point, save for his linguistic caution. There is no indication that Lewis would object to the phrases "injury" or "healing" as related to inner pain, so those terms are retained throughout this project to allow Lewis to intersect readily and clearly with modern thinkers.

4.3 Lewis on imagination as a substitute for language

While Lewis's letters, essays, and other non-fiction writing reveal much that pertains to a modern conversation about combat-related moral injury and healing, it is in his fiction that Lewis fully develops his theological conception of the lived experience of moral healing. To Lewis, imaginative capacity is part of man's nature with potential to engage his reason, body, and spirit. Imagination, then, is a vital part of a healing process that emphasizes inner unification, and might be considered a way to transcend limitations of language in so doing. The ability to discern the "ought to be" in oneself, others, and the world, the foundation of moral injury, can be considered an inherently imaginative pursuit. Edward Tick asserts war is part of moral injury, in that combat "reshapes the imagination as an agent of negation. To create weapons and plan strategies that conquer and kill, the imagination must be enlisted in life-destroying service."[797] Tick describes the path toward moral healing as one of "imaginal return,"[798] and Lewis concurs. Man is not "concerned with matter as such at all: with waves and atoms and all that," Lewis says. "What the soul cries out for is the resurrection of the senses."[799]

[796] "Hamlet: The Prince or the Poem?", SLE, 105.
[797] Tick, *War*, 21.
[798] Tick, *War*, 194.
[799] LTM, 163.

Lewis considers healing a fundamentally inquisitive pursuit, which can be thought of as a certain kind of imaginative employment. He sees potential in harnessed curiosity to silence fear. Concerning his lifelong fear of insects, for example, Lewis says "Much later, in my teens, from reading Lubbock's *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*, I developed for a short time a genuinely scientific interest in insects. Other studies soon crowded it out; but while my entomological period lasted my fear almost vanished, and I am inclined to think a real objective curiosity will usually have this cleansing effect."[800] The process of developing cleansing curiosity can be an enjoyable one. "Once you knew what inquiry was for," Lewis reminds. "There was a time when you asked questions because you wanted answers, and were glad when you had found them. Become that child again: even now."[801] To Lewis, the bottom line remains a fundamentally Christian one. "I do not think the resemblance between the Christian and the merely imaginative experience is accidental," he concludes. "I think that all things, in their way, reflect heavenly truth, the imagination not the least."[802]

Lewis sees longing for joy, no matter what the present condition, as the "real mark of a human."[803] This is an early idea and philosophical commitment. During World War I, Lewis writes:

> It is well that there are palaces of peace / And discipline and dreaming and desire, / Lest we forget our heritage and cease / The Spirit's work – to hunger and aspire; / Lest we forget that we were born divine, / Now tangled in red battle's animal net.[804]

Here Lewis suggests war can cause men to forget who, what, and how they are. Theologically, Lewis seems to be here in the realm of the *Imago Dei.* Lewis's thoughts about forgetting bear similarity to the way in which the reformers, most notably Calvin, argued that due to sin, man's God-likeness had been blotted out, such that it can scarcely be recognized within oneself or others. A way to become untangled from "red battle's animal net" may be to re-awaken the memory, to re-conceive, re-imagine. In another poem penned during World War I, Lewis writes:

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[800] SBJ, 8.
[801] GD, 41.
[802] SBJ, 206.
[803] "Talking about Bicycles," PC, 85.
[804] "Oxford," SIB, lines 1-6.

> … But only the strange power / Of unsought Beauty in some casual hour / Can build a bridge of light or sound or form / To lead you out of all this strife and storm / …. Out leaps a sudden beam of larger light / Into our souls. All things are seen aright.[805]

In employing the words "bridge" and "lead," Lewis illustrates how beauty can re-orient perspective in the immediate and present moment. His is a hopeful message, of light that enters the soul.

4.4 Lewis as literary critic, reading literature of war

Lewis's personal reaction to literature of war lends refinement to his own experience and validates his unique position among his contemporaries. Lewis believes literature fills a vital role in conveying lived experience that other academic disciplines do not. "It is possible to 'do History' for years without knowing at the end what it felt like to be an Anglo-Saxon *eorl*, a cavalier, an eighteenth-century country gentleman," says Lewis. "The gold behind the paper currency is to be found, almost exclusively, in literature."[806] Lewis freely admits, however, "We may have to ask whether literary criticism is itself an end or a means and, if a means, to what."[807] As pertains to literature of war, especially literary criticism of battlefield portrayals, Lewis's reaction to war literature is complex and seemingly quite personal. Curation of his thoughts better illuminates his own experience of war, adding a layer of nuance to the substantial body of modern scholarly work already in existence on Lewis and literary criticism while drawing bright, clear lines between war and Lewis's worldview.

In the 1946 essay "Talking about Bicycles," Lewis provides a vital window into how he thinks about classes of literature based on the authors' point of view. Lewis then directly applies those classes to how authors write about war. "Talking about Bicycles" records a conversation between a first-person narrator, presumably Lewis, and "a friend." In it, discussion about the four

[805] "Dungeon Grates," SIB, lines 17-24.

[806] "Is English Doomed?," PC, 27. In a footnote, Lewis clarifies he refers to "Sir Launcelot of the Arthurian Romances; Baron Bradwardine in Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly* (1814); Terrence Mulvaney is one of the three privates in Rudyard Kipling's *Soldiers Three* (1888)."

[807] "Is History Bunk?," PC, 134-135.

stages of enjoyment in bicycling is used as a platform to propose "four stages about nearly everything," given the names "the Unenchanted Age, the Enchanted Age, the Disenchanted Age, and the Re-enchanted Age." The speaker attempts to extend the argument to the experience of love for a woman, only to be reminded by the bachelor narrator that he cannot relate to a conversation about love of a wife. The friend responds thus:

> Let's take an example that may interest you more. Most of our juniors were brought up Unenchanted about war. The Unenchanted man sees (quite correctly) the waste and cruelty and sees nothing else. The Enchanted man is the Rupert Brooke or Philip Sydney state of mind – he's thinking of glory and battle-poetry and forlorn hopes and last stands and chivalry. Then comes the Disenchanted Age – say Siegfried Sassoon. But there is also a fourth stage, though very few people in modern England dare of talk about it. You know quite well what I mean. One is not in the least deceived: we remember the trenches too well. We know how much of the reality the romantic view left out. But we also know that heroism is a real thing, that all the plumes and flags and trumpets of the tradition were not there for nothing. They were an attempt to honour what is truly honourable: what was first perceived to be honourable precisely because everyone knew how horrible war is. And that's where this business of the Fourth Age is so important…[808]

If accepted the assumption that Lewis serves as narrator, this passage categorizes Lewis as a man who understands war, though not love, and is interested in conversation and philosophical thoughts about war. Use of the third person reveals that the "friend" in the story is also a Great War veteran who fought in the trenches. Conversation freely turns to some of the most well-known poets of World War I, through no overt prompting by the narrator – it seems readily accepted by both parties that the progression of poetry throughout the Great War illustrates something important about society's and soldiers' experience within that war. The friend continues to emphasize the importance of confirming a writer's perspective as part of evaluating the value of their insights:

> Isn't it immensely important to distinguish Unenchantment from Disenchantment – and Enchantment from Re-enchantment? In the poets, for instance. The war poetry of Homer or *The Battle of Maldon*, for example, is Re-enchantment. You

[808] "Talking about Bicycles," PC, 86-87.

