



University of South Florida
Scholar Commons

Graduate Theses and Dissertations

Graduate School

January 2012

Lower Sacraments: Theological Eating in the Fiction of C. S. Lewis

Gregory Philip Hartley

University of South Florida, Greg.Hartley@fcc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd>

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Scholar Commons Citation

Hartley, Gregory Philip, "Lower Sacraments: Theological Eating in the Fiction of C. S. Lewis" (2012). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*.

<http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/4329>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

Lower Sacraments: Theological Eating in the Fiction of C. S. Lewis

by

Gregory P. Hartley

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of English
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Nicole Discenza, Ph.D.
Annette Cozzi, Ph.D.
Sara M. Deats, Ph.D.
Thomas Howard, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
November 5, 2012

Keywords: Christianity and Literature, Communication and the Arts, Constructivism,
Ecclesiology, Eschatology, Eucharist, Food Studies, Hamartiology, Language and
Linguistics

Copyright © 2012, Gregory P. Hartley

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my amazing wife, Shannon. For nearly ten years, this annoying little goblin haunted our lives. You may not feel like you were patient with it, but you were. Now that it has been fought, defeated, and tamed, it can now hopefully be made to serve.

Let's name it Dobby.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my grateful appreciation to the following individuals and institutions without whom no dissertation or degree of any sort would have been attainable. To Dr. Nicole Discenza, your years of untiring dedication, page after page of kind encouragement, and your gentle—but very persistent—commitment to making this the highest quality project possible pushed me far beyond what I thought were the boundaries of my own capabilities. You have exemplified servant-minded leadership to the uttermost farthing. *Pæt wæs gōd cyning!* To Dr. Annette Cozzi, Dr. Sara M. Deats, and Dr. Thomas Howard, for your years of patient waiting capped with two months of maniacal labor. To Lee Davidson, for always knowing the answer to every question ever asked, and for your special concern during the hellish week of comps. To Dr. Tony Buchanan, for pushing me to start. To Florida Christian College, the founders of the feast, the school's superlative generosity has been as overwhelming as its astonishing commitment to faculty development. I have the best job in the world! To my cheerleading squad: David Peters, Robert Ritchie, Twila Sias, Brian Smith, and Shane Wood. How tired you must be of hearing me grumble! How tirelessly you listened and supported! To Linda Stark, for amnesty from overdue fees and for the real estate. You can have it all back now! And to Marla Black, for your industrious retrieval of nearly endless ILLs. You, my friend, are a force of nature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Abstract	vi
Preface: Primary Sources	1
Chapter One – Introduction	2
Section 1 – Cultural Influences	5
Biblical Influences	5
Classical and Medieval Influences.....	10
British Influences	14
Section 2 – Critical Methods.....	22
Theological Criticism.....	22
Freudian Criticism	26
Structuralist Criticism	33
Section 3 – Thematic Chapters	45
Chapter Two – The More Thus We Share: Ecclesiological Meals in C. S. Lewis’s	
Fiction	52
Culinary Language Of Fellowship.....	54
Hospitality Meals: Growing the Church	57
Hospitality Meals and the Old Testament Table Bond.....	59
Hospitality Meals as Ideas	62
Hospitality Meals as Initiation	66
Fellowship Meals: Lewis’s Personal Ecclesiology.....	76
Eating with the Inklings	78
The Fellowship Meal as Ritual	80
The Fellowship Meal and Shared Beliefs	83
The Fellowship Meal and Friendship	85
The Fellowship Meal and the Evangelium	87
Conclusion – A Culinary Model of Ecclesiology	91
Chapter Three – Like the King in Curdie: Sacramental Meals in C. S. Lewis’s	
Fiction	98
Culinary Language of the Eucharist	102

Lewis's Own Doctrine	108
Real Presence of Christ	109
Established by Christ	111
Necessity of Repetition	112
Communion as Worship	114
Efficacy of the Rite	116
Who May Partake	119
Who May Administer	121
Priestly Communions	122
Conclusion – Lewis's Curdie Meals: Mediated Sacraments	129
Chapter Four – Turkish Delight, Please: Food and Sin in Lewis's Fiction	139
Culinary Language of Sin	140
Turkish Delight: the Model	144
Tempted by Turkish Delight	147
Edmund's Addiction	148
Pleasurable Meal Ruined	149
Edmund's Alienation	149
Stage One – Temptations Successful (and Unsuccessful)	151
Forbidden Fruit as a Symbol of Divine Power	151
Satan: Lewis's Antagonists as Edenic Tempters	154
Eve: The Satan-Apple-Eve Paradigm	156
Stage Two – Pleasure in Excess: Gluttony and Intemperance	159
Gluttony of Delicacy: Pickiness	161
Gluttony of Excess: Intemperance	165
Stage Three – Anti-pleasure: Getting to Like Bad Eggs	171
Anti-pleasure Protagonists	174
Anti-pleasure Antagonists	178
Stage Four – Anti-relationship: Alienation and the Mindset of Hell	179
Incompatible Moral States	181
Sliding Into the Hellish State	184
Hell and Sinful Fasting	189
Conclusions – Character Study: Mark Studdock at the N.I.C.E.	195
Mark's Temptation: The Inner Ring	196
Mark's Addiction: Alcohol and Devouring Desire	198
Anti-pleasure: Mark Chooses Misery	201
Anti-relationship: Mark's Hell State	202
Chapter Five – Pleasures for Evermore: Eschatological Meals as a Capstone to Lewis's	
Theological Eating	206
Culinary Language of Eschatology	209
Superlative Meals	211
Celebration Feasts: Lewis's "Happily Ever After" Meal	225
Menu: Pleasures Perfected	232
Diners: Fellowship Perfected	233
Provider: Sacrament Perfected	234

Conclusion – The Big Picture: Using the Meals as a Spiritual Character
Analysis.....235

Works Cited240

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Comparing course progression in C. S. Lewis and Isabella Beeton	17
Table 1.2: Variables and opposing pairs within Lewis's meals.....	39
Table 1.3: Analysis of apple meal in <i>Prince Caspian</i>	40
Table 2.1: Synopsis of Lewis's ecclesiological eating	55
Table 2.2: Ideological hospitality meals in <i>The Pilgrim's Regress</i>	63
Table 3.1: Criteria for Sacramental meals	103
Table 3.2: Lewis's Mediated Sacramental Meals	132
Table 4.1: Meal categories for Lewis's four types of transgressive meal	141
Table 5.1: Criteria for Lewis's Personal and Universal eschatology meals	211
Table 5.2: Platonic arrangement of meal categories	237

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Lévi-Strauss's "culinary triangle" of oppositions	33
Figure 4.1: Progression of Mark's sinful meals.....	196

ABSTRACT

For years, critics and fans of C. S. Lewis have noted his curious attentiveness to descriptions of food and scenes of eating. Some attempts have been made to interpret Lewis's use of food, but never in a manner comprehensively unifying Lewis's culinary expressions with his own thought and beliefs. My study seeks to fill this void. The introduction demonstrates how Lewis's culinary language aggregates through elements of his life, his literary background, and his Judeo-Christian worldview. Using the grammar of his own culinary language, I examine Lewis's fiction for patterns found within his meals and analyze these patterns for theological allusions, grouping them according to major categories of systematic theology. Chapter two argues that ecclesiastical themes appear whenever Lewis's protagonists eat together. The ritualized meal progression, evangelistic discourse, and biographical menus create a unity that points to parallels between Lewis's body of protagonists and the church. Chapter three focuses on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and charges that Lewis's meals which are eaten in the presence of the novel's Christ figure or which include bread and wine in the menu reliably align with the Anglo-Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. Chapter four studies how sinful eating affects the spiritual states of Lewis's characters. The chapter first shows how Lewis's culinary language draws from Edenic sources, resonating with a very gastronomic Fall of Humanity, then examines how the progressively sinful eating of certain characters signifies a gradual alienation from the Divine. The fifth, and

concluding, chapter argues that Lewis's portrayal of culinary desire and pleasure ultimately points to an eschatological theme. This theme culminates near the end of Lewis's novels either through individual characters expressing superlative delight in their food or through a unified congregation of protagonists eating a celebratory feast during the novel's dénouement. I close the study by emphasizing how this approach to Lewis's meals offers a complete spiritual analysis of Lewis's main characters that also consistently supports Lewis's own theology.

PREFACE: PRIMARY SOURCES

My analysis of Lewis's theological eating includes meals from twelve of Lewis's major novels: *Pilgrim's Regress* (PR), *Out of the Silent Planet* (OOSP), *Perelandra* (Per), *That Hideous Strength* (THS), *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (LWW), *Prince Caspian* (PC), *The Voyage of The Dawn Treader* (VDT), *The Silver Chair* (SC), *The Horse and His Boy* (HHB), *The Magician's Nephew* (MN), *The Last Battle* (LB), and *Till We Have Faces* (TWHF). Abbreviations for frequently used non-fiction works are as follows: *Mere Christianity* (MC), *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis* (CL), and *God in the Dock* (Dock).

This list of novels omits two of Lewis's fiction works: *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Great Divorce*. The settings of both exist primarily in spiritual realms, rendering physical eating irrelevant, which means that neither includes any actual meals to analyze. The books do include valuable spiritual analogies that employ eating imagery which I include as illustrative material in their proper chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In 1906, a juvenile C. S. Lewis, writing at about age seven, penned a play entitled *The King's Ring*. The first scene featured a group of animals gathering before dinner to toast the good health of King Bunny. The first sentence of the play begins, "This wine is good" (Lewis, *Boxen* 26). Assuming the accuracy of the date, the earliest tale written by Lewis opens with a meal, a confirmation of Lewis's fascination, even at age seven, with culinary descriptions and the role they play within a story.¹

Although Lewis's stories are better known for their cleverly-concealed Christianity or for their integration of fantasy, myth, and British culture, a few critics have come to notice that Lewis frequently describes meals in vivid detail. Food itself plays a fundamental role in novels like *Perelandra* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, where meals of fruit in the first instance and candy in the second serve as the *entrée* for important themes. Other novels, such as *That Hideous Strength* and *The Pilgrim's Regress*, utilize meals as a substitute clock, their stories ticking along to the rhythm of breakfast, lunch, and dinner. These rhythms and the steady, reliable introduction of an enormous variety of dishes, dining settings, and diners endow Lewis's novels with a subtle, but strong, culinary delight.

¹ Lewis himself claimed that this was his earliest story; Walter Hooper suggests the probability of the date (*Boxen* 9).

Assuredly, the careful reader will soon notice patterns within Lewis's scenes of eating and drinking. One might notice that bread and wine appear on the menu with curious frequency. Another may wonder why characters so often eat in front of a fireplace. A third might possibly notice that for the fourth time in as many books, a character ate a meal that was "the best he ever had." These and numerous other small consistencies and patterns emerge when we view Lewis's culinary language from a distance. Critics commonly observe Lewis's attention to food, yet numerous authors, from Homer to Kenneth Graham, display similar attentiveness without displaying the repetitive patterns across multiple novels. Ratty and Mole may enjoy an elaborate picnic by the banks of a river, but the Reluctant Dragon does not. Homer helps, however, because we may also witness consistent patterns in his dining scenes. The hospitality meals found in *The Odyssey* provide useful information for critics and anthropologists because they highlight customs the ancient Greeks actually practiced (Reece 10). We can pick up this trail in Lewis by considering what customs Lewis might have actually practiced that he also portrays in his fiction. The bread and wine mentioned earlier spring immediately to mind. Lewis was a Christian, and the eating of bread and wine forms the central ritual of the Christian faith. But this is old news. Critics have connected Lewis's eating with the Lord's Supper on numerous occasions (Ford 101; Myers 147; Patterson 28; Schakel 62). However, once we reexamine his text in light of the Lord's Supper, new meanings emerge as we begin to see how the significance of the meal transforms the significance of the scene. What once was a little girl and an old man sharing a casual meal suddenly becomes a communicant receiving spiritual mediation from a priestly character in the presence of a Christ figure. Such findings confirm what Lynn Vallone

has previously declared but not thoroughly explored, that “For Lewis, the functions of food and taste are not merely mimetic, but also metaphoric in nature, and it is the food itself, as well as the consumers of it, that communicates a moral vision” (51).

At the outset, I must assert a cautionary boundary. This study does not propose that Lewis’s meals should be interpreted allegorically. Rather than hinting that all of Lewis’s meals conceal hidden meanings suggesting that every meal is “really” about communion or Passover, instead I propose that Lewis intuitively spoke a culinary language that was theological at its core. Instead of concealing information, this language reveals new themes that would remain muted or altogether unexpressed without attentiveness to his scenes of eating. These new themes are certainly consistent with the theological subtext inherent in most, if not all, of Lewis’s works. Far from demanding an exclusivist, allegorical reading, the new themes augment other well-documented themes within the text.

This chapter will first develop the backgrounds of Lewis’s culinary language, seeking social and professional contexts for the unique vocabulary found throughout his fiction. Next, in order to formally position the study, I provide a rationale for my critical perspective. Critics often employ Freudian methods to explain food-related motifs in literature, and I explain why the approach does not satisfy in Lewis’s case. Instead, my method borrows heavily from structural linguistics, but ultimately veers from a universal semiotic analysis to focus on a highly individualized theological exegesis. The last section of the chapter will examine the vocabulary of Lewis’s culinary language, organizing a given meal’s individual variables—such as menus, participants, locations, sources, etc.—into a navigable grammar. This grammar will help organize dozens of

theological allusions Lewis consistently uses in his meals across his canon of fiction.

Developing this concept, subsequent chapters will examine specific collections of these allusions to delineate the theological themes revealed by the culinary language.

Section 1 – Influences

The sources of Lewis’s culinary language are simple to trace. In this sense he was a product of his environment. The contexts of geography, worldview, and profession afford a variety of predictable culinary motifs which Lewis shares with numerous other authors similarly contextualized. Nevertheless, as an introduction for the complete study, an overview of these three major contextual influences helps familiarize us with Lewis’s particular tendency for describing eating. As a Christian, Lewis frequently borrows key Biblical narratives using food imagery to infuse meaning into his own depictions of eating. As a professor of medieval and classical literature, Lewis plunders ancient dining customs to embroider his settings with authenticity and fantasy. As an Englishman, Lewis’s very British stories depict characters with a deep fondness for the hearty, simple English diet.

Biblical Influences

Larry Earl Fink’s concise summary of the Bible’s emphasis on food highlights several specific meal types from which Lewis draws inspiration:

The most important historical and theological matters are almost invariably described or expressed through food and eating imagery. These include the Fall, the Exodus and the Passover ceremony, much of Christ’s teachings, the Lord’s Supper, and the nature of Heaven as presented in Revelation. (Fink iii-iv)

Fink's point regarding biblical meals can be applied to Lewis's meals as well. He uses the Bible as a starting point for understanding mankind's relationship between what we eat and Who we worship. Most of Lewis's more important meals can be traced to a handful of borrowed biblical images. When Lewis employs the imagery of these central meals, the original biblical significance of the meal infuses Lewis's depiction and deepens its meaning.

Two novels, *Perelandra* and *The Magician's Nephew*, are saturated with referential allusions to Adam and Eve's eating from the Tree of Knowledge (Gen 3.1-6).² *Perelandra* is essentially a reimagining of the Genesis story, filtered through the comprehensive study of Milton's *Paradise Lost* that Lewis completed just before publishing *Perelandra*. Elizabeth Baird Hardy notes a collection of similarities in the handling of food between Lewis and Milton, including the tendency to correlate food and sin, free will symbolized in eating, and the otherworldly nature of the Edenic fruits (69-70). Despite using the planet Venus for its setting, Lewis paints his landscape with Edenic strokes. Fantastic fruit trees crowd Venus's floating islands, whose human population consists of only a single male and female, both naked and under divine orders, just like the earthly first couple, Adam and Eve. For *The Magician's Nephew*, Lewis again draws important plot elements from the Fall of Man, but this time, borrows his imagery from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As a pastiche of Milton's Eden, the climax of *The Magician's Nephew* takes place in a garden at the top of a steep hill crowned with

² This study will use the Authorized Translation for all Scripture references and quotations to ensure that the wordings are as Lewis would have known them. Lewis often read the New Testament in its original Greek, but where he does quote an English translation, he usually uses the Authorized (King James) Version (see *Collected Letters, Vol. II* 193). Notable exception are Lewis's quotations from the Psalms. For those, he uses the translation found in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

high hedges and a gate. Digory, the child protagonist, is tempted by a satanic witch to eat “the apple of life” in order to gain immortality (*MN* 177). Allusions to the biblical Eden are intact, but Lewis foregrounds his tale with the details he has borrowed from Milton (Milton IV.131-247).

A second significant biblical meal is the Last Supper Jesus Christ shares with his disciples (Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 13). This meal, which was a celebration of the Passover, forms the prototype for the Christian sacrament of Holy Communion, also called the Eucharist, or The Lord’s Supper. Christ’s meals with His disciples created “bonds of table-fellowship” which Jesus reserved solely for His close followers, a quality that Lewis’s Christ-figures imitate (Joncas 351). Aslan uses food to set apart British children as his followers in similar fashion. In *The Magician’s Nephew*, he sends Digory on a quest to retrieve a magical apple; in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, he serves fish to Edmund and Lucy before exhorting them to learn his name in *their* world; and in *The Silver Chair*, Aslan precedes his discipleship of Jill by providing her with a refreshing drink of water (*SC* 21). Aslan is only one of several Christ-figures from Lewis’s fiction, yet whether it be Maleldil (from the Space Trilogy), Cupid (from *Till We Have Faces*), or The Landlord’s Son (from *Pilgrim’s Regress*), the motif of fellowship eating with the Christ figure remains consistent in each novel.

The food miracles of Christ are a rich third biblical source from which Lewis draws a good deal of imagery. Jesus provides miraculous meals on three occasions in the Gospels when he feeds the crowd of five thousand (Matt. 14, Mark 6, Luke 9, John 6), a second crowd of four thousand (Matt. 15, Mark 8), and his famous first miracle, converting water to wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11). In *Prince Caspian*, Aslan

provides a feast of grapes which sprout instantly from the ground on command (*PC* 159). Through this event, Lewis illustrates Aslan's Christ-like power over nature as a parallel to Jesus's miraculous provision of wine, a miracle upon which Lewis wrote in detail for his own study of miracles (John 2:1-10; *Miracles* 141). Lewis explains that Jesus's miracle was one of *time*: water turning into wine is a perfectly natural act that grape plants perform on their own; Jesus merely speeds up the process (*Miracles* 141). When Lewis reproduces the same situation in *Prince Caspian*, in essence he constructs a Narnian "miracle" that adheres to the same criteria to which Biblical miracles adhere. That grapevines grow and bear fruit is only natural; that they do it instantly—at Aslan's bidding—makes them miraculous.

The biblical culmination of the miraculous is the apocalyptic, since the teachings of Jesus point to the last days and the ultimate reward His followers receive in heaven. Lewis does not miss this eschatological point, even in his portrayal of eating. Numerous life-after-death meals in the Bible find expression in Lewis's fiction. In the final pages of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the meal of fish Aslan serves to Lucy and Edmund on the shores of the Silver Sea shows that they have reached the Utter East, which lies closer than any other terrestrial point to Aslan's Country, the Narnian equivalent for Heaven (*VDT* 21). Doris Myers and Colin Manlove both note that the meal closely resembles one of the last meals Christ ate with his disciples (Myers 138; Manlove 64; John 21:1-25). Very shortly before His ascension, the resurrected Jesus prepares the disciples a breakfast of fish and bread on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus's call to "Come and have breakfast" is identical to Aslan's offer to the children (John 21:12; *VDT* 245). Both Aslan and Jesus use the opportunity to encourage their followers to give faithful service until

death. Jesus exhorts Peter to “Follow me” before predicting how Peter will die; Aslan tells the children that they will not see him again until they cross a river, an image which has signified death at least since the time of Virgil (John 21:18-19; *VDT* 247).³

Aslan fulfills his promise in *The Last Battle*, which contains an explicit expression of the afterlife. Eating still plays a role here, but this time Lewis appropriately borrows from the book of Revelation. As with John’s apocalypse, catastrophe punctuates *The Last Battle*, so eating occurs infrequently, yet Lewis still capitalizes on the sparse imagery to cast his vision of the Narnian afterlife. After the final battle midway through the novel, the Narnian warriors enter the afterlife through a stable door, which Lewis establishes as another symbol for death. Inside, they soon discover a grove of fruit trees with multiple fruits growing “under every leaf . . . gold or faint yellow or purple or glowing red . . . fruits such as no one has seen” (*LB* 156). The prototype for these trees appears in Revelation 21, where the Tree of Life stands in New Jerusalem “bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month” (Rev 22:2). Shortly after seeing the trees, the Narnians feast on the fruit, which the narrator describes with superlative praise, echoing another passage in Revelation where the inhabitants of heaven are blessed by the “wedding supper of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9). This feast represents the consummation of the eternal relationship with Jesus Christ and his followers (Davis 341). Lewis uses the image the same way; this meal is the first meal in Aslan’s Country. From there events lead “further up and further in” until Aslan himself announces to a hesitant Lucy who fears being sent home yet again: “No fear of that. Have you not guessed? . . . all of you are . . .

³ Numerous Christian writers use the same metaphor, including *The Pearl* poet, Dante, and Bunyan (Wicher 15); Lewis himself first makes use of the metaphor in *Pilgrim’s Regress* (132).

dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun” (*LB* 210). Significantly, at least for the Narnian Chronicles, a primary activity upon entry into the eternal is a meal.

Classical and Medieval Influences

Biblical influence may be a mandatory starting point for studying Lewis’s theological meals, but we must not underestimate how much his classical and medieval studies impacted Lewis’s eating sensibilities as well. Lewis’s penchant for imitation is certainly well-documented by his biographers George Sayer and Walter Hooper. These two also adequately document his life-long love affair with classical literature, and critics have demonstrated the presence of Greek and Roman plot elements in his fiction. Andrew Montgomery notes how *The Silver Chair* includes the classic descent into the underworld featured in so many classical tales, and he correctly identifies *The Odyssey* as a source for Lewis’s own sea-quest story, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (62-64). Little attention, however, has been paid to how Lewis borrows food imagery from Greek and Roman literature, yet Lewis’s demonstrated knowledge of the religious themes in Homer’s meals is strong encouragement to similarly analyze Lewis’s own meals for latent religious content. A particularly Homeric feast occurs after the *Dawn Treader* nearly shipwrecks in a storm and must make repairs on a deserted island. The crew go ashore and feast on roasted wild goats and wine from Archenland “which had to be mixed with water before you drank it” (82). Odysseus and his men eat a meal under very similar circumstances when they camp on an island off the coast of the Cyclops’s shore, and his men roast mountain goats and drink strong wine mixed with water (9.179-184). Lewis offers no explanation for mixing the Archenland wine with water, so most readers likely assume that the purpose of the preparation is to avoid drunkenness. Instead, the reference alludes

to the Greek custom of mixing strong wine with water. Many Greek writers, including Hippocrates and Herodotus, hint that drinking strong wine without first mixing it with water would lead to “madness and death” (*Epidemics* 4.15). This was, in fact, the source for the legendary explanation for Alexander the Great’s untimely death (Dalby 354).

Classical eating customs necessarily punctuate *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis’s only novel actually set during the classical era. Through the telling of this story, Lewis demonstrates his proficiency with the Homeric formula meal. To celebrate her victory over Prince Argan, Queen Orual orders a feast of bean-bread, roast pig, and wine for her guests (*TWF* 221). Similar menus may be found repeatedly in both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* in what Dalby describes as the “communal meal” of Homeric society “which always consists of meat, bread, and wine” (179). As in Homeric society, meals eaten in Lewis’s kingdom of Glome usually feature some element of worship, as when the Fox drinks with Orual but first makes a “libation to Zeus the Savior . . .” with a “clever twist of his cup that lets fall just one drop” (*TWF* 140). The scene mirrors libation offerings in Homer, such as when Nestor and Atrides pray to Zeus before drinking and tip “first drops for the god in every cup” (*Iliad* 9:209; Dalby 354).

Lastly, we may consider the famous bacchanal depicted in *Prince Caspian*. Here as Aslan and the Pevensie girls work to restore Narnia from the tyranny of the Telmarines, Bacchus appears and leads the Narnians in a wild romp, culminating with the spontaneous generation of vines laden with “really good grapes” upon which all who are present feast (*PC* 168). I have already discussed one facet of this event as a miracle alluding to turning water into wine, yet the Greek allusion in Lewis’s scene is to Euripides’ play *Bacchae*, where Dionysus’s female maenads, worshipping in the woods,

are fed by nutritious fluids, wine among them, spontaneously erupting from the earth (*Bacchae* 698-710; Kitts 318). Lewis knew the play well and was so moved by a live performance of it in February, 1956 that he was still writing to friends about it several years later (*Letters*, Vol. III, 711; 1018). Bacchus, of course, is the Roman version of Dionysius, god of wine, the worship of whom was marked by drunkenness and orgiastic revelry. Doris Myers and Devin Brown separately identify Lewis's use of Bacchus not as an adoration of pagan immorality but as symbols of liberation and self-renewal morally restrained by the presence of Aslan (Myers 138-139; Brown, *Prince* 184-185). Judging from the themes of liberation and renewal, it is highly likely that Lewis saw in such scenes a sort of proto-Eucharist, fitting smoothly into his philosophy that pagan myths were infused with the unfocused gleam of divine Truth (*Miracles* 160; qtd. in Brown, *Prince* 186). Such a connection would seem to invite Lewis's imitative mingling of religious worship and culinary delight so often portrayed in Greek literature.

A number of medieval correlations in Lewis's fiction deserve attention as well, the most obvious of which is the Grand Feast. Nearly all of the Narnian books conclude with a celebration feast (Hooper 90).⁴ Lewis sometimes devotes several paragraphs or even whole pages to describe these meals. Perhaps the most blatantly medieval of the Narnian feasts is the introductory feast given to Eustace and Jill (*SC* 47). It is the only meal eaten in the great hall of Cair Paravel, which Lewis describes in detail, and the lengthy menu includes soups, pavenders (fish), venison, peacock, pies, ices, jellies, fruits, and nuts, wines and fruit drinks. Lewis's inclusion of elaborate medieval dishes such as boar's head or peacock, which enter the hall with a fanfare of "trumpeters and

⁴ The only Chronicle which does *not* feature a medieval-style feast in its denouement is *The Magician's Nephew* (Ford 369). The pre-civilization theme of the story necessitates meals with simple, raw ingredients.

kettledrums,” suggests that he was familiar with the theatrical medieval concept of *entremet*, which both Bridget Ann Henisch and Roy Strong describe as a centerpiece dish, brought out from the kitchen with great pageantry and usually bestowed with allegorical significance (*VDT* 192-3; Henisch 229; Strong 116).