> see in every line that the poet knows, quite as well as any modern, the horrible thing he is writing about… In the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, on the other hand, or in *Lepanto*… one is still enchanted: the poets obviously have no idea what a battle is like… Has the writer been through the Enchantment and come out on to the bleak highlands… if Disenchanted, he may have something worth hearing to say, though less than a Re-enchanted man. If Unenchanted, into the fire with his book. He is talking of what he doesn't understand.[809]

Here the friend emphasizes the importance of identifying between perspectives grounded in lived experience (Disenchantment and Re-enchantment) and perspectives whose reality is obscured by ideas without lived experience to modify them (Unenchantment and Enchantment). Lewis responds to the potential of books written by Unenchanted and Enchanted authors to sway public sentiment concerning war in unproductive ways. For instance, Lewis likes Englishman George Borrow's *Lavengro* but falls "most violently out of sympathy with the author at times – when he is loudly patriotic."[810] One of Lewis's students recalls, "He enormously enjoyed [Anglo-Irish author Jonathan] Swift's humor and thought his work fuller of real laughs than almost any other, but he thought Swift's antiwar pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies*, was disastrous, since it forced the government into making an ill-advised peace when it was on the brink of success."[811]

The theme of valuing authors whose presentation of war resonates with his own lived experience extends throughout Lewis's life. Lewis finds Homer and Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, who fought in the Crimean War at age 26, pass the test:

> Before I went to the last war I certainly expected that my life in the trenches would, in some mysterious sense, be all war. In fact, I found that the nearer you got to the front line the less everyone spoke and thought of the allied cause and the progress of the campaign; and I am pleased to find that Tolstoi, in the greatest war book ever written, records the same thing – and so, in its own way, does the *Iliad*.[812]

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[809] "Talking about Bicycles," PC, 87-8.

[810] Letter of 2 Feb 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 353.

[811] Derek Brewer, "The Tutor: A Portrait" in *Remembering C.S. Lewis*, 126.

[812] "Learning in War-Time," WG, 51-52. In an interesting aside, Siegried Sassoon also mentions Tolstoy, saying "the battle pictures help me a lot" (as quoted by Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 142).

The "greatest war book ever written" is, presumably, *War and Peace*. In this passage, Lewis seems to delight in writers who accurately capture the inner experience of war and how a combatant's views can shift and evolve, including how the experience of war validates or nullifies a combatant's pre-conceived notions of what war is *like*. While Lewis's remarks are an evaluation of the quality of a portrayal and he does not extend them directly to soldiers, the implication for moral injury and healing is that combatants suffering today might find in these authors the same kinship that Lewis seems to.

Lewis does not demand authors serve in war themselves to laud their portrayals of it, which could be interpreted as a nod to the universality of some elements of war to other experiences of human hardship. Lewis does, however, notice and praise what seems to be significant research on the part of such authors that allow them to write of war in an accurate way. Of William Thackery's *Vanity Fair*, for example, Lewis says "the Waterloo scenes are splendid. How wise of him to avoid the temptation of a battle chapter – and how he gives you the feeling of war by those two slight references to the firing, heard far off the first day and a little nearer the second day!"[813] Lewis likewise applauds Italian poet Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme* because "He knows something about fighting: his single combats read like the real thing, not like what I find in Spenser and Malory. He loves a good scientific swordsman."[814]

Specific to the war poetry of his World War I contemporaries, Lewis exhibits mixed reactions but is largely critical. Of one of the most notable names, Lewis calls "Siegfried Sassoon (a horrid man)" and says he had "a shock" when he saw *Counter-Attack*, Sassoon's most well-known body of war poems, "published by him at 2/6 in a red paper cover and horrid type."[815] It is unclear whether Lewis reacts negatively to Sassoon's writing style, subject matter that is openly critical of World War I, the graphic depictions found in many of Sassoon's poems, or some combination thereof. In "our own Kipling," who did not fight himself but loses a son during World War I, Lewis finds "the heroic qualities of his favorite subalterns are dangerously removed from meekness and urbanity"[816] that Lewis presumably found to be true of his own role as a subaltern. Not all is negative. Lewis reacts positively to most of Robert Nichols 1918 *Assault and other War Poems*. "The war poetry is, at least, no worse than the rest of its kind,"

[813] Letter of 4 Feb 1924 to his father, CL I, 618.
[814] Entry of 11 Oct 1923, AMR, 358.
[815] Letter of 6 Oct 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 403.
[816] "The Necessity of Chivalry," PC, 5.

Lewis says. "Nichols is very different from that great mass of modern poets, who copy the faults but not the merits of Rupert Brooke, and who are so intolerably clumsy and ugly in form."[817] Lewis continues to say, however, "how a man who wrote them could also write such howling gibberish as 'The Assault' must remain a mystery."[818]

Lewis's strong criticism of his contemporaries may strike a modern reader as noticeably more harsh than Lewis's criticism of authors writing of war from other time periods. Lewis acknowledges that his reaction to reading literature of war is deeply personal. "Any war book that is any good at all stirs up my [sympathy for the living] so much that I find it difficult – through the din – to discover what it is really like."[819] Of works that use war as a tool to make larger point, those works that are "much more than a war book," Lewis demands open philosophical conversation that extends the experience of war to greater themes. "My chief complaint is that [they stop] too soon," Lewis regularly laments, "without pulling the threads (the philosophical ones) together."[820] Lewis is sufficiently academically skilled to identify the need to separate his personal and professional reactions, but often presents them in tandem. In an excerpt from a letter to a friend, colleague, and fellow combatant about Arthur Hanbury-Sparrow's *The Land-Locked Lake*, for example, Lewis writes:

> There were places in the book where one felt the old hatred. Gr-r-r- [here Lewis writes in Greek a phrase from Aristophane's *Peace*, line 1172, that reads 'a commander hateful to the gods']. Still, he seems to share them himself. On the purely literary side, I think it good: vivid without the journalese that usually accompanies these vivid war books. Some of the battles are not very easy to visualize, but that is almost unavoidable: they are certainly easier than Blunden's. One really glorious bit is the description of the gusto he feels even for the filthy air and Stygian landscape of the front when expecting death: the preciousness of *matter* as such. I don't think that's been done before.[821]

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[817] Letter of 15 Oct 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 407.

[818] Letter of 6 Oct 1918 to Arthur Greeves, CL I, 403.

[819] Letter of 28 Mar 28 1933 letter to Owen Barfield, CL II, 104. In his original letter, Lewis uses a Greek word. The editor notes that of that word,"there is no true English equivalent. Essentially Lewis meant 'sympathy for the living'. More literally [the word] is a desire to encourage growth or nourishment."

[820] Letter of 28 Mar 1933 to Owen Barfield, CL II, 104.

[821] Letter of 28 Mar 1933 letter to Owen Barfield, CL II, 106.

Here Lewis reveals how deeply felt is his personal reaction to vivid literature of war – he, an expert in words, cannot find an adequate one in English.

The Battle of Maldon, an Old English poem of unknown date and authorship celebrating Viking victory over an Anglo-Saxon army in a late tenth century battle, emerges in Lewis's fiction in a way that hammers home how closely war and words are linked in Lewis's mind. Only fragments remain of the original poem; both beginning and end are lost. Lewis calls *The Battle* "ripping,"[822] "good stuff,"[823] and in several places in his diary of the early 1920s records working with the poem for academic purposes. As previously presented, this work meets Lewis's criteria for "Re-enchantment." By 1936, Lewis writes of lead character Dr. Ransom in the fictional *Perelandra*, second book in his space-set Ransom Trilogy:

> Once he was actually astride the enemy's chest, squeezing its throat with both hands and – he found to his surprise – shouting a line out of *The Battle of Maldon*.[824]

While the image is somewhat comical, in it are many themes of war previously presented – loss of control, the need to physically kill, surprise in one's own capacity and actions, and unexpectedly literary expression of what it might feel like, to wrap one's hands around an enemy's throat and squeeze.

As his theological beliefs evolve, Lewis finds himself increasingly drawn to "the most religious (Plato, Aeschylus, Virgil)" writers as "clearly those on whom I could really feed." Those whose writing "did not suffer from religion" increasingly appear "tinny" to Lewis. "There seemed to be no depth in them," Lewis says. "They were too simple. The roughness and density of life did not appear in their books."[825] Though Lewis presumably reads descriptions of war in literature for the remainder of his life, as it is difficult to imagine a career in academia without such being true, over time he seems to find "the roughness and density of life," including that of war, best captured in theology.

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[822] Entry of 27 Nov 1922, AMR, 192.
[823] Entry of 20 Apr 1923, AMR, 308.
[824] Per., 132.
[825] SBJ, 261.

4.5 Lewis's *Last Battle* as a case study of combat-related moral healing

Lewis's most well-developed illustration of what is today called moral injury and healing is found in *The Last Battle*, the final book in Lewis's seven-part *Chronicles of Narnia*. The book tells of a series of smaller engagements and actions that culminate in a massive conflict after which Narnia is destroyed, making it quite literally the last battle of Narnia. Lewis uses the book to present ideas of heaven, hell, and redemption; it is a story of false gods, betrayal, and the triumph of a loving Christ-figure lion. Key figures include King Tirian of Narnia, who leads a valiant and small group of soldiers against the Calormenes that includes past kings and queens of Narnia; an array of Talking Animals of Narnia; and a corrupted Ape named "Shift" and his donkey sidekick, Puzzle. The Narnians fight in the name of Aslan, a lion who serves as Christ figure through the *Chronicles*. The Calormenes worship Tash, a pagan god "much bigger than a man," with "a vulture's head and four arms," an "open beak," "blaz[ing] eyes," and a "croaking voice."[826]

As the first part of their offensive, the Calormenes employ trickery and deceit, in religion and in war, to systematically lure the people and creatures of Narnia away from redeeming belief in Aslan before physically attacking them to take over their lands. Lewis's close yoking of religion and war acknowledges how in the history of mankind, religion and war are often discernably and directly linked, and is evocative of periods such as the Crusades. Indeed, the Calormenes are often interpreted today as representing Islamic characters, and even criticized for what might be considered prejudiced character traits. To directly link the Calormenes to Islam seems to constitute looking at Lewis through a modern lens, as the Calormenes are polytheists, among other differences. It is most important for a discussion of moral injury and healing to recognize the "other-ness" of the Calormenes. This is an army physically, culturally, socially, and religiously different from the Narnians. Lewis's portrayal of the eventual salvation of a Calormene prince, then, is a strong theological statement of redemption. Whether Lewis intends

[826] LB, 150.

the Calormenes to represent Islam or not, these scenes may be read as intensely personal by modern American, British, and coalition veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The culminating engagement in *The Last Battle* could be taken as a case study of Lewis's experience of on moral pain and beliefs about moral healing, to anyone looking for a singular example of this project's major themes. Battlefield action begins because King Tirian loses control. Though Tirian has a battle plan, at seeing his enemy closing in on subjects in his kingdom, "something seemed to burst inside him. He no longer cared if this was the best moment to interfere or not."[827] Here the word "interfere," previously established as a signpost of Lewis's own journey of injury and healing, stands out. So, too, does the image of something "burst[ing] inside," a description that intimately captures what it might feel like to lose control. A dynamic link between the physical and immaterial is strongly illustrated, suggestive of some of Lewis's theological conclusions about the nature and composition of humanity. Action around Tirian is immediate and chaotic, with many things happening simultaneously, "quick as lightning."[828] One of Tirian's soldiers "could never remember what happened in the next two minutes. It was all like a dream (the sort you have when your temperature is over 100)." An enemy Calormene "lay dead at his own feet and he wondered if it was he who had killed it."[829] Others in Tirian's army remain "bewildered to the last."[830] In the midst of the killing and as the battle progresses, Lewis records Tirian and his compatriots as feeling "terribly alone."[831] The descriptors are reminiscent of the speed of action, confusion, fatigue, and emotional volatility Lewis recalls in his own experience of war. Interweaving of emotionally charged descriptors, however – especially words like "interfere," which holds special significance for Lewis, and "alone," a hallmark of his own post-combat experience – cause this scene to catch the attention of a reader looking to Lewis in the context of combat-related moral injury and healing. In the opening paragraphs of what becomes a lengthy scene in the book, Lewis immediately creates space for something more than simply the overwhelming experience of war. Readers do not yet know what will become of the "interference," if anything will change in this being "alone," but Lewis's choice to create space

[827] LB, 128.
[828] LB, 130.
[829] LB, 136.
[830] LB, 136.
[831] LB, 140.

for sentiments very much like moral injury and healing to possibly be created is significant, and signposts a section of writing worth paying attention to for the purposes of this project.