Lewis’s final novel, *Till We Have Faces*, punctuates moments of good fortune with royal feasting, but attends times of conflict with austere meals, demonstrating Lewis’s cognizance of the medieval rhythms of fast and feast and the religious rituals attendant to each (Mennell 58; Henisch 28). Meals that signify such devotion to God establish a connection to the austerity of medieval monasticism. Strong comments that monastic meals were simple and routine, usually consisting of a Lenten diet of fish and vegetables, which are precisely the sort of meals Elwin Ransom eats with the ascetic and mystical *hrossa* on Malacandra (*Strong* 46; *OOSP* 64-65). Numerous Narnian characters have austere diets after the fashion of medieval holy men and women: the Wizard Coriakin eats only bread and wine (*VDT* 163); the retired star Ramandu subsists on a single fire-berry per day (*VDT* 208); a third, who is actually called “the Hermit of the Southern March,” offers porridge and goat’s milk to his guests, although he himself never seems to eat (*HHB* 148-9). The Hermit presents a rather accurate historical model. According to Henisch, records depict medieval hermits repeatedly fasting or eating outrageous diets of nearly inedible thistles or dried peas but often presenting sumptuous meals to their guests, proving “that austerity could be sweetened and hospitality refined when the two were practiced together and nourished by love” (Henisch 8-9). The Hermit of the Southern March demonstrates the medieval principle that eating deeply affects the spiritual disciplines of self-control, hospitality, and fellowship. He matches the qualities

Henisch mentions by caring intently for the questing children and talking horses who stumble upon his secluded house. He fills their bellies, dresses their wounds, and prepares them for the next segment of their quest using his miraculous powers of vision (*HHB* 147).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, pervasive allusions to medieval Eucharistic practices demonstrate Lewis's greatest debt to medieval cuisine. Not only are bread and wine staple menu items for many meals, but characters, especially female ones, experience something akin to the Eucharistic visions claimed by numerous medieval men and women (Bynum, *Holy Feast* 72, 227). Lucy and Orual are two such characters. Lucy experiences several visions while reading the Magician's book in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; immediately afterward the Magician eats only bread and wine while Lucy enjoys a typical British meal of omelet, lamb and peas (*VDT* 163). Psyche, whom Lewis describes as an "*anima naturaliter christiana*" serves her sister, Orual, wine and honeycakes, after which Orual is granted a vision of Cupid's supernatural palace (*Letters* 274; *TWHF* 109, 119).⁵ Although male, Elwin Ransom is the medieval visionary of *That Hideous Strength*; he survives solely on the elements of the Eucharist, a legendary ability of medieval saints (*THS* 149; Bynum, "Fast" 140).

British Influences

Of course, Lewis did not attempt to recreate a strictly medieval environment. One notable dissonance between Narnian culture and medieval Europe is the availability of food. Caroline Walker Bynum expresses the frequency of famine in the Middle Ages, and

⁵ *Anima naturaliter christiana* is Latin for "naturally Christian soul." Lewis borrows the concept from Tertullian's *De Testimonio Animae*, which claims that some human souls have a naturally ability to perceive and respond to God.

that, even in years of plenty, culinary profusion was reserved for wealthy nobles (“Fast” 139). Narnia, on the other hand, never experiences famine; in *The Horse and His Boy*, even when Shasta and Aravis must cross a desert with almost no provisions, their privation does not last for more than a day. Undoubtedly, the explanation lies with the Narnian stories’ fairy tale status; as Bynum points out, the constant medieval food shortage explains why so much folklore centers around fantasies of abundant food (“Fast” 139). Both the genre of the fairy tale and Lewis’s own personal situation explain his idealized fantasies of plenty. Andrzej Wicher observes that the renewable feast in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* may have its roots in legends of the Celtic cauldron of plenty, again emphasizing the connection with Narnia to medieval (and ancient) idealism rather than its actuality (Wicher 12). If we look to Lewis’s adult novel, *Till We Have Faces*, we find a more realistic balance of plenty-and-famine that characterizes a culture completely dependent on the land for sustenance. The Kingdom of Glome experiences famine so severe that, for months, even the royal family must subsist on leeks and bean bread (TWHF 36). Turning to the Space Trilogy, however, the fairy tale element returns, and the rule of plenty again takes hold. Only in the first book does any character experience lack of food, but the circumstance stems from ignorance rather than natural lack. After arriving on Mars, Ransom escapes his captors and enters a period of isolation in the alien landscape. He nearly starves until an alien rescues him and eventually informs him that the very turf upon which he walked was edible, so that if he had died, “he would have starved amidst abundance” (*OOSP* 66).

A second element of contrast between medieval culture and Lewis’s novels originates less from scholarship than from the contrast of genres. Lewis did not write

historical fiction; instead, he considered most of his novels to be fairy tales.⁶ While fairy tales certainly take certain cues from the Middle Ages, much of what passes as “medieval” in fairy tales, especially food, is much more recent. Staging the appearance of medievalism is what Massimo Montanari calls “playing at historical cuisine”: inventing medieval-sounding menus (or other cultural features) that are not authentically medieval (69). That Lewis was such an excellent medievalist minimizes this element in his fairy tales, but we may witness at least one example that blends the medieval with the modern.

As I have shown, the grand feast which the children enjoy early in *The Silver Chair* demonstrates medieval characteristics, yet the progression of the menu follows not the medieval progression of dishes but a nineteenth century progression called dinner *à la russe*. In 1810, a Russian diplomat to Paris introduced a new manner of table service for which each dish was brought in separately as its own course (Strong 296). This service model departed from the “service *à la française*” of the eighteenth century for which the dishes awaited the diners at the table. The new service was quickly dubbed “service *à la russe*” in honor of the Russian ambassador and slowly became the standard service in Europe as the century progressed. When he was a young boy, C. S. Lewis read about “dinner *à la russe*” from his family’s copy of Isabella Beeton’s *Book of Household Management*, an encyclopedic volume of nineteenth century British cookery (Gresham ix). If we compare the menu from *The Silver Chair* with Mrs. Beeton’s suggested *à la russe* menu, the service orders for each course align almost exactly, signifying that the medieval scholar did not suppress his modern sensibilities and tastes (Beeton 955; see Table 1.1).

⁶ The subtitle Lewis gave to the final book in his science fiction series illustrates the point: *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups*.

Table 1.1: Comparing course progression in C. S. Lewis and Isabella Beeton.

<i>Silver Chair</i> feast	Mrs. Beeton's service à la russe
Soups	Ox-tail Soup. Soup à la Jardinière.
Pavenders (an invented Narnian fish)	Turbot and Lobster Sauce. Crimped Cod and Oyster Sauce. Stewed Eels. Soles à la Normandie. Pike and Cream Sauce. Fried Filleted Soles.
Venison	Filets de Bœuf à la Jardinière. Croquettes of Game aux Champignons. Chicken cutlets. Mutton Cutlets and Tomata [sic] Sauce. Lobster Rissoles. Oyster Patties. Partridges aux fines herbes. Larded Sweetbreads. Roast Beef. Poulets aux Cressons. Haunch of Mutton. Roast Turkey. Boiled Turkey and Celery Sauce. Ham.
Peacock	Grouse. Pheasants. Hare. Salad. Artichokes. Stewed Celery.
Pies	Italian Cream. Charlotte aux Pommes. Compôte of Pears. Croûtes mdrées aux Fruits. Pastry.
Ices and jellies	Punch Jelly. Iced Pudding.
Fruit and nuts	Dessert and Ices.
Wine and fruit drinks	—

Sources: SC 47 and Beeton 955.

Mrs. Beeton's book allows us to appreciate how Lewis's own modern British culture influenced scenes of eating in his novels. Lewis continued to enjoy Beeton as a sort of light pleasure reading long into adulthood. In 1960, the senior Lewis wrote to Anne Scott, revealing his fondness of Beeton and recipe reading in general: "Cookery books are not such bad reading. Have you Mrs. Beeton with the original preface? It is delicious" (CL 3.1181). Lewis's stepson, Douglas Gresham, who lived with Lewis and his wife, Joy Davidman, from 1957 to 1963, wrote his own cookbook in celebration of how Lewis's abiding delight in cookery texts influenced the Narnian Chronicles.⁷ The preface of Gresham's now out-of-print *Narnia Cookbook* details the connection between Lewis and Beeton and includes recipes for such Narnian dishes as snipe stuffed with

⁷ Joy died in 1960, leaving Lewis to care for the teenaged Douglas and his brother David until his own death in 1963.

truffles or gooseberry fools, many of which are derived from recipes that may be found in Beeton (Gresham ix). On at least one occasion, Lewis himself tries his hand at recipe writing. *The Silver Chair* includes a few passages from the Giant's cookbook, an enormous volume found in the kitchen of the giant castle of Harfang. The book's alphabetized, encyclopedic entries for "Mallard," "Man," and "Marsh-Wiggle" constitute an obvious parody of the format used by Beeton (SC 131-2).

Lewis's fondness for British cooking did not begin, or end, with Isabella Beeton. Culturally speaking, modern British cuisine forms the bulk of eating in Lewis's fiction because, biographically speaking, modern British tastes dominated his actual meals. Personal letters bear witness to the "plain and wholesome English food" Lewis enjoyed all his life (Vallone 51). A letter to his brother dated 9 January 1940 recalls in detail a walking tour and pauses to savor the memory of his meals—eggs and cold pigeon for lunch at a hotel one day, "pork pie and a pint of cider" at a local pub the next (CL 2.321-2). The menus Lewis provides in his letters—bacon and eggs, beer, marmalade, buttered toast, and, of course, the perennial tea—evoke the meals found in Lewis's novels, demonstrating that his fictitious meals were often closely modeled after those he enjoyed in real life (CL 2.102).

Along with the rest of his countrymen, however, Lewis also experienced moments of deprivation which likewise fueled his drive to write about food. His experiences in the trenches of France during World War I and the national austerity of wartime rationing during the 1940s and '50s find some expression in nearly all of Lewis's novels.⁸ In *The Pilgrim's Regress* John and Virtue eat tinned meat and plain biscuits with three

⁸ With the exception of *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933), every novel in Lewis's canon was written between 1938 and 1956. Wartime rationing extended from 1940 to 1955 (Zweieniger 12).

unwelcoming strangers in an abandoned shack (*PR* 71); Tirian and the children must eat military rations of hardtack and water during the siege of Narnia (*TLB* 65); Ransom must scavenge for sustenance in the deprivation and insecurity of the Martian landscape (*OOSP* 110); Bardia and Orual, who both see active military duty, discuss the typical fireside meals of “bread and onions” during military campaigns (*TWHF* 127).

Lewis’s close friend J. R. R. Tolkien also lived through these troubled times, and his influential relationship with Lewis and the manner in which Tolkien expressed war-time eating in *his* novels eventually distills into Lewis’s novels. Lewis befriended Tolkien in 1935, and the two formed the Inklings, a literary club which met twice a week to eat and read together (Sayer 249). The men shared a great deal in common: both were veterans of World War I, both were Christians teaching at Oxford, both delighted in medieval literature while sharing a cautious disdain for modern stuff, both eventually became world-famous authors, and, if we compare their books, both enjoyed eating sturdy British food (Wood 338). The meetings of the Inklings helped forge this final, less well-known similarity. On Thursdays, the Inklings usually gathered at the Eagle and Child Pub in Oxford where the group drank enormous quantities of beer and lunched on kidney pies or the massive sandwiches common to British pubs (Carpenter 209). Tolkien personifies this sense of British simplicity in the lives and habits of his Hobbits who, among other things, are essentially British culinary experts. The little people eat their way through Middle-Earth, always longing for the next meal. An exasperated Bilbo Baggins trudges along on a quest that looks more and more like a forced military march with each passing day, wishing repeatedly for “his comfortable chair before the fire in his favourite sitting-room in his hobbit-hole, and . . . the kettle singing” (*Hobbit* 46). Tolkien

also shared Lewis's sense of the sacramental. Jonathan Langford finds Eucharistic metaphors in the *lembas* of Lothlorien and the *miruvor* of Rivendell, elvish provisions which lend spiritual and physical vitality to mortals, yet these elements retain a military quality, as Gimli the dwarf notes upon first inspecting *lembas*: "I thought it was only a kind of *cram*, such as the Dalemen make for journeys in the wild" (Langford 122-23; *Fellowship* 436).⁹

A second effect that wartime eating had on Lewis's books came not from the Great War, but from World War II. In his forties by that time, Lewis did not see active duty during this war, yet he was subject to the same national rationing program as the rest of the country. Rationing began in January of 1940 with butter and bacon, but by the time food control concluded in 1955, a host of foodstuffs, including meat, bread, eggs, potatoes, tea, margarine, cooking fat, preserves, cheese, canned foods, sugar, and chocolate were all rationed at some point (Zweieniger 17-24). Lewis's stepson, Douglas Gresham, claims that Lewis's apparent obsession with food stems wholly from the fact that "everyone was hungry all the time," but Lewis's writings from that period do not indicate a corresponding "obsession" (Gresham, interview). A food fixation driven by want would focus more on hunger, as we see in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, where near starvation constantly threatens the young protagonist (312). Lewis does, however, mention food and the ongoing rationing quite often, though mainly in response to receiving C.A.R.E. packages from American readers and supporters.¹⁰ Dozens of Lewis's letters continually praise the generosity of his enthusiasts without ever really descending into complaint. At times, his tone is rather jolly, as when all the members of the Inklings

⁹ Tolkien describes *cram*'s analogue with military hardtack in *The Hobbit* (242).