Despite their fears, Lewis's characters face imminent death squarely. During a lull in the action they find water, and "such was their thirst that it seemed the most delicious drink they had ever had in their lives, and while they were drinking they were perfectly happy."[832] The Calormenes wish to capture Tirian's soldiers and hurl them into a "grim door" as sacrifice to their pagan god. By this point in the battle, it is clear Tirian's band will be defeated by a vastly larger Calormene force. Tirian's soldiers remind each other that the door to death "may be for us the door to Aslan's country,"[833] a door to heaven. Their ability to remain cognitively and emotionally in the given moment keeps them focused on possible redemption through death.

When Tirian's soldiers are ultimately captured by the enemy and taken to the door of doom, Lewis clearly illustrates the power and importance of personal choice. King Tirian falls through the door locked in physical combat with a Calormene prince. The men go together through the door, but inside have dramatically different experiences. The bloodthirsty pagan god does exist, it is behind the door, and it does take men for its prize; it takes the enemy prince, wailing and shaking in terror.[834] Tirian, however, hears a voice "strong and calm as the summer sea."[835] Tirian sees Aslan, of whom he has previously only heard rumors, and "what he saw then set his heart beating as it had never beaten in any fight."[836] Lewis's comparative statement illustrates the magnitude of the glory Tirian experiences in the light of the one true Aslan, a light so strong it drives even the frantically beating heart of combat into obscurity.

Tirian is joined in Aslan's company by those who fought with him and have already suffered physical death. In Aslan's presence, Lewis describes "the blood and dust and sweat of a battle," with "face[s] all dirt and tears,"[837] as instantly replaced by feeling "fresh and cool and clean."[838] Aslan welcomes the characters into heaven, "And as He spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion," Lewis records, "but the things that began to happen after that were so great and

[832] LB, 146.
[833] LB, 146.
[834] LB, 150.
[835] LB, 150.
[836] LB, 152.
[837] LB, 152.
[838] LB, 153.

beautiful that I cannot write them."[839] As they journey closer to and with Aslan and all that is good, Lewis's characters continue to experience physical healing. Their battle-incurred wounds and injuries "had suddenly gone."[840] There feel no more fear. "Have you noticed one can't feel afraid," they exclaim to one another, "even if one wants to?"[841] Lewis refrains from offering more specific details, perhaps leaving it to the reader to imagine what Aslan-inspired healing might look and feel like to them. "You can't find out what it is like," Lewis writes, "unless you can get to that country and taste it for yourself."[842] His observation is an invitation. The invitation is accepted by characters Aslan redeems, including Puzzle the Donkey, an instrument of the downfall of Narnia whose shame at his actions nearly keeps him from approaching Aslan.

The soldiers who receive instant healing from Aslan chose to embrace Aslan during their earthly lives. But redemption in *The Last Battle* is not limited to the Narnians. Instead, Lewis repeatedly illustrates what happens when those who did not follow Aslan during their earthly lives are given another opportunity to choose to embrace him in a middle space after death. While the characters are physically dead, they are not aware of their deaths and retain the ability to make moral and spiritual choices. Aslan makes it clear that the task before them is just that, to choose to believe and follow.

One such character in the middle space is Emeth, a Calormene soldier who fought hard against the Narnians. To reduce individual resistance to fighting, Calormene leaders indoctrinated Emeth and his fellows in arms with the teaching that the Christ figure Aslan and the pagan god, Tash, are one. The teaching gives war the power of religion and religious conviction and recalls the widely shared impression of soldiers during World War I of misinformation leveraged to motivate men to arms. Lewis also presents the false god as a corruption of language; the Calormene leaders dub this falsehood "Tashlan." When Emeth reaches the middle realm, he sees Aslan, not Tash. Emeth seeks truth, asking if the Christ figure and the pagan god Tash are indeed one. The Lion "growl[s]so that the earth shook (but his wrath was not against me)" and says:

[839] LB, 210.
[840] LB, 158.
[841] LB, 199.
[842] LB, 157.

> It is false. Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath's sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him. And if any man do a cruelty in my name, then, though he says the name Aslan, it is Tash whom he serves and by Tash his deed is accepted. Does thou understand, Child?

Aslan makes it clear that this choice, whether to serve Aslan or Tash, is a binary one. Emeth cannot choose both; in Lewis's Christian portrayal, neither can any seeking moral healing. Emeth replies:

> Lord, thou knowest how much I understand. But I said also (for the truth constrained me), Yet I have been seeking Tash all my days.[843]

Aslan responds to Emeth's veritable confession of sin with a message of sweeping redemption. "Unless thy desire had been for me," Aslan replies, "thou wouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek."[844]

Lewis's presentation could be received as controversial; a critic might say Emeth's worship of a false god is at odds with Scripture and an instance of Lewis incorporating pagan ideas into his theological beliefs. In response, it is worth noting that Lewis gives readers an Emeth who, upon first meeting of the true Aslan, acknowledges him as Lord, and that Aslan does function as a Christ figure in Narnia. Lewis's model of eschatological redemption in this scene might call to mind German Roman Catholic theologian Karl Rahner's ideas about "anonymous Christians." Rahner was born in 1904 and wrote voluminously until his death at age 80, making him a contemporary of Lewis's. Rahner attests "everyone who follows his or her conscience and is true to it – even when believing oneself an atheist or belonging to another Christian Church or to another great culture-religion – is and remains – if we said, if one does not sin mortally against one's own conscience – encompassed by the salvation of the one, eternal God, whose absolute

[843] LB, 189.
[844] LB, 189.

promise for me has come in Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen one."[845] This so-called "anonymous Christian" concept was during Lewis's time and remains controversial among Christian theologians. Proponents of "anonymous Christianity" might point to Romans 1:20,[846] which acknowledges potential for divine revelation apart from Scripture. Detractors attest that "anonymous Christianity" denies the Christian requirement for belief in Christ among those who have been directly exposed to Christ and still choose to follow other culture-religions. The implication for moral injury is that Lewis remains uncompromising in his emphasis on personal choice.

Lewis seems to incorporate commitments by both camps, illustrating an Emeth capable of redemption through a theological stance reminiscent of Rahner's, but creating an Emeth who must clearly and immediately choose Christ upon encountering Aslan. In so doing, Lewis comes into interesting interaction with the ideas of another contemporary, Karl Barth. Barth was a Swiss theologian born a few years earlier than Lewis, in the 1880s, who died in the 1960s, as did Lewis. Barth was a theological giant who influenced generations of thinkers after him and published widely, so it is reasonable to presume Lewis was familiar with his work. Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, a planned five-part cannon whose published four parts span millions of words and thousands of pages, constitutes one of the largest works of systematic theology in the world today. In it, Barth orients all theological discussion around Christ. Barth's ideas about election are complex and nuanced, but of relevance to the topic of this project, Barth upholds God's mercy as paramount in salvation; attests that God is revealed to humanity as an act of might and grace on the part of God, not through man's intuition or will; and asserts that revelation of God comes to man in the person of Jesus Christ. Grace extended to all is a dominant theme in Barth's writing that extends through his other theological conclusions, and one that Lewis also embraces.

In Emeth, Lewis seems to strike a middle ground between Rahner and Barth that opens a pathway to salvation to individuals of varied earthly experiences but preserves the necessity of Christ as the locus of revelation and salvation. Though Lewis clearly resonates, or at least is in

[845] Karl Rahner, Interview with Leonhard Reinisch for Radio Bayern, Munich, 29 Apr 1982, *Karl Rahner in Dialogue*, 338.

[846] Romans 1:20 reads, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

conversation with, other thinkers, his mechanism for bringing Emeth to a point of choice is uniquely war-linked. Emeth is given opportunity to meet the Lord only because he first chooses to fight as a soldier; that is how Emeth dies. Despite his initial status as an "enemy" to the heroes of the story, redemption comes for Emeth as a result of his participation in battle. Fighting, even dying, is for Emeth the path to God.

Lewis offers the same opportunity for redemptive choice to other characters. The dwarves, for example, are a group of characters who throughout *The Last Battle* attempt to sabotage both sides and take Narnia for themselves. When they find themselves through the door, the dwarves are able to perceive only darkness. They experience a different sensory reality than the Narnians, evocative of Lewis's previously explored remarks about how the physical and spiritual bodies influence one another; the dwarves find themselves unable to take in sights or smells beyond the very literal comprehension of their minds. Lewis records that even Aslan cannot help the dwarves, because the dwarves will not "let" Aslan or any other help them. Given the option to accept redeeming grace, the dwarves "[choose] cunning instead of belief. Their prison is only in their own minds, yet they are in that prison; and so afraid of being taken in that they cannot be taken out."[847] Aslan's remarks call to mind Lewis's assertion in *The Screwtape Letters* that "every shutting up of the creature within the dungeon of its own mind – is, in the end, Hell."[848]

4.6 "Die before you die"

Across several fictional works, Lewis offers one final, clear message to those suffering from inner pain, including combat-related moral injury:

> Die before you die. There is no chance after.[849]

[847] LB, 169.
[848] GD, 70.
[849] TWHF, 318.

Lewis writes these words in *Till We Have Faces*, one of the last works of his life and one he calls a personal favorite. *Till We Have Faces* is, as has been presented, a book of injury presented in the language of war, with extended imagery of masking and unmasking as symbolic of pain and healing. Lewis envisions healing as an "un-bodying," "un-doing," "un-making," all word choices that suggest a necessary process of breaking down. Sometimes Lewis places this un-bodying in the context of death, but equally as often the choice to be un-made is a larger commitment to choose to allow. "If I could only leave off, let go, unmake myself, [Joy] would be there,"[850] Lewis writes of his progression to Christianity.

Lewis's interpretation is Arminian in tone. Arminianism, so named after the sixteenth century Dutch theologian who developed the school of thought, Jacob Arminius, asserts that there can be harmony between God's sovereignty and man's free will; that is, human beings may cooperate with the regenerative grace of God through their own free choices. Arminius was at the time a direct response to John Calvin's emphasis on God's sovereignty and man's depravity, contending that Calvinism's theories of predestination could not be fully reconciled with a loving God. Arminianism also upholds universal atonement and teaches that the grace of God can be willfully rejected by man. Though foundationally opposed by the Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Reformed tradition, and a host of others, Arminianism influenced John Wesley and became an influence in Methodism. Considering how Lewis's ideas about moral injury and healing may be shaped to some degree by Arminianism may have some explanatory power for his employment of a lexicon that centers around choice. Whether employed on theological grounds or as a secular linguistic tactic, giving primacy to personal choice correspondingly grants agency to suffering individuals, a potentially powerful reversal of the loss of agency that may contribute to injury.

To Lewis, the decision to allow brings simultaneous consumption and relief. In *Till We Have Faces,* Orual describes the experience of "being unmade," in her case by recognizing the might of the gods and man's associated irrelevance, as one of "new terror, joy, overpowering sweetness."[851] Lewis acknowledges there is difficulty in giving oneself over, in dying to the self. Lewis describes "the natural life in each of us," the part of ourselves that resists surrender, as:

[850] SBJ, 321.
[851] TWHF, 350.

> …something self-centred, something that wants to be petted and admired, to take advantage of other lives, to exploit the whole universe. And especially it wants to be left to itself… it is afraid of the light and air of the spiritual world, just as people who have been brought up to be dirty are afraid of a bath. And in a sense it is quite right. It knows that if the spiritual life gets hold of it, all the self-centredness and self-will are going to be killed and it is ready to fight tooth and nail to avoid that.[852]

Here Lewis envisions self-centredness as something existing in the third person, something rightfully outside of humanity, a quality that destroys, brings harm, and must be fought. He uses the pronoun "it," setting the quality outside, apart. While the tactic meets with mixed reviews in today's moral healing practices, some currently suffering may find it useful conceptualization.

Lewis offers a well-articulated fictional illustration of dying to the self as a fight in *The Great Divorce*. There, Lewis presents a Purgatory-like space where men and women become ghosts capable of making decisions at any time that will allow them to heaven. A loving God even sends each of the Ghosts a specific Angel from heaven, to enlighten the Ghosts about their worldly actions and offer the Ghosts immediate opportunity to choose redemption. The first-person narrator, who gradually realizes his place and condition, observes numerous interactions between ghosts and pleading angels. Many of the discussions focus on giving up of the self. "Could you, only for a moment, fix your mind on something not yourself?,"[853] an Angel pleads with a lost human. The Angels know that "if it took her mind a moment off herself, there might, in that moment, be a chance"[854] of moving into the glory of heaven and God. Even in the most cruel, miserable Ghosts, the Angels see possibility; "There's still a wee spark of something that's not just herself in it. That might be blown into a flame."[855]

Perhaps the most poignant illustration for this discussion of combat-related moral injury and healing is Lewis's presentation of a "Ghost who carried something on his shoulder," a "little red lizard, and it was twitching its tail like a whip and whispering things in his ear." The imagery may be evocative to sufferers of combat-related moral injury and PTSD, who often describe their difficult emotions and reactions as something living apart from them, somewhat foreign and