¹⁰ CARE = The Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere.

enjoyed a ham sent by Baltimore doctor Warfield M. Firor. His thank-you note includes signatures of all present with the inscription, “The undersigned, having just partaken of your ham, have drunk your health;” Lewis signed the note “yours Hamicably” (*CL* 2.838). Other times, Lewis merely seems astonished at the generosity, as this response to Vera Matthews attests: “Gosh, *what* a present! I wonder do you realize that—so far as I can judge—it represents eight weeks butter rations alone!” (*CL* 2.841). A second ham from Warfield Firor elicited a response which is the closest Lewis comes to complaining: “It will give you an illuminating sidelight on English life today when I tell you that the first resolution passed for the impending banquet [of ham] was ‘Every man to bring his own piece of *bread*’! There is by the way talk of taking bread ‘off the ration’ after the next harvest, but no one now takes very much notice of such items of official encouragement as our rulers see fit to give us; we have heard this sort of thing too often” (*CL* 2:850). The letter is dated 16 April 1948. The Ministry of Food did indeed end bread control that July, having rationed it for only two out of the fifteen years food controls were active (Zweieniger 24).

While it may be an overstatement to say that rationing explains away *all* of Lewis’s emphases on food, it certainly plays a role. Carolyn Daniel describes this principle as “deprivation shapes desire,” explaining that wartime rationing did create an unusually intense focus on food in British authors in general (70, 72). A single example shall suffice to illustrate how this seems to unfold in Lewis. When Lucy meets the Faun Tumnus in Narnia during her very first visit, the two sit down to “a wonderful tea” of a “brown egg . . . sardines on toast . . . buttered toast, and then toast with honey, and then a sugar-topped cake” (*LWW* 15). At the time of Lewis’s writing, every item on the menu

was being rationed except toast, which probably explains its comic abundance.¹¹ Honey and sugar were scarce, eggs were rationed at one every second week, and sardines would have been “an amazing luxury” (Nikolajeva 129; Gresham, interview). Not only is Lewis expressing his own deprivation vicariously through Tumnus, but he no doubt set the mouths of his original readership to watering at the mention of so many forbidden treats.

Section 2 – Critical Methods

The reader will have noticed that so far this introduction to the theology of Lewis’s fictional meals has been decidedly biographical: I have sought out those elements of Lewis’s personal life which persuaded him why and how to portray eating in his novels. The historical criticism provides a necessary foundation for what follows. I have already stated that the primary method of subsequent chapters is a theological explication of these meals. The second half of this introductory chapter provides a rationale for this approach and positions the theological method in contrast with two major competing approaches, Freudianism and structuralism, with an explanation of why I discard Freud but appropriate Lévi-Strauss to serve my theological purposes.¹²

Theological Criticism

Most modern critics write from within a materialistic framework, while Lewis, himself a modern critic, did not. Thomas Howard corroborates this perspective when he says, “the element that stymies serious literary discussion of Lewis . . . is the element for which there is no provision in the criticism of modern fiction, namely the Ultimate”

¹¹ Even the toast is debatable. Lewis finished *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* in late 1948, so the recent bread rationing was surely still fresh in his mind (Sayer 312).

¹² Of course, there are many other varieties of criticism, but those critics who notice the importance of Lewis’s meals usually fall into the three schools of theological, Freudian, or structural criticism, as shown below.

(Howard, *Achievement* 54). Within the Christian realm itself, Lewis has no shortage of critics who share his worldview, but only a few of these scholars focus on his meals. In this sense, a gap exists between mainstream critics and the circle of Lewis's Christian critics.¹³ Mainstream critics who scan episodes of Lewis's meals for anecdotal support of their arguments often ignore the theological overtones of Lewis's fiction, thereby missing the theological implications. Such methods may reveal certain insights into Lewis's meals but do not fully address the greater thematic positioning of the meals within the narrative. Theological critics focus intently on Lewis's Christianity, but because they do not fully appreciate the significance of food in his books, they also tend to overlook the theology inherent in nearly all of Lewis's meals. I intend to bridge this gap by fully affirming the priority Lewis attaches to food while examining his meals from a systematically theological perspective.

To Lewis, all daily living held spiritual significance, which especially included eating. Lewis himself testifies to this fact in a 1955 letter to Mary Van Deusen:

Even now, at my age, do we often have a *purely* physical pleasure? Well, perhaps, a few of the hopelessly prosaic ones: say, scratching or getting one's shoes off when one's feet are tired. I'm sure my meals are not a purely physical pleasure. All the associations of every other time one has had the same food (every rasher of bacon is now 56 years thick with me) come in: and with things like Bread, Wine, Honey, Apples, there are all the echoes of myth, fairy-tale, poetry, and scripture. So that the physical

¹³ I am using the term "critic" loosely when referring to this group. Many of these authors are ministers or theologians writing with homiletic objectives; strengthening the Christianity of the reader often supersedes careful literary analysis.

pleasure is also imaginative and even spiritual. Every meal can be a kind of lower sacrament. (*CL* 3.583; emphasis original)

This letter provides significant evidence that Lewis was well aware of both the spiritual and literary significance of richly symbolic foods like bread, wine, honey, and apples, all four of which play important roles in Lewis's own depictions of eating. The last sentence illustrates precisely how Lewis connected eating to the spiritual. Observe that by invoking physical, imaginative, and spiritual pleasures, Lewis has covered the three levels of reality Plato espouses in *The Republic*, a text which influenced Lewis's Christianity greatly (Johnson and Houtman 76). The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is, after all, a meal, and to Lewis it stood on the threshold between the realm of the sensible and the spiritual world of forms, yet all other eating, especially eating with others, is made more holy by the Eucharist's very existence. And finally, all sensible eating constitutes a Platonic precursor to the ultimate feast with Christ foretold by the Apostle John in Revelation 19:9: "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb."

The Platonic interpretation of eating is not Lewis's only connecting point between food and spirituality. Lewis asserted that the desire for food demonstrated the existence of God Himself. His letter to Van Deusen continues:

'Devastating gratitude' is a good phrase: but my own experience is rather 'devastating desire' – desire for that-of-which-the-present-joy-is-a-Reminder. All my life nature and art have been *reminding* me of something I've never seen: saying 'Look! What does this – and this – remind you of?' (*CL* 3.583-4).

Here we find an expression of Lewis's favorite proof for the existence of God, which Peter Kreeft has labeled the "Argument from Desire" (Kreeft 249-50). Lewis frequently used hunger as a favorite metaphor for communicating humanity's desire for God. In addition to the letter above, he conveys the metaphor three times in his major works. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis centers his chapter on Hope on the variety of ways people can respond to this desire and uses the desire for food to illustrate that longings do not exist unless "satisfaction for those desires exists" (121). In *The Screwtape Letters*, we find the demon Screwtape urging his pupil never to permit the human in his "care" to fulfill any pure desire with genuine pleasure since humans can be "defended from strong temptations . . . by a still stronger taste for tripe and onions" (66). The third usage comes from the afterword Lewis wrote for the third edition of *Pilgrim's Regress*, which claims that the desire for God contains a delight in and of itself, a "hunger . . . better than any other fullness" (157; qtd in Kreeft 255). The metaphor arises in minor writings as well, demonstrating that Lewis's fascination with spiritual hunger was more than merely academic. He states in a letter to Sheldon Vanauken, "At one time I was much impressed by Arnold's line 'Nor does the being hungry prove that we have bread.' But, surely, tho' it doesn't prove that one particular man will *get* food, it *does* prove that there is such a thing as food?" (CL 3.76).¹⁴ Wayne Martindale and Kathryn Welch maintain that Lewis's frequent use of the hunger metaphor symbolizes humanity's deep dependence on God (104). Human hunger is inescapable and never-ending. This hunger traces a relationship between humanity and its creator: we crave; God provides. Similarly, the innate spiritual

¹⁴ These are not the only times Lewis uses this metaphor, but I do not wish to exhaust the reader with repetitions. Other expressions can be found in *Perelandra* (32), *The Great Divorce* (41), *The Pilgrim's Regress* (36), *They Asked for a Paper* (124), and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (357).

craving, which seemed to Lewis so similar to hunger, was created by God as “a pointer to something other and outer” (*Joy* 238). Just as physical hunger leads to life-sustaining nourishment, without this signpost, humanity would perish. Through these and other metaphors in his non-fiction works, Lewis demonstrates that his Christianity so deeply affected his daily life that eating itself could not help but take on theological significance.

Freudian Criticism

To contrast the theological explanation for hunger, I shall next examine a competing interpretation of Lewis’s meals. Much has been made of the Freudian connection between food and sex.¹⁵ Sigmund Freud famously connected infancy, feeding, motherhood, and sexuality in his “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality”:

No-one who has seen a baby sinking back satiated from the breast and falling asleep with flushed cheeks and a blissful smile can escape the reflection that this picture persists as a prototype of the expression of sexual satisfaction in later life. (Freud 263-64)

Based on this relationship, Freudian critics propose a sexual symbolism any time a character eats, a theory which has often been applied to Lewis’s novels. Carolyn Daniel observes that Edmund and the White Witch’s relationship is “clearly sexualized” (231). Edmund seeks nourishment and mother comfort from the Witch, and she, in return, as a monstrous female with her phallic wand and fetish-invoking furs, seduces him (125). The

¹⁵ Here, for clarity’s sake, I must make a distinction between Freudian criticism and psychoanalytic criticism. According to Harmon and Holman, psychoanalytic criticism has its roots in Freud, but focuses more on unconscious desire in general rather than specifically latent sexual desire (409). Freudian criticism, however, driven by the “libidinal demands” of the id, continues to claim erotic desire as the wellspring of all desire (220). Since the critics I respond to below are patently Freudian *rather* than psychoanalytic (and Lewis’s own response is similarly pointed), my comments apply to the Freudian school alone.

warm, creamy drink the Witch provides for Edmund symbolizes the comfort of mother's milk but has been poisoned by the Witch's devouring sexuality (126).

Other critics take similar stances. Mary Werner cites Lewis's own struggles with sexual temptation as grounds for her Freudian interpretation of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Werner sees a young C. S. Lewis projected into the character of Edmund. As Edmund is dominated by the White Witch, so was Lewis intimidated by dominant females, which, Werner concludes, explains why Lewis did not marry until later in life (20). Mervyn Nicholson corroborates this notion of the White Witch wielding sexual power over Edmund, stating that "the Tricky Female [the White Witch] controls the male by manipulating his desire; he becomes her slave. The desire becomes compulsion" (56). Edmund's obsession is equivalent to a desire to "become one with her" (56).

As a literary critic himself, Lewis was aware of the Freudian school and responded to it. He specifically rebuffs the food-sex association in the essay "On Three Ways of Writing for Children." Consider the following paragraph which recalls a conversation Lewis had with a father concerning the "rather fine high tea" Lucy and Tumnus share in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*:

"Ah, I see how you got to that[, said the father.] If you want to please grown-up readers you give them sex, so you thought to yourself, 'That won't do for children, what shall I give them instead? I know! The little blighters like plenty of good eating'." In reality however, I myself like eating and drinking. I put in what I would have liked to read when I was a child and what I still like reading now that I am in my fifties. (*On Stories* 31)

Maria Nikolajeva reads this paragraph and chastises Lewis for either naïvely or insincerely ignoring the undeniable connection between food and sex (129). Strong words, yet strangely, Nikolajeva does not substantiate this claim other than stating that “sexual intercourse . . . is the necessary stage in a rite of passage” but then she drops the matter with the concession that “he had to observe the proprieties” of his time and genre and moves on to describe how the tea Lucy and Tumnus share is a ritualized meal in the mode of Holy Communion (129). She omits how the meal’s ritual quality evokes Communion and misses the opportunity to complete the theological point. The menu certainly does not carry the connotation, since eggs, toast, and cake share very little in common with the biblical Lord’s Supper.¹⁶

Both Freud and Nikolajeva fail to realize that the common element between sex and eating is the unity of fellowship that binds the participants together. The Greek New Testament uses the word *homothumadon*—meaning “one mind, one accord, one passion”—to describe occasions where being together, including eating together, unites the minds and passions of all participants (Acts 2:42; 5:12; 8:6; Thayer G3661).¹⁷ While the Greek word does not allude to the sexual relationship, Lewis did not overlook sex’s similar function and did not shy away from discussing or portraying sex when the occasion called for it. Multiple texts demonstrate this fact. In *Pilgrim’s Regress*, John struggles to distinguish between his desire for God, in whom he does not believe, and his desire for sex. The book explores how often and how easily sexual gratification substitutes for God but also demonstrates how such a substitute ultimately leaves John

¹⁶ As we shall see in the next chapter, high tea evokes Communion because it is a ritual meal that becomes a conduit for spiritual fellowship.

¹⁷ Citations of Joseph Thayer’s *Greek Lexicon* use Strong’s numbering system to reference Greek words.

confused and dissatisfied. In the end, John learns how to embrace the fact that his supernatural longing has its source in a Real Person. Through this honest faith, he learns to reject the misleading nature of his sexuality. In another instance, the closing chapters of *That Hideous Strength* so pervasively represent lovemaking that the scene could be called an orgy were it not so resplendently monogamous. A fine medieval feast, complete with costumes and crowns, serves as the appetizer for all this lovemaking, after which Venus herself descends while the ecstasies of courtship and worship mingle together (*THS* 364; 375). Lewis understood that this was all very grown-up fare and actively advised against children's exposure to it. He called *THS* "most unsuitable" for children due to the novel's exploration of "many specifically sexual problems which it wd. do them no good to think of at present" (*CL* 3.433). This awareness argues further against any conscious inclusion of such imagery in Lewis's books meant for children.