[852] MC, 178-179.
[853] GD, 62.
[854] GD, 79.
[855] GD, 104.

difficult to control, with uncertain relationship to their foundational self. An Angel appears and asks the Ghost:

> ’Would you like me to make him quiet?’
>
> ‘Of course I would,’ said the Ghost.
>
> ‘Then I will kill him,’ said the Angel, taking a step forward.[856]

At the offer to kill the Lizard, the Ghost retreats, seemingly unwilling to lose the familiarity of the little red reptile on its shoulder. In the pages that follow, the Angel asks the Ghost for permission to kill the Lizard seven times. The Ghost continues to resist, even asking for a gradual process less dramatic than killing the creature. The Angel is clear “there is no time.” “The gradual process is of no use at all.” “There is no other day. All days are present now.” “This moment contains all moments.”[857] The strength of the Angel’s language imparts a sense of urgency and necessitates an abandonment of previously held positions as complete as Lewis’s own move beyond his “treaty with reality.” The Angel does not promise an easy process. “I never said it wouldn’t hurt you,” the Angel reminds the sniveling Ghost. “I said it wouldn’t kill you.”[858]

The process is at all turns one of free will, of personal choice. “I cannot kill it against your will,” the Angel tells the Ghost. “It is impossible. May I have your permission?” The Ghost finally decides “it would be better to be dead than to live with this creature,” and grants permission in a “bellow[ing]” acquisition that ends in the whimper “God help me. God help me.”[859]

God does. The Ghost “gave a scream of agony such as I never heard on Earth” as the Angel “closed his crimson grip on the reptile: twisted it, while it bit and writhed, and then flung it, broken-backed, on the turf.” Then, to the narrator’s surprise, both man and Lizard are transformed. The Lizard becomes “the greatest stallion I have ever seen, silvery white but with mane and tail of gold.” “New-made man” and “new horse” “breathed into the other’s nostrils”

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[856] GD, 107.
[857] GD, 108-109.
[858] GD, 109.
[859] GD, 109-110.

and ride into the great beyond, happy and whole. To Lewis, only God can "overcome us that, so overcome, we may be ourselves."[860]

The narrator stands amazed at all he witnesses. In this study of moral injury and healing, the passage creates space for potential discussion of community, control, and surrender, all themes previously introduced in this project and elsewhere extensively articulated by Lewis. Lewis seizes none of these opportunities. Instead, he makes one point:

> But it was killed first," the Angel reminds. "You'll not forget that part of the story?"[861]

Or, as Lewis says elsewhere and as this exploration of moral injury and healing began – "Die before you die. There is no chance after."[862]

4.7 Summary

It is difficult to follow Lewis's illustration in *The Great Divorce* with commentary, as the scene so clearly presents Lewis's position and adding to it seems to risk harming its poetic balance. Lewis draws on varied theological perspectives to conclude that personal commitment to follow the call to Christ, is the singular course of action that leads to healing and salvation. Though theologically his position is not beyond criticism, to those suffering from combat-related moral injury and seeking healing, Lewis's assertion that individuals have the power to choose, and that their choices determine their spiritual fate, may be comforting and empowering to both Christians and secular audiences. In Lewis's interpretation, agency is restored in the language of surrender.

[860] GD, 106-113.
[861] GD, 114.
[862] TWHF, 318.

5. Conclusions that are Beginnings

"Open the gates for me,
Open the gates of the peaceful castle, rosy in the West,
In the sweet dim Isle of Apples over the wide sea's breast,
Open the gates for me!
…
I shall not see
The brutal, crowded faces around me, that in their toil have grown
In the faces of devils – yea, even as my own –
When I find thee,
O Country of Dreams!
Beyond the tide of the ocean, hidden and sunk away,
Out of the sound of battles, near to the end of day
Full of dim woods and streams."[863]

- C.S. Lewis, "Death in Battle" in 'Spirits of Bondage, 1918

"Where the sky and water meet,
Where the waves grow sweet,
Doubt not, Reepicheep,
To find all you seek,
There in the utter East."[864]

- C.S. Lewis, 'Voyage of the Dawn Treader,' 1952

[863] "Death in Battle," SIB, lines 1-4, 17-24.
[864] VDT, 22.

Lewis's most well-known works are *The Chronicles of Narnia*, seven books published throughout the 1940s and 1950s, three of which were turned loosely into movies in the twenty first century. Of the many characters with which Lewis populates Narnia, Reepicheep the Mouse is a perennial fan favorite. The arc of Reepicheep's life concisely encapsulates all that has been presented thus far on moral injury and moral healing, and it is reasonable to speculate Reepicheep may be inspired by Sergeant Harry Ayres, who died standing beside Lewis near Arras. In Reepicheep, Lewis seems to be working out an imagined healing for perhaps both himself and Ayres, achieved through a journey and purpose that Ayres was denied in the trenches. The imaginative capacity of hope to transform that Lewis illustrates is one chaplains may find particularly powerful to attend.

Reepicheep appears in only three of the *Narnia* books, and even in those is the subject of far fewer words than many other beloved characters. His impact, however, is undeniable, and his storyline emerges as one of healing for himself and facilitation of the same for others. Chief Mouse Reepicheep is the quintessential warrior, an almost comically one-dimensional character in its first appearances. A mouse of unusual stature, approximately two feet tall on its hind legs "not much heavier than a very large cat,"[865] that "twirled his long whiskers as if they were a moustache,"[866] Reephicheep has "very dark, almost black" fur. The Mouse carries "a sword very nearly as long as its tail," and sports "a thin band of gold passed round its head under one ear and over the other and in this was stuck a long crimson feather."[867] Reepicheep is "one of the great heroes of Narnia,"[868] "the most valiant of all the Talking Beasts," who "won undying glory in the second Battle of Beruna."[869]

Lewis's history of writing about mice begins in his youth, with the "dressed mice" of his boyhood *Boxen* stories. Lewis's childhood mice are not warriors, nor is there any hint that as a lad he envisions them as such. Lewis begins writing of mice again on the front, as might be expected of a man living in an environment overrun by rats and mice. The creatures make frequent appearances in soldiers' letters and diaries, and their presence in the trenches becomes more prolific each year of the war as they come to feed on the shallowly or unburied dead.

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[865] VDT, 33.
[866] PC, 79.
[867] VDT, 15-16.
[868] LB, 203.
[869] VDT, 15-16.

Lewis's records one interaction with mice, however, that evidences a robust emotional response. In his 1950s autobiography, Lewis recalls:

> Even then they attacked not us but the Canadians on our right, merely 'keeping us quiet' by pouring shells into our line about three a minute all day. I think it was that day I noticed how a great terror overcomes a less: a mouse that I met (and a poor shivering mouse it was, as I was a poor shivering man) made no attempt to run from me.[870]

Lewis sees himself, "poor shivering man," as kin to that "poor shivering mouse." Many Great War officers describe shelling as the most stressful, nearly unbearable experience of fighting in the trenches, speaking to the feelings of helplessness inherent in being pinned down in one place by unrelenting fire.[871] Others note that the effects of such shelling, seeing people torn "in the way that high explosive tears… is simply hellish."[872] When he notices this mouse, Lewis is being shelled "three a minute all day." Lewis's choice to embody the boldest of the Narnian warriors as a mouse is not a moment of fancy, nor a mere illustration of humble appearance concealing a bold heart. Reephicheep is time in a trench, carried forward decades into Lewis's writing life.

A military veteran reading descriptions of Reepicheep is likely to instantly place Reepicheep's character as that of a senior enlisted man, or a non-commissioned officer (NCO). Though armies of various nations have slightly different titles, social atmospheres, and requirements for obtaining such positions, these "middle ranks" occupy a unique and revered place in military culture. The men who hold these ranks have been doing their jobs for some time; in peace time, that could mean decades, while in World War I it meant they had been fighting on the front long enough to offer recommendations to the junior officers appointed over them. Lewis encapsulates such experience in description of "an old sergeant's glance, grown battle-wise to know the points of men."[873] As a result of their superior experience, the NCO carries far more practical knowledge than the officers appointed over them. A good NCO accepts the responsibility of both training and shaping those junior to him, but also of leading, training,

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[870] SBJ, 239.
[871] Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 119.
[872] T.P.C. Wilson, as quoted in Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks*, 121.
[873] *Dymer*, Canto IX, stanza 16.

and teaching those who command him. Examples of Reephicheep caring for all around him are seemingly endless, from the Mouse standing "sentry over the water every night so that one more man could go to sleep,"[874] to sitting with sailors on look-out duty onboard ship,[875] and serving as "constant comforter" to a terrified crew member who is turned into a dragon.[876] Lewis writes:

> The noble Mouse would creep away from the merry circle at the camp fire and sit down by the dragon's head, well to the windward to be out of the way of his smoky breath. There he would explain that what had happened to Eustace was a striking illustration of the turn of Fortune's wheel, and that if he had Eustace at his own house in Narnia (it was really a hold not a house and the dragon's head, let alone his body, would not have fitted in) he could show him more than a hundred examples of emperors, kings, dukes, knights, poets, lovers, astronomers, philosophers, and magicians, who had fallen from prosperity into the most distressing circumstances, and of whom many had recovered and lived happily ever afterward. It did not, perhaps, seem so very comforting at the time, but it was kindly meant and Eustace never forgot it.[877]

The emotional fortitude to directly address a difficult situation, willing foregoing of the personal pleasure of the campfire to stay by the sufferer's side, and permanent impact on the memory of those he serves with are all hallmarks of a good NCO. These details, which add great richness and depth to the Reepicheep character, most likely come from Lewis's first-hand experience of the NCO-junior officer relationship.

The NCO's experience makes him a valuable advisor, as Lewis establishes Reepicheep throughout the arc of the *Chronicles*. A good NCO is honest, having likely attained the highest ranks available to him and therefore free of any political considerations of promotion. As Lewis writes, "no one had ever known Reepicheep to be afraid of anything, he could say this without feeling at all awkward. But the body, who had all been afraid quite often, grew very red."[878] A good NCO walks with upright shoulders and a certain panache, an effect "bold and striking,"[879]

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[874] VDT, 74.
[875] VDT, 32-33.
[876] VDT, 102-103.
[877] VDT, 102-103.
[878] VDT, 143.
[879] VDT, 15.

as Lewis records of Reepicheep's physical presence. He has been proven, and his job now is to help everyone else pass the tests.

Lewis attributes the characteristics of just such an NCO to the one he serves with in France, Sergeant Harry Ayres. Upon arrival on the front, Lewis says he is taught the rules that "govern trench warfare… at once by my sergeant." Lewis shares a specific incident in which he suggests "pooping a rifle grenade into a German post where we had seen heads moving." Lewis records Ayres's response:

> 'Just as 'ee like, zir,' said the sergeant, scratching his head, 'but one 'ee start doing that kind of thing, 'ee'll get zummit back, zee?'[880]

Later, Reepicheep will embody that same mix of deference, willingness, measured reaction to danger, and practicality that Lewis remembers of Ayres. Lewis says that through relationship with Ayres, he "came to know and pity and reverence the ordinary man." Lewis calls himself a "a puppet moved about by him," and that Ayres "turned this ridiculous and painful relation into something beautiful, became to me almost like a father."[881] By his own assessment, Lewis's relationship with Ayres was deep, substantial, and formative.

In his autobiography, Lewis recalls Ayres's death in April 1918, writing that Ayres "was (I suppose) killed by the same shell that wounded me."[882] The Sergeant's body was never recovered, and he has no known grave. Ayres's name remains on a memorial to the Allied wounded in Arras, France today. Given the nature of the NCO-junior officer interaction in military culture, the added intensity of the relationship in wartime, and the circumstances of Ayres's death, it is reasonable to look for reflections of Ayres in Lewis's work, and to see Ayres's influence in the character development of Reepicheep.

Over the course of the three books in which he appears, the story Lewis gives Ayres-as-Reepicheep is astoundingly full of hope. Reepicheep is introduced in *Prince Caspian*, book four in publication order but the second book Lewis writes in the series. Publication vs. writing order is a point of contention in Lewis scholarship but does not change the Reepicheep story line; readers meet Reepicheep in *Prince Caspian*, follow him in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, and see

[880] SBJ, 238.
[881] SBJ, 240.
[882] SBJ, 240.

him reappear as a complete surprise in *The Last Battle*, in one of the last scenes of the *Chronicles*. In *Prince Caspian* Reepicheep approaches caricature, a swashbuckling soldier who pursues battle at the drop of a hat with flourishing language. Reepicheep proves brave in the biggest battle of that book but incurs grievous wounding. Lewis describes the post-battle scene:

> For at that moment a curious little procession was approaching – eleven Mice, six of whom carried between them something on a litter made of branches, but the litter was no bigger than a large atlas. No one had ever seen mice more woebegone than these. They were plastered with mud – some with blood too – and their ears were down and their whiskers drooped and their tails dragged in the grass, and their leader piped on his slender pipe a melancholy tune. On the litter lay what seemed little better than a damp heap of fur; all that was left of Reepicheep. He was still breathing, but more dead than alive, gashed with innumerable wounds, one paw crushed, and, where his tail had been, a bandaged stump.[883]