An examination of the Scriptures reveals the biblical nature of Lewis's portrait of love from *That Hideous Strength* (with the possible exclusion of Venus). William Propp's article "Milk and Honey" points out numerous times in Scripture when eating and sex are compared, and double-entendres between the two abound. The phenomenon occurs nowhere more frequently than in Song of Songs as the Beloved says to his Lover: "I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk" (5:1) or "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue" (4:11; Propp 16). Maternal metaphors are present as well which link God with divine nurture. The following verse depicts the Israelites receiving sustenance from God

as a child receives sustenance from its mother, through breast-feeding: “and [God] made [Israel] to suck honey out of the rock” (Deuteronomy 32:13; Propp 16).¹⁸

A Freudian treatment of these images appears inevitable, but spiritually they point in an utterly different direction. Lewis’s essay “Psycho-analysis and Literary Criticism” rejects Freudian criticism for its claim that the pleasurable images found in literature generate their pleasure *merely* due to their latent eroticism, that *all* desire ultimately finds its source in sexual desire, and that our learned inhibitions require the concealment of that ultimate desire (*They Asked* 127-8).¹⁹ Lewis’s counterclaim is that the pleasure of literature can easily be traced to multiple sources. Eroticism certainly serves as a possible candidate but is by no means the only, or even necessarily the strongest, source of desire. As evidence, Lewis suggests the following analogy, which is yet another expression of his Argument from Desire:

A man may go to a dinner under the illusion that he wants conversation when he really wants alcohol; but this does not mean that he suddenly loses interest in the proceedings when the champagne appears. He is more likely to realize, as he raises his glass, that this *is* what he really wanted—or at least to find the conversation very much better. It is one thing to admit unconscious desires; it is another to admit desires so unconscious that their satisfaction is felt as a disappointment and an irrelevance. (*They Asked* 129)

¹⁸ The Hebrew word for “suck” here means “to nurse.”

¹⁹ The title of Lewis’s essay seems to refute note fifteen; however, the nuances between “Freudian” and “psychoanalysis” were not as clearly defined in 1941—when Lewis wrote the essay—as they are today.

As for erotic imagery, the fact remains that readers can still find pleasure in the image of a garden even after discovering how gardens may deliberately or unconsciously represent the female body. This demonstrates that the pleasure of the image does not rest wholly in its sexual symbolism (*They Asked* 131). In his conclusion, Lewis remarks that the power perceived in Freudian analysis stems from its ability to explore the shadowy origins of our desires and potentially unlock tremendous, primordial truths (*They Asked* 137). This power has obvious benefit for a theological perspective, but unfortunately, the Freudian perspective does not probe the nature of pleasure deeply enough.

When applied to sex and eating, we find that Lewis's doctrine of desire explains why the two intersect, not because sex is the ultimate pleasure and eating its mimesis, but because both are sensual pleasures which anyone may strongly desire, and any strong desire leads, as John was lead in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, to a Place that transcends mere physical pleasure (Lewis, *Miracles* 164) . A more lucid iteration awaits in *Mere Christianity*, Lewis's capstone defense of his faith:

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. . . . Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. (121)

If sexuality is somehow a "higher" or "better" desire than eating, it is only because it is not strictly a need, and therefore can be subject to extremes in privation or indulgence, permitting virtues or vices to be more easily constructed around it. The greater intimacy and intensity of sex also allows for a more rapid spiritualization of the

act, but the book of Acts spiritualizes the intimacy of eating when the believers devote “themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. . . .” (2:42). Peter Kreeft adds to the argument that physical desires must be transcended. Once transcended, they lead to the deepest of all desires, which can only be satiated by the greatest of all pleasures, namely, spiritual fellowship with Christ (Kreeft 266). Lewis agrees when he concludes that desire itself emanates from God and leads to heaven: “I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death” (*Mere Christianity* 121).

Given this perspective, Lewis might suggest that Freudians are looking through the wrong end of the telescope. In *That Hideous Strength* the Christological character Elwin Ransom helps the misguided Jane discover that for too long she has neglected the sacred side of her femininity, to which she responds, “You mean I’ve been repressing something?” Ransom declares, “Yes, but don’t think I’m talking of Freudian repressions. He only had half the facts. It isn’t a question of inhibitions—inculcated shame—against natural desire” (314-315). By placing sex at the center of human existence, many Freudian critics convert eating into a benign substitute for the *summum bonum* of sexuality. Instead, as I have shown, Lewis places *desire* for fellowship with other personalities and with the Divine Creator at the center of human existence. Only through fellowship can humans experience true fulfillment. This expression frames a central pillar of Lewis’s argument for the existence of God (*Mere Christianity* 121). In the final analysis, Freudian criticism falls short not so much for its lack of insight, but for its limited materialistic perspective.

Structuralist Criticism

Structuralism, on the other hand, is similarly materialistic, but offers useful methodologies which provide starting points for theological insight. Claude Lévi-Strauss's essay "The Culinary Triangle" sets out the culinary oppositions of raw/cooked, air/water, fresh/rotten as a means of studying any society's habits of food preparation (29; see Fig. 1.1).²⁰

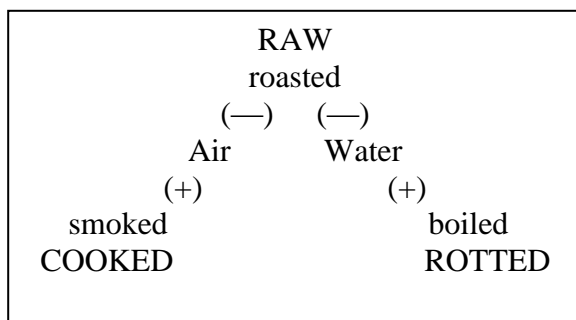


Fig. 1.1: Lévi-Strauss's "culinary triangle" of oppositions. Source: Lévi-Strauss 34.

Although no evidence suggests that C. S. Lewis followed the research of Lévi-Strauss, one may observe clear culinary oppositions in Lewis's novels.²¹ For example, in *Out of the Silent Planet*, protagonist Elwin Ransom rockets to Mars aboard a spaceship as the captive of antagonists Weston and Devine. Throughout the story, Weston and Devine only eat pre-packaged, cooked foods, like tinned beef, whiskey, and biscuits (29). While he is with them, Ransom eats their food, but upon escaping their clutches, he eats a Lenten diet of raw fruits and vegetables plus some fish, all available naturally from the Martian landscape. Here the moral dichotomy of good/evil aligns with the Structuralist semiotics of opposition and contradiction. The coded meaning in the food changes once it

²⁰ Lévi-Strauss greatly elaborates this concept in his seminal work *Mythologiques*, particularly with volume 1: *The Raw and the Cooked*, but for my purposes, the shorter essay provides a sufficient synopsis of his thesis.

²¹ *The Raw and the Cooked* was not published until 1964, the year following Lewis's death.

shifts from cooked to raw. The technological, meat-eating villains represent a corrupt society that seeks to possess and destroy the agricultural, monastic inhabitants of Mars. The sterile, preserved state of Weston's tinned meat and whiskey symbolizes his anti-nature attitude, while Ransom's meals change meaning once he shifts from cooked eating to raw eating. He embraces nature by living off fresh produce from the Martian landscape. Once he meets the Martian inhabitants, Ransom first eats with the alien population, then begins to learn its language, and eventually becomes assimilated into their society, illustrating Lévi-Strauss's statement that "the cooking of a society is a language in which it unconsciously translates its structures," only with a spiritual slant (35).

Lévi-Strauss intends the progression from raw to cooked as an indicator of social development, but Lewis deftly reverses this notion. Ransom's impulse to eat only raw, "native" foods illustrates his superior morality over his captors. In this fashion, he very much resembles the biblical prophet Daniel, who, along with his fellow Israelite captives, refused to eat the Babylonian king's rich meals in favor of a raw diet of vegetables. Daniel's diet sets him apart from the idolatrous king who enslaved him and his friends (Dan. 1:10-16). Through this diet, Daniel achieves sanctification, the theological process of becoming holy, which literally means "to be set apart" (White 969). By integrating Ransom into Martian culture, Lewis likewise sets Ransom apart from Earthly culture, gaining Ransom a distinct measure of holiness from the experience and suggesting that Ransom's alliance with the Martians is also spiritual rather than merely physical. Unlike humans, the Martians remain untainted by sin. Through their perfect communion with Maleldil (God), their culture guides Ransom into a more perfect relationship with the

Ultimate and actually begins to reverse Ransom's own fallenness. After eating the food on both Mars and Venus, Ransom becomes an Adamite immortal and is no longer under the curse of Original Sin (*Per* 189).

Structuralism's opposition of raw-versus-cooked works particularly well when analyzing the eating in *The Magician's Nephew*. In this novel nearly all foods are eaten raw, with an emphasis on fresh fruit. One scene in particular practically overflows with semiotic significance. The protagonists Digory and Polly find themselves at sunset on a hill in the newly-created world of Narnia without proper food to eat. Their only option is a bag of toffees Polly has brought from England. The children eat every toffee save one, which they plant, because they know that the soil in Narnia is magical; they had witnessed the famous Narnian lamppost sprout from the ground where an iron bar had been dropped. The next morning they find a toffee tree, "about the size of an apple tree... with little brown fruits that looked like dates" (*MN* 164-167). The primary conflict of the scene rests in the fact that the sun is going down, signifying supper time. This means a meal *must* occur, but not because the children are starving; they are, like all of Lewis's child characters, rather well fed. Instead, they have simply been raised to expect an evening meal. Evident here is the culinary language of British society, and the reciprocity is elegant: the meal tells the time while the culture demands the meal.

In addition, Lewis contrasts how British children and adults might respond differently to the same situation. Both would expect their dinner, and neither would be satisfied with the menu, since toffee obviously does not meet the criteria for "supper" in terms of quantity or variety (Douglas 36). But unlike the children, adults might refuse the strange meal altogether, because, as the narrator intrusively remarks, "You know how

fussy they can be about that sort of thing” (*MN* 164). On the other hand, the British children who were this book’s first readers would likely have delighted in a meal of toffee, especially considering that sugar rations were still firmly in place at the time of Lewis’s writing.

This episode also provides an example of how we might appropriate structuralism to make a theological point. Lewis presents an unusual reversal of food. The toffee, in a cooked/boiled state, magically reverts to a natural/raw state—the toffee fruit. The significance resonates within the context of the newly created Narnia: no Narnian culture exists yet, since everything is brand new, or as Polly says, “There is no one there, and nothing happening. The world only began today” (160). The Edenic quality of this vibrant land precludes the availability of cultural objects like refined sugar or the pots required to boil it in since the land still provides every need.²² Lewis assigns meaning to the burial of the toffee as well, for obviously, toffee is not a seed, and in our world to bury candy is to spoil it. Digory and Polly, of course, know both of these facts, but the testimony of the sprouting lamppost gives them hope that the candy will not spoil, but will experience new life as a tree. Lévi-Strauss might identify this process with the culinary triangle and its “ability to engender myth” since the transformation reverses a natural process and should therefore be categorized as miraculous or magical (34). But Lewis goes further than mere myth when the raw/cooked opposition gives way to a burial/resurrection motif which moves the reader inexorably to Aslan himself, who created all of these wonders, and who, the reader already knows from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, died and resurrected in yet another reversal of the rotten/raw

²² This Edenic quality is also present in Venus as Mars as portrayed in Lewis’s *Space Trilogy*, providing another explanation for why all of those meals are raw.

opposition.²³ The ability of Lewis's meals to make theological statements frames the core of this study, and structuralist methodology gives us the tools to decipher the statements.

Mary Douglas, whose article "Deciphering a Meal" provides practical application of Lévi-Strauss's theory, suggests that meals may be interpreted like language, even diagrammed using grammatical elements of meaning (36). She claims that all meals can be interpreted based on the coded units of meaning found within ingredients, presentation, and meal times (38-9). By looking for patterns within a set context of meals, we may find that categories emerge which may be analyzed for meaning. She examines the categories of the daily menu, the meal, the course, the helping, and the mouthful to look for micro-cultural expressions of meaning in the ways individual families interact at mealtimes (37). My approach for this study borrows from Mary Douglas's concept of interpreting a meal. While her research seeks only sociological insights, Douglas's practicability creates the potential for broader application, and we will discover that Lewis's meals yield to this analysis.

As Douglas suggests, an analysis of any meal may become quite complex very quickly (38-39). But unlike Douglas, who is looking for a universal message common to all diners, when seeking meaning in one of Lewis's meals, we only need to ask why Lewis ever need vary from the simple statement, "They ate." Granted, the embellishments for this statement often—perhaps even usually—function in a text for either purely aesthetic reasons or for a more-or-less binary augmentation of a narrative event. A lovely description enhances a lovely conversation; a filthy meal demonstrates

²³ To be strict, some scholars argue that *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* should be read as the second book in the series instead of the first, in which case the reader may not know just yet that Aslan has died and risen. If so, the toffee tree might be viewed as a foreshadowing.

squalid living conditions or the unfairness of a plot twist. The sets of variables which shape meals approach infinity, so to attempt a universal categorization is almost certainly pointless.

So perhaps a better approach may be to start with the unchanging certainties of a text as a means of limiting the variables. For C. S. Lewis's fiction, one such unchanging certainty is that he lived and wrote as a Christian, a fact which Leanne Payne asserts colored every aspect of Lewis's life, including his writing (14). Once we determine this certainty, another immediately emerges. I have shown that Lewis was intimately familiar with the Bible in both its imagery and its theology. As such, we may be certain that images in his fiction which resemble biblical imagery do, in fact, find their source there, whether subconsciously or deliberately.

Unlike Mary Douglas, I am not examining the eating habits of a family, but rather the narrative variables of fictional meals; I have identified categories of meaning for my analyses different from those of Douglas (37-38). Meals in Lewis's novels vary meaningfully according to menu, drinks, location, diners, progression, provider, length, and afterward. Notably, each of these feature opposing pairs that immediately begin to deliver information (see Table 1.2). The menu opposition of raw vs. cooked, for example, immediately suggests whether or not humans have a hand in the preparation of a meal, a factor that suggests the interaction of a deity. For drinks, the opposition of fermented vs. unfermented indicates the presence of alcohol, a polarizing ingredient in the context of any Christian setting. The long vs. short opposition in the length category simply tells us how important the meal is; this category will often work in the background as an

indicator of whether the meal is worth studying at all. I will tend to favor longer meals for their obvious wealth of imagery and the influence they spread over the rest of their story.

Table 1.2: Variables and opposing pairs within Lewis’s meals

Menu	Raw
	Cooked
Drinks	Fermented
	Unfermented
Location	Indoors
	Outdoors
Diners	Alone
	Together
Progression	Single-Course
	Multi-Course
Provider	Human
	Non-human
Length	Long (i.e. a paragraph or more)
	Short (i.e. less than a paragraph)
Afterward	Action
	Rest

Using the list above, we might extract meaning from a given meal by stringing together data from these lists of variables to constitute a sort of culinary “sentence.” The meal’s menu, location, diners, and other factors all form the parts of speech of the sentence. While one may argue that the above categories may be found in any meal portrayed by any author, the specifically theological sense of Lewis’s meals emerges when we examine the backgrounds of Lewis’s meal vocabulary. While these sentences may be read narratively or culturally, their primary function is theological due to the biblical and biographical resonances of the individual choices with which Lewis populates each category. Also worth noting here is that a single meal may carry more than one theological theme. The variables in one category may resonate with one theme

while the variables in others may allow for a second.²⁴ This fact does not contradict my thesis at all, since the theological themes are complimentary. Let us consider a particular meal to clarify how the process works.

In chapter two of *Prince Caspian*, the four Pevensie children have landed in Narnia once more after being absent for some 1,000 years of Narnia time. They discover the ruins of *Cair Paravel*, the old castle in which they once lived as kings and queens, and begin eating the apples from the old orchard they had watched being planted, now centuries ago. These apples become the staple food of the children's diet for more than half the total novel, and the theological implication of the meal of apples may be extracted by examining the vocabulary of Lewis's culinary sentences as he describes that first meal of apples in chapter two. We may categorize the details of this meal by interpreting the data into the table of opposing variables.

Table 1.3: Analysis of apple meal in *Prince Caspian*

Category	Opposition	Description
Menu	Raw	Apples. Roasting is attempted, but fails.
Drinks	Unfermented	Water. First from a stream, then a well.
Location	Outdoors	Appears to be a deserted island, but they soon discover it to be the ruins of their old home: the castle of Cair Paravel
Diners	Together	The four Pevensie children, are together but isolated from both Narnians and other Englishmen.
Progression	Single course	The children do not have sufficient provisions for a second course
Provider	Non-human	The children had the orchard planted in ages past, but the

²⁴ The presence of multiple senses in a single meal actually improves the analogy between the grammar of meals and the grammar of language. Words and sentences may have multiple meanings and still be perfectly intelligible; I find that this is also true for Lewis's meals.

		orchard was blessed by Pomona, a wood goddess whose magical enchantments protected it. Lilygloves, the mole who did the actual digging, prophesied that the children would be thankful for the trees someday (19).
Length	Long	Lewis spends eight pages setting up for the meal, one full paragraph on the meal itself, and provides another full paragraph explaining to origin of the apple orchard The apples themselves are used in at least six more meals (34, 111, 112, 115, 118, 137).
Afterward	Action	The energy gained from the meal and the clues from the apples and the ruins empower them to explore the castle and solve the riddle of their location.

Based on the meal information pulled from the text, we can begin an analysis of the theological significance of the meal. Right away we know that it is an important meal from its length alone and from the fact that imagery from the meal recycles throughout much of the rest of the book.

Menu – The simple menu of apples conceals a deceptively complex image. Immediately, the raw state of the food indicates humankind itself is not directly involved with the menu. Lewis hints at this by alluding to Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit. She had blessed the trees while Lilygloves made a prediction that “you’ll be glad of these fruit trees one day” (*PC* 19). Combined, the two events indicate that a Power beyond the mere hardiness of apple trees has preserved this orchard for the last 1,000 years. The apple image itself, when considered with Lewis’s Christian background, draws from an enormously deep well of symbolism stretching back to Genesis and the garden of Eden (Toussaint-Samat 558). The Bible never actually identifies the forbidden fruit as an apple,

yet the traditional identification of the fruit as an apple is centuries old.²⁵ However, Lewis is not using the apple as a symbol for sin here. Medieval artists placed apples in the hands of Christ to represent salvation since Christ is the New Adam who reversed the Fall caused by Adam and Eve's sin (Sill 54). Paul Ford claims that the apples here serve just such a purpose, and notes that apples as a redemption motif can be found elsewhere in the Chronicles (49). Apple imagery turns up in *The Magician's Nephew* when Digory yearns for fruit "from the land of youth" to heal his dying mother and gets just that in the form of a magic apple from the Narnian equivalent of the Tree of Life (MN 99; 216). The apples in *Prince Caspian* do not function quite so dramatically, but they do provide needed sustenance and strength, sufficiently demonstrating the salvific motif by warding off the threat of starvation.

Drinks – Water's natural wholesomeness and life-giving properties often play a significant role in Scripture, and therefore in Lewis's works as well. John the Apostle repeatedly refers to Jesus Christ as the living water (John 4:14; 7:38), and Lewis frequently uses water imagery in connection with Aslan, the series' Christ figure (SC 21; HHB 179). Water's association in Scripture with baptism and with miracles evokes additional salvific motifs of transformation and regeneration. Lewis exploits this resonance early in *Prince Caspian* by noting how thirsty the children become soon after they arrive in Narnia, making their search for a source of fresh water a priority (5). So while, in one sense, the water coming from the old well at *Cair Paravel* is just a well and the children are merely thirsty, the theological resonance of the water image signifies that

²⁵ The association probably began with St. Jerome's Latin translation of the scripture. In Latin, the word *malum* can be understood to mean "evil" or "apple"; hence the source of the association appears when Jerome translates a phrase in Genesis 2:17 as "*de ligno autem scientiae boni et mali*" ["the tree of the knowledge of good and evil/apples"] (Toussaint-Samat 558).

spiritual forces are at work, not only transporting the children into Narnia in the first place, but also perfectly providing for their every need once they arrive (Martindale and Welch 104).

Location – The children have returned to Narnia and found the ruins of Cair Paravel, where they once ruled as Kings and Queens of Narnia during their prior visit. Many hundreds of years of Narnia time have passed since then. The castle has fallen into ruin and the children do not recognize that they are even in Narnia, much less that they have found their old home. In Lewis’s narrative, the ruined Cair Paravel functions as an enormous riddle presented for the children to solve. Lucy and Peter express awareness of the riddle, and Peter solves the riddle using a multi-step exercise in logical deduction—the Apple Orchard is the fourth point in his syllogism (19; Brown, *Prince* 35). Just who has placed the riddle there for them to solve remains, as Lucy puts it, a “wonderful mystery hanging over the place” (18). However, the narrator frequently comments about how the “air of Narnia had been working” on the children since their arrival, through which they progressively regain the strength and wisdom lost when they returned to England the first time (109; 138). Such repetition implies that the mental and physical challenges of the riddle play an important role in re-acclimating the children to the rigors of Narnian life (Brown, *Prince* 33). The failed attempt at cooking the apples demonstrates to the reader how far they have to go before they can be of any service to Caspian. This suggests strongly that the puzzle of Cair Paravel was posed to the children by Aslan himself, the only person who *could* have presented them with such a puzzle. Lewis never states this explicitly, of course, but Devin Brown points out that Lewis does

offer explicit attribution to Aslan as the power behind multiple coincidences in *The Horse and His Boy* (48).

Diners- This category is relatively straightforward. The children remain isolated because they have some “growing up” to do apart from the greater milieu of the plot. Their time on the island is not a time of relationship but of preparation. Isolation frequently plays this precise role in Lewis’s novels, as we see with characters such as Elwin Ransom in the Space Trilogy or Orual in *Till We Have Faces*, who spend time alone in order to discover spiritual truths needed in order for them to move forward toward the spiritual transformation in store for them. The apples could even play a role here since they are the first Narnian food the children eat. Susan Navarette amply demonstrates Lewis’s use of “magical” food with transformative powers imbuing Ransom with near immortality in *Perelandra* (100). The blessed apples work on these diners to speed up their acclimatization to Narnian life.

It is possible to continue with this analysis to include all eight categories of variables, but in this particular example, the first four contain all the information necessary to correctly determine the theological significance of the meal, which by now should be plain. The vocabulary of the meal points solidly towards a single theological message. The apples here strongly allude to God’s—or Aslan’s—provision of sustenance for the children, saving them from starvation in a time of need (Martindale and Welch 104). The pervasive presence of water and the children’s need of it indicate their dependence on this same Providence for survival. The location and the diners’ isolation within it show that the Providential element at work here is building toward some specific purpose, namely the preparation of the children to resume their roles as powerful kings

and queens of Narnia. Taken as a whole, the meal confirms the presence of Providence in *Prince Caspian*, which might be missed without special attention to this and other meals within the text. This claim, in fact, is borne out in scholarship concerning *Prince Caspian*. Critics who note the apple motif arrive successfully at the providential theme (Brown, *Prince* 33; Ford 49; Martindale and Welch 104). Others who miss or ignore the significance of this meal miss the theme (Schakel 34; Kilby 129; Sammons 127).

Section 3 – Thematic Chapters

Having established the usefulness of structuralist methods adapted to theological purposes, the final step is to collate meal interpretations into discernible themes both within individual novels and across Lewis's entire canon. These final themes correspond with the four chapters which follow this introduction. Research for this study has revealed numerous themes inserted in Lewis's fiction through his meals. However, space limitations require that I only focus on the four theological themes which most contribute to the interpretation of Lewis's books, namely, the themes of ecclesiology, Eucharist, hamartiology, and eschatology. The structure of each chapter will be similar. Chapters will open with a focused discussion of how an individual theological theme can be discovered by analyzing repetitive trends within the various categories of variables in Lewis's depictions of eating. For the sake of brevity, I will only focus on meals which I have already identified as fitting into each theological category, performing detailed explications—like the one exemplified above—on the most influential among these. Accompanying this structuralist analysis will be a corresponding comparison of the images found in these meals with their source imagery drawn from either principles found within Lewis's non-fiction or from the Bible. After verifying that the meal imagery

from Lewis's text warrants a theological interpretation, I will assert the presence of the theological theme, and the chapter will proceed with an argument for an interpretation of the specific meals of the text in light of the theological themes. The final chapter will deviate from this pattern somewhat, featuring a brief discussion of the theme of eschatology in Lewis's meals paired with a conclusion for the study as a whole.

Chapter two focuses on the theological theme of ecclesiology, or the fellowship of believers. Ecclesiology usually examines the Christian church as a working spiritual unit, but since many of Lewis's novels are not framed in a specifically Christian setting, I will use a broader definition of "believers," with the understanding that most of Lewis's protagonists serve as analogues to Christians. This notion can be extended to understand gatherings of protagonists as analogous to church gatherings, which especially includes meals. The meal variables which this study emphasizes are the Menu, the Drinks, the Diners, the Progression, and the Afterward. The category of Diners plays a particularly crucial role. When Lewis portrays diners eating together as friends or even just as companions, the meal resonates with the teaching of Christ which declares that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). The chapter will examine how the theme of hospitality pervading Lewis's fiction expresses Lewis's theology of evangelism. The progression of these meals tends towards the home-cooked, the location house-based. The meals can be shown to demonstrate a functional version of the Old Testament table bond, with the host often seeking to utilize the bond in an attempt to proselytize the guest into loyalty to the novel's Christ figure. From evangelism, the chapter will move to a discussion of which of Lewis's meals reveal insight into his doctrine of ecclesiastic fellowship. Whenever the hearty English food

Lewis enjoyed is paired with drinking and smoking, the meal veers sharply towards ecclesiology because those meals' consistent expression of the ecclesiastic themes of edification, worship, and the gospel, or *evangelium* (Sayer 342-3). Lewis read the drafts of his novels at gatherings of his literary club, The Inklings, which often met in a pub at lunchtime, and we find that such events held a discernible influence on how Lewis expressed Christian fellowship (Sayer 312-313). We shall see that this sort of food is often present when friends who share purposes and/or beliefs eat together. I argue that the very consistent nature with which such meals are portrayed in Lewis's fiction urges interpreting them as Christian fellowship. A central example of such a meal is the supper Mr. and Mrs. Beaver prepare in their cozy lodge, which follows the fellowship pattern precisely: fried fish and potatoes with a "huge jug of beer" for Mr. Beaver, who takes a moment to light his pipe before telling the children the story of the White Witch (*LWW* 73-74).