As a curious aside, the mud that "plasters" these tiny combatants is nowhere mentioned in Lewis's *Prince Caspian* battle descriptions, so it unclear from whence it comes. Mud and blood are strongly linked in Lewis's descriptions of World War I in other places, however, including *Surprised by Joy* and *The Pilgrim's Regress*. To return more directly to Narnia, Reepicheep's tail, "the honor and glory of a Mouse," is restored by Christ-figure Aslan, with Aslan's remark that 'I have sometimes wondered, friend…whether you do not think too much about your honor.'"[884] Aslan makes Reepicheep whole "Not for the sake of your dignity, Reepicheep, but for the love that is between you and your people."[885] Not discussed further but reminiscent of Lewis's ideas about moral healing and dying to the self is Reepicheep's pre-wounding assertion that "'My life is ever at your command, but my honor is my own.'"[886] After Aslan heals his tail, Reepicheep ceases to speak so strongly about his honor, suggesting an evolving focus outward and less on himself.

In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Reepicheep's second book, Lewis immediately establishes Reepicheep as on a quest to find "Aslan's own country,"[887] a presumed place of

[883] PC, 206.
[884] PC, 208.
[885] PC, 209.
[886] PC, 186.
[887] VDT, 21.

peace. Reepicheep's fixation with finding Aslan's country dominates his every interaction in the book. Though Reepicheep is still consistently described as valiant - a warrior "who had fought for his life many a time, never lost his head even for a moment. Nor his skill."[888] – Lewis allows more complex emotions to rise in the Mouse's character. For instance, during a chess game with Lucy, a main character in the *Chronicles*, Lewis writes:

> He was a good player and when he remembered what he was doing he usually won. But every now and then Lucy won because the Mouse did something quite ridiculous like sending a knight into the danger of a queen and castle combined. This happened because he had momentarily forgotten it was a game of chess and was thinking of a real battle and making the knight do what he would certainly have done in its place.[889]

Here Lewis gives readers a Reepicheep whose memory of combat intrudes on his daily life at unexpected times, a likely familiar state of affairs to combatants suffering from moral injury, PTSD, or both, and in keeping with known symptoms of both.

Lewis provides a magnificent conclusion to Reepicheep's desire to reach the end of the world, which the Mouse says has been his "heart's desire"[890] since his youth. As the time to execute the grand adventure draws near and the rest of the crew voice to doubts and worries, Reephicheep announces "'My own plans are made'":

> While I can, I sail east with the *Dawn Treader*. When she fails me, I paddle east in my coracle. When she sinks, I shall swim east with my four paws. And when I can swim no longer, if I have not reached Aslan's country, or shot over the edge of the world into some vast cataract, I shall sink with my nose to the sunrise and Peepiceek will be head of the talking mice in Narnia.'[891]

The ship journeys on. Eventually:

> What they saw – eastward, beyond the sun – was a range of mountains… and the mountains must really have been outside the world… No one in that boat doubted

[888] VDT, 34.
[889] VDT, 67.
[890] VDT, 207.
[891] VDT, 213.

> that they were seeing beyond the End of the World into Aslan's country…They helped [Reepicheep] lower his little coracle. Then he took off his sword ('I shall need it no more,' he said), and flung it far away across the lilied sea… The coracle went more and more quickly, and beautifully it rushed up the wave's side. For one split second they saw its shape and Reepicheep's on the very top. Then it vanished, and since that moment no one can truly claim to have seen Reepicheep the Mouse.[892]

Every detail of this description matters in a story of moral healing. Lewis gives Ayres-as-Reepicheep an ending where his sword is not needed; there is no violence. The sword is washed in a sea of lilies, a flower previously spoiled for Lewis by their association with funerals and death. [893] No one knows what really happens to Reepicheep once he goes over the waves, as no one knows what happens to Ayres, but Lewis writes "my belief is that he came safe to Aslan's country and is alive there to this day."[894]

That belief is born out in *The Last Battle of Narnia*, where Reepicheep reappears. After the culminating battle and destruction of Narnia, the now-dead combatants journey through a sort of shadowland, following Aslan but not yet having discerned the permanence of their condition. Eventually:

> They found themselves facing great golden gates…a great horn, wonderfully loud and sweet, blew from somewhere inside that walled garden and the gates swung open… what came was the last thing he had expected: a little, sleek, bright-eyed Talking Mouse with a red feather stuck in a circlet on its head and its left paw resting on a long sword. It bowed, a most beautiful bow, and said in its shrill voice: 'Welcome, in the Lion's name. Come further up and further in.'[895]

The emotive significance shines bright. It is Ayres-as-Reepicheep who meets his fellows in arms at the gates of Heaven. It is Ayres who dies and is reborn. It is a healed combatant who issues an invitation to come "further up and further in."

They went, to untold happiness. So may we.

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[892] VDT, 244-245.

[893] See section "Lewis, The Doc, and *The Screwtape Letters*" for further discussion of the significance of lilies in Lewis's war-related writing.

[894] VDT, 245.

[895] LB, 202-203.

Summary

War has the capacity to reveal human nature in tremendous dimension. The type of war-story someone tells, including what they have to say about moral injury and moral healing, depends on what extreme they choose to explore. Herodotus keeps things clean and heroic. Homer's pen dives deep into detail. Thucydides is unrelenting in his depiction of confusion and chaos. What type of war story does Lewis tell? One of death. One of healing. One of choice.

There is utility to Lewis's ideas, the way he conceptualizes moral injury and the words he uses to describe moral healing, in chaplaincy care today. Those suffering, and those dedicated to helping them, need the straight-forward presentation of complex ideas Lewis provides. Communities need lay theology, the intellectually driven strive to recover a discarded image, and the lonely crave revival of capacity to receive allegorical love. Somewhere a combatant waiting for the next bullet, his own or someone else's, needs poetry unafraid of anger, a space explorer pondering humanity beyond physical human form, unabashed talk of soul, and a lion God who fights. Combatants need Reepicheep, opening a gate for us.[896]

[896] Alluded to here, in order of mention, are Lewis's *Mere Christianity* (1952), *The Discarded Image* (1964), *The Allegory of Love* (1936), *Spirits in Bondage* (1919), the Ransom Trilogy (1938-1944), and the *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956).

"One soul in the whole creation you do know: and it is the only one whose fate is placed in your hands. If there is a God, you are, in a sense, alone with Him."[897]

- *C.S. Lewis, 1940s radio broadcast*

"The end of this story and the beginning of all the others."[898]

- *C.S. Lewis, 'The Magician's Nephew,' 1955*

[897] MC, 217.
[898] MN, 193.

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