Chapter three examines meals that share the qualities of the Christian Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, which Jesus Christ invoked at His final Passover with His disciples. At the Last Supper, Jesus commanded the disciples to eat bread and wine in remembrance of Him (Matt. 26:17).²⁶ Consequently, the meal variables most emphasized here are those of Menu and Drinks. Fermented wine and bread form the foundation of the Christian Eucharist, and Lewis's love of regularly partaking of the Lord's Supper is well-documented (Sayer 135; Lewis, *Malcolm* 100-105). Nancy-Lou Patterson has previously acknowledged that these two facts naturally generate a Eucharistic motif any time a perceptive reader notes the presence of the elements within a meal (Patterson 31). The

²⁶ Whether the wine was alcoholic or merely grape juice is debatable but not relevant here. Lewis cared little for such niggling.

presence of the sacramental elements elevates the occasions in which they occur, rendering them higher and more holy than Lewis's more common meals. These meals initiate the worship of and the desire for fellowship with the novel's Christ figure, either symbolically, through the presence of the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine, or literally through the actual presence of the Christ figure. The chapter will argue that the elevation stems from the Anglo-Catholic doctrine of Real Presence, and Lewis's use of allusions to medieval holy men and women George MacDonald's king, who subsists solely on bread and wine, suggests the doctrine requiring a formal priesthood to administer the Eucharist (MacDonald 171; *THS* 149). The meal variable of *Diners* reveals additional insight into the Eucharistic theme. As mentioned, each of the novels in the study includes a Christ figure. In *Pilgrim's Regress*, Christ is the Landlord's Son; in the *Space Trilogy*, the Christ figure is Maleledil; in *The Chronicles*, it is Aslan; and in *Till We Have Faces*, the Christ character is Cupid. Because eating the Lord's Supper signifies fellowship with Christ himself, a variation of the Eucharistic theme is generated whenever characters eat in the presence of that novel's Christ figure. My term for such a presence is the Corporal meal, since the status of the Christ figure serves to transform any meal into spiritual fellowship with Christ, regardless of the menu.²⁷ Delight punctuates these meals, as when Aslan provides a miraculous feast of grapes while the Narnians and the Pevensies dance and romp about Him in worship (Brown, *Prince* 183; *PC* 159).

Chapter four focuses on the theme of hamartiology, examining the nature of sinful eating and its impact on characters who are in conflict with the protagonists. Only spiritually unhealthy characters—usually villains—consume meals of this sort, while dire

²⁷ The Greek word for fellowship, *koinonia*, is the source of the English word "communion."

consequences swiftly follow, so that the unholy devourer “eateth and drinketh damnation to himself” (1 Cor. 11:29; Lewis, *Surprised* 161). The meal variable of Diners plays an important role since only antagonists and sinful protagonists ever eat such meals. The meal variable of the Afterward shows that swift and negative consequences often follow on the heels of sinful eating. Edmund becomes addicted to Turkish Delight and turns traitor; Jadis eats a forbidden apple and gains a miserable immortality; Orual tries unsuccessfully to slake a guilty thirst just before assaulting her sister and angering Cupid (*LWW* 37; *MN* 172; *THS* 168). These images all connect Lewis’s sinful eaters to the Christian vice of gluttony. Lewis was well connected with the historical dialogue concerning gluttony, and his own studies on the topic appear in *Screwtape Letters* and *Mere Christianity* (*SL* 87ff; *MC* 75-76). Modern scholars have noted these connections and have since made gluttonous eating one of the most well-chronicled of all of Lewis’s eating themes (Martindale, and Welch 103; Reed 62; Vallone 52; Werner 20). The chapter will explore four iterations of this theme. The first emerges when Lewis combines sinful eating with the menu item of apples and/or the setting item of gardens, creating clear Edenic resonances within the text and interrogating the popular notion that *the* Original Sin was gluttony. Here the argument turns toward Milton, exploring Lewis’s tremendous admiration for and imitation of *Paradise Lost*. The second iteration, that of intemperate eating or “gluttony proper,” examines addiction’s role by looking at culinary abuses such as Edmund’s Turkish Delight or Mark Studdock’s emergent alcoholism. Anti-pleasure eating takes place when a character, because of sin, loses the ability to enjoy any food that would otherwise be pleasurable. Without pleasure their spiritual health is hindered, according to Lewis’s own doctrine of pleasure (Brown, “Work” 92;

Lewis, *Screwtape* 44). Lewis embodies this doctrine succinctly at the beginning of *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, when he describes the antagonistic Eustace and his parents as “vegetarians, non-smokers, and teetotalers,” encapsulating the anti-pleasure image with the negation of three of Lewis’s most pleasurable activities: smoking, drinking, and eating meat (*VDT* 1). The final expression of sinful eating, anti-fellowship, examines the variable of diners and menus. The Menu category is important not for what it includes, but for what it excludes, since Lewis rarely provides a menu for meals eaten by villains. Previous chapters examine the spiritual and physical delights of fellowship. However, sinful meals present the antithesis of fellowship, representing characters who descend into misery by alienating themselves from God and from others, entering into a hellish state of existence. This process of alienation is a signature event for Mark in *That Hideous Strength*, where eating with enemies forms a framework of mistrust and treachery, culminating in a cataclysmic meal at the novel’s end where the sinful diners are themselves eaten in judgment for their moral abuses.

The fifth and final chapter briefly surveys eschatological eating, the most transcendent of the categories and an appropriate conclusion to the study since it examines the afterlife in heaven, the ultimate goal of all Christian theology. Lewis’s eschatological meals are the easiest to identify, but not solely because of shared meal variables. Instead, Lewis signals the presence of an eschatological meal through a rhetorical device. Occasionally, a diner declares that a meal or menu item is “the best” he or she has ever eaten. Such expressions are usually followed by an experience of death, be it actual or figurative. The existence of such a tight pattern—superlative quality followed by exposure to death—signifies that such meals touch Lewis’s doctrine of the

afterlife in some way. When Jill drinks water in the paradisiacal Aslan's Country, when the Friends of Narnia eat perfect fruit immediately after their actual deaths; when Ransom consumes the orgiastic fruits on the otherworldly Perelandra, all are described with superlative rhetoric and all figure in to Lewis's concept of glory. The chapter also explores as second type of eschatological meal, the celebration feast frequently found at the close of Lewis's novels. By occurring within the novel's denouement and attended with an expression of the fairy tale's "happily ever after" topos, the jubilant, conflict-free feast that closes the novel must be seen as an approximation of paradisiacal reality. The discussion of eschatology is an appropriate close to the study because it culminates the core message of Lewis's culinary theology. The themes, both new and old, revealed in this study demonstrate that within Lewis's fiction may be found a progressive theology of eating that moves from terrestrial relationships, to spiritual relationships, and on into the perfection of all relationships in a paradise of pure pleasure and eternal fellowship with God in the afterlife. Both Lewis's readers and Lewis himself have latent cravings for all three tiers of pleasurable relationships which partially maintain the popularity of Lewis's novels, especially among Christians. This final chapter will position eschatological eating securely within the backdrop of Lewis's other references to Paradise, illustrating how, for Lewis, writing was a means of exemplifying his precept from *Mere Christianity*: "I must make it the main object of my life to press on to that other country and to help others do the same" (MC 121).

CHAPTER TWO

THE MORE THUS WE SHARE: ECCLESIOLOGICAL MEALS IN C. S. LEWIS'S
FICTION

There can be no denying that food acts as a cultural unifier, bringing humans together as perhaps no other cultural ritual or artifact can. As a presence in literature, food often—perhaps usually—signifies a host of unifying features which bind humanity together in a commonwealth of taste. Lynne Vallone describes the general function of eating in children's literature "as a means to discuss identity and belonging, moral character, children's behaviors, power relations, and gender roles" (47). Ultimately, all these topics center on the role which community plays in the lives of both protagonist and reader. Wendy Katz agrees with Vallone by asserting that understanding the child's relationship with food will help us "understand the workings of the world of the young" (192). The statement seems valid beyond just children's literature, of course, as M. F. K. Fisher claims, "Our three basic needs for food and security and love are so minced and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others" (vii; qtd. in Vallone 47). C. S. Lewis's scenes of eating beautifully illustrate this reality. His meals often emphasize the attainment of security and love. We see security when the beavers struggle to keep the four Pevensie children safe from the White Witch's secret police by cozening them in their lodge and treating them to a home-cooked meal. We see love when Jane discovers the selfless company of St. Anne's, who shield her from the enemies

who would destroy her and, on the way, enjoy a picnic in the car on a rainy day (*THS* 113; Howard 138).

Of course, throughout literature, eating functions in a similar fashion. However, as we shall see, Lewis's meals are different. His latent Christianity and his measured application of its principles can be traced in meals across his writing.²⁸ He portrays the universal reality of a human culinary community as countless authors before him have done but then adds indicators that point to the spiritual needs of the human soul which depend on this basic framework of community for its interactions (McCray 414). Lewis's human characters spend time together to meet the physical and social needs of nutrition and companionship, but also because of deeply shared spiritual beliefs which are strengthened by being combined. This binding principle is expressed in the Bible when St. Luke declares, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts 2:44). The early Christians ate together, but also prayed, worshipped, and studied the Christian way of life together. Luke calls this principle fellowship, and Lewis depicts his characters fellowshipping in much the same way.

Lewis uses certain meals to demonstrate not only a collection of protagonists functioning as a body of believers but also the process by which that body acquires new members. Therefore this chapter will examine two distinct iterations of ecclesiastic eating that can be found in Lewis's meals. The first will depict the process of a host feeding a guest and verbally proselytizing the newcomer into the worldview held by the host. These hospitality meals frequently depict Lewis's understanding of Christian evangelism and

²⁸ Naturally, we must tread carefully. Just because Lewis is a Christian does not give the reader *carte blanche* to assign "hidden" Christian meanings arbitrarily. Lewis himself was quick to point out that only one of his novels (*The Pilgrim's Regress*) functioned as a deliberate allegory, which means we do damage to his works by treating them all like allegories (*CL* 3. 1004).

usually end with the guest adopting the host's loyalty to the novel's Christ figure. The second type will examine how Lewis depicted a ritualized version of his own favorite types of eating to portray his ideal principles of Christian fellowship. When protagonists eat together, they come united in loyalty to the person and purpose of that novel's Christ figure, usually expressed by a story told after the meal that expresses the good news of the Christ figure. This gathering of believing protagonists may be seen as an analogy—not an allegory—of the Church, which means that the meals they share together correspond with Christian fellowship. The conclusion of this chapter will examine the culinary implications of Doris Myers' claim that *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* can be viewed as an extended metaphor of how the fellowship of believers ought to function as a community (Myers 142).

Culinary Language of Fellowship

First, we must survey the particular categories of eating Lewis uses to assemble these theological expressions. As asserted in the previous chapter, C. S. Lewis's meals speak a culinary language that may be analyzed for theological content by examining patterns within the variety of variables found in each of the meals (Douglas 36). Lewis's meals can be analyzed according to eight categories of variables: Menu, Drinks, Location, Diners, Progression, Provider, Length, and Afterward. In five of these variables, I find patterns that indicate an ecclesiological theme (see table 2.1). Variables in the Menu, Diners, Location, Provider, and Afterward categories show how Lewis uses hospitality as a means of modeling evangelistic practices. In Hospitality meals the Diners are strangers, and one always arrives as a guest, often at the home of the host. The host provides a pleasurable home-cooked meal in a homely setting during which it quickly

becomes apparent that the event is not merely a meal but a sort of initiation ceremony into the circle of friends to which the host belongs. Most of the time, that circle aligns itself with the novel's Christ figure, alluding to the process of Christian evangelism. Once new characters have gained membership in the circle, Fellowship meals can occur. For these meals, the categories of Menu, Diners, Progression and Afterward display variables that point to Lewis's personal vision for ideal Christian fellowship. These meals take their cues from Lewis's private life, especially his weekly meetings with his own circle of Christian friends. Meals of two or more protagonists eating a meal together featuring eating, drinking alcohol, and smoking uses the Oxbridge model Lewis himself enjoyed. After such meals, one or more protagonist tells some sort of story, almost always in support of the Christ-figure's agenda. This storytelling models both the meetings of Lewis's Christian friends and the tradition of homiletic-based church worship.

Table 2.1: Synopsis of Lewis's ecclesiological eating.

Culinary Language	Hospitality Meal
Diner	1. When a protagonist enjoys a . . .
Menu	2. home-cooked meal at the . . .
Location	3. home of a . . .
Provider	4. host, who . . .
Afterward	5. has a proselytizing conversation, the meal parallels evangelism.
Fellowship (Inklings) Meal	
Diners	1. When protagonists share a . . .
Menu	2. meal of hearty English food following the Oxbridge progression of . . .
Progression	3. eating, drinking, and smoking that concludes with . . .
Afterward	4. storytelling centered on the Christ figure, the meal unites the protagonists in an analogy of Christian fellowship.

The most important variable for both types of meal is the Diners category. When we examine the eating habits of Lewis's protagonists and antagonists, we immediately find patterns emerging. When Lewis's protagonists eat together, Lewis almost invariably

describes the meal in pleasurable terms, with rich, sensory descriptions of the menu and lingering over the diner's response to both the food and to each other. This contrasts enormously with any eating with or near an antagonist, whether protagonists are present or not. Those meals lack joy, which Lewis signifies by rarely describing the menu, or when he does, the descriptions lack any toothsome quality, as seen often in *The Space Trilogy*. We see this when Elwin Ransom eats "tinned beef, biscuits, and whiskey" with his captors on Malacandra (*OOSP* 44). Lewis gives the menu, but rather than stressing any pleasurable taste from the food, Lewis emphasizes the sense of isolation that comes from eating with one's enemies. Whether or not Lewis describes the meal in detail correlates directly with whether protagonists or antagonists are eating together.

Next, in order to understand how Lewis's dining protagonists relate to ecclesiology, we must first understand how they function as a body of believers. A universal feature of Lewis's protagonists is that they serve as analogues for Christians (Ford 353; Howard, "Triumphant" 141). Nearly all of Lewis's novels have some sort of Christ figure.²⁹ In each novel, all protagonists eventually align under the authority of the Christ figure and are called to faith in him in opposition to the novel's antagonists. This analogical relationship between protagonists and the Christ figures is crucial for understanding Lewis's latent theology, so for the remainder of this study, I will call this

²⁹ Lewis's Christ-figures will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, but I will list them all here for reference sake. The Christ figure for *The Pilgrim's Regress* is "A man," who is the son of the Landlord. The primary Christ figure for *The Planet Trilogy* is Maledil, while the secondary Christ figure is Elwin Ransom. The Christ figure for the entire Narnia series is Aslan, the lion. And the primary Christ figure for *Till We Have Faces* is Cupid, with Psyche as the secondary Christ figure. *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Great Divorce* are excluded from this list since they include neither eating nor a personified Christ figure.

core of protagonists “True Believers” to indicate their allegiance to the Christ Figure.³⁰ Lewis’s plots demonstrate conclusively that the True Believers must assemble together for mutual strength and edification, exemplifying the Scripture stating that Christ is in the midst of “two or three” gathered in His name (Matt. 18:20). In *Pilgrim’s Progress*, John needs Vertue to help him on his journey to find the Landlord (Clark, “Food” 10). In *That Hideous Strength*, the company at St. Anne’s must stand against the rising tide of evil which opposes Ransom and Maleldil (Downing 93). In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the Narnians themselves and the children of earth must work together to fight whatever army, witch, or tyrant seeks to usurp the authority of Aslan (Ford 205-6). Under the force of such a clear analogy, it becomes almost imperative to interpret the meals which True Believers eat together in the same ecclesiastic light. This means that when Lewis’s protagonists share a meal, we may understand that meal to be communicating something of Lewis’s notion of how the church functions. From here, we may at last begin looking at specific iterations of Lewis’s meal-based ecclesiology, starting with hospitality, in which newcomers are indoctrinated into the body of True Believers (Weber 379; Erickson 1061).

Hospitality Meals: Growing the Church

As previously mentioned, hospitality is present on any occasion in which invited guests dine with their host. Hospitality as a social custom is neither specifically Christian nor especially unique to Christianity—although we may argue that hospitality is endemic to biblical Judeo-Christian culture. Massimo Montanari observes that hospitality

³⁰ In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis uses the actual term “Christian” to describe this core because Maleldil is revealed to be the literal Jesus Christ. In all of the other novels, however, we cannot call the protagonists “Christians” because the Christ figure is not Jesus Himself.

developed with civilization itself, offering a quote from Plutarch as support: “We do not invite each other simply to eat and drink, but to eat and drink together” (Montanari 93). While hospitality is a universal human virtue, Lewis’s hospitality is uniquely Christian due to its focus on growing the circle of True Believers (Jung 50). Specific expressions of hospitality in his fiction are permeated with Greek, British, and Judeo-Christian conventions. Martindale and Welch specifically note how Lewis was inspired by Homeric hospitality (105). Several of his books imitate *The Odyssey* in that their heroes travel from place to place and are received and fed by the natives found at each new location (Montgomery 63-4). Elwin Ransom, the hero of *Out of the Silent Planet*, enjoys the same hospitality of various Martian species in his quest to return to earth as Odysseus does in his quest to return to Ithaca. Just as Odysseus is delayed by Nestor’s excessive hospitality, so do the *hrossa*’s delightful culture delay Ransom from obeying the call of Oyarsa (Reece 10). After his time with the *hrossa*, he is the guest of Augray, the scientific *sorn* who literally saves his life by hospitably providing a sort of Martian version of Homer’s *kukeōn*—vegetables, cheese, and “strong drink”—and by providing oxygen, since Augray’s tower is on a high mountain top (93; Kitts 307). But Lewis also applies the conventions of hospitality of his own country in the same novel. In the first chapter, Ransom is on a walking tour of England, traveling from village to village with pack on his back, like Bunyan’s pilgrim or Wordsworth, knocking at doors and dining at country inns in search of homely British hospitality. For this study, however, the most relevant conventions of hospitality Lewis employs are those of Judeo-Christian culture.

Hospitality Meals and the Old Testament Table Bond

Lewis's use of Judeo-Christian topos for hospitality demonstrates that Lewis's interest in the virtue was not merely sociological, but biblical. Lewis's scenes of hospitality demonstrate proficient use of the Judeo-Christian table bond to establish the important of healthy spiritual fellowship. Ancient Jewish culture demanded that guests expect luxurious treatment under the service of their hosts, and we find dozens of examples of strangers requesting food and lodging for the night and receiving warm receptions. According to Burton Easton, stories such as Abraham's treatment of his divine visitors and Manoah's generosity to his guests demonstrate that eating with one's guests strengthens the "the bond of hospitality" (Gen. 18:1-8; Judg. 13:14-15; Easton 1432). Both Abraham's and Manoah's guests turn out to be angels, further intensifying the spiritual connection with their hospitable treatment. Once the host's food has been consumed by the guest, a spiritual bond develops, and the host is now responsible for the guest's welfare, even if the guest is proven to be a criminal (Easton 1432). Perhaps the most dramatic example is Abraham's nephew Lot, who receives two strangers to his home just before the fall of Sodom (Gen. 19:1-26). He bathes the visitors—who, once again, are angels—and feeds them, and when the wicked men of the city pound on his door demanding that Lot surrender his guests, Lot refuses to turn them over, offering instead his own daughters to "do ye to them as is good in your eyes" (Gen. 19:8). Through this startling example of Lot's loyalty to his guests, we see that the nature of the table bond is sacrificial, and in the New Testament this gesture suggests that a rejection of a stranger is a "rejection of Christ Himself" (Easton 1433). This remarkable recurrence of angels as houseguests returns as a new call to hospitality in the book of Hebrews, "Be

not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (13:2). Also in the New Testament, Jesus himself indicates the binding principle of hospitality when He separates the “sheep” from the “goats.” One of the criteria Christ applies to reward the sheep with admission into His kingdom—and to punish the goats with exclusion from it—is that the sheep offered hospitality to Jesus through His representatives: “I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in” (Matt. 34-5, 42). Other societies besides the Judeo-Christian practice the table bond, of course, but the Hebrews passage renders the practice explicitly spiritual, while the Matthew passage makes it explicitly Christian.

Lewis’s hospitality meals often demonstrate a similar table bond as that modeled in the Bible. These bonds range from the obvious to the obscure. In *Prince Caspian*, Trufflehunter refuses to allow Nikabrik to kill the unconscious Caspian because “It would be murdering a guest,” an act which Margaret Visser declares to be “particularly horrendous” (*PC* 67; Ford 257; Visser 92). Almost from the moment Lucy enters the wardrobe, she is met with the hospitality of Tumnus the faun, who invites her to his house to enjoy a high tea in front of a fire with soft-boiled eggs, toast—with sardines—and “a sugar-topped cake” (*LWW* 13).³¹ The image of a little girl at a very grown-up high tea harmonizes with the fantasy teas of the Alice books which hint at adolescent coming-of-age, resonating with Lewis’s young audience (Katz 193). Unfortunately, Tumnus shatters the fantasy with the revelation that he is, in fact, Lucy’s enemy and is planning to hand her over to the White Witch. The abrupt confession at once breaks the spell upon the reader and Lucy, both of whom have been enchanted by the pleasures of magic,

³¹ Mrs. Beeton says that another name for high tea is “meat tea” (Beeton 263-4).

sugar, and friendship. Tumnus' effrontery shocks the demands of hospitality, which in the Old Testament would have been a serious betrayal of the table-bond. Maria Nikolajeva points out how the ritual nature of the British high tea emphasizes this point. Tumnus cannot turn Lucy in because he's eaten with her, and "a shared meal is a covenant" (Nikolajeva 129). But Tumnus himself realizes this fact before it is too late and makes it his duty to protect her. When Lucy pleads with Tumnus to let her return home, he says, "Of course I will. Of course I've got to. I see that now" (22). And like Lot in the Old Testament, Tumnus sacrificially chooses to defend his guest, accepting the inevitable consequence of being arrested and turned into stone. Tumnus's bond of fellowship to this strange human girl forges a permanent friendship between him and Lucy, making Tumnus the first truly heroic, and somewhat tragic, character of the book (Katz 194). Curiously, the meal also represents a reversal of Lewis's typical pattern, for it is Tumnus, the host, whose beliefs are transformed by his guest, Lucy. The character of Lucy resolves this apparent inconsistency. She is, according to Lewis, an "*anima naturaliter Christiana*," a naturally Christian soul who, of course, will influence others on behalf of the Christ figure (*CL* 3.830). By surprising analogy, the "angels unaware" theme mentioned in Hebrews finds a minor expression here. Tumnus does experience a period of punishment as a stone statue for his treachery, but because he chose to defend his "angelic" guest, he is eventually rescued and becomes fully loyal to Aslan (*LWW* 188).

With an understanding of the biblical expression of the table bond, we may now examine Lewis's hospitality in light of New Testament evangelistic practices. As noted above, Lewis's hospitality meals nearly always include a proselytization: a conversation

during which the host attempts to recruit the guest to the host's view of things. We also find that the menu itself often symbolizes the ideas behind which the host proselytizes. Since the host almost always speaks as an advocate of the novel's Christ figure, these meals of recruitment may be seen as parallel to Christian evangelism.

For Lewis, the whole point of conversation was to share ideas, and a chief reason why Christians share ideas is to win converts to the Christian worldview. Christopher Mitchell plainly states that "Lewis perceived evangelism to be his lay vocation, and the means by which he expressed the evangelistic impulse were his writing and speaking" (3). Mitchell offers ample evidence to demonstrate the validity of this claim, including references to Lewis's numerous apologetic works and the well-documented conversion experiences in the Narnian Chronicles.³² In short, Mitchell establishes that Lewis's "evangelistic impulse" pervades his writing.

Hospitality Meals as Ideas

Lewis's hospitality meals represent the moment in which Lewis's evangelistic impulse intersects his story. The pattern of host conversing with guests during a meal in order to convince the guests to adopt the host's worldview can be understood as Lewis modeling evangelism for his readers. The fact that the menus for these meals frequently symbolize the ideas being discussed adds an additional dimension to the spiritual nature of the event and assists in crafting a proper interpretation. Nowhere is Lewis's practice of this pattern more evident than in *The Pilgrim's Regress*. John, the protagonist, travels throughout the allegorical landscape, eating with hosts whose meals and names symbolize the worldviews to which they seek to win him. David Clark summarizes this

³² The entire volume of *The Pilgrim's Guide*, in which Mitchell's essay appears, explores Lewis's evangelistic impulse and its many iterations in his writings. I need not offer a complete survey here.

persistent pattern in dialectic terms. A host “advocates the view s/he symbolizes (thesis), John reacts to the new ideas (antithesis), and the encounter then concludes with a partial acceptance of those ideas (synthesis)” (Clark, “Food” 8). After numerous encounters with more than a dozen hosts all competing for his attention with their modern worldviews, John finally discovers Christianity and finds salvation in an allegory of Lewis’s own conversion to Christianity. In order to quickly provide a thorough sense of the constant role the evangelistic hospitality meal plays within the novel, the following table documents each meal and the worldview represented by each.³³

Table 2.2: Ideological hospitality meals in *The Pilgrim’s Regress*.

Ch.	Menu/description	Character(s)	Worldview
2.1	“breakfast” at an inn	Woman inn-keeper “sweeping out the rubbish” and Mr. Enlightenment	Atheism (Lindskoog 14)
2.4	“exquisite food” in a medieval setting	Mr. Halfways	Aesthetic Romanticism (Lindskoog 18)
2.8	breakfast	Gus	Technological Realism (Lindskoog 21)
3.1	cigarettes with drinks that taste like medicine	Clevers	Freudian Avant Garde (Lindskoog 25, 27)
3.8	meat, eggs, and milk	Mr. Sigismund Enlightenment and the giant, Spirit of the Age	Freudian Reductionism (Clark, “Food” 2; Lindskoog 31)
4.5	cowslip wine and radishes with oysters, soup, sherry, Halibut, salad, “joint,” champagne, savouries, ices, bread, salt, apples, hock, claret, and port	Mr. Sensible	Upper-class Hedonism (Myers 20)

³³ I am indebted to David Clark’s “Food in the Pilgrim’s Regress” and Kathryn Lindskoog’s *Finding the Landlord* for the identification of many of the worldviews.

6.2	“three tins of bully beef and six biscuits”	Neo-Angular, Neo-Classical, and Mr. Humanist	Religious Agnosticism (Clark, “Food” 23; Lindskoog 61)
6.6	roast pork and mead drunk from a horn	Savage. Grimhild, and dwarf tribes Marxomanni, Mussolinini, Swastici, and Gangomanni	Nihilism and Totalitarianism (Clark, “Food” 4; Lindskoog 65)
7.5	cakes, honey, and tea	Mr. Broad	Religious Liberalism (Clark, “Food” 5)
7.6	bread, cheese, fruit, curds, buttermilk (no wine)	Mr. Wisdom	Idealism (Lindskoog 73)
7.10	champagne, chicken and tongue, hashish, claret, caviare [sic], brandy, lamb with mint sauce . . . fruit, steak and gravy, wine	Wisdom’s wayward children	Eclecticism (Clark, “Food” 6; Lindskoog 77-8)
8.5	bread and water	“a Man” (Christ)	Christianity (Lindskoog 86; Clark, “Food” 6)
8.7	bread, water, and wine	The Hermit	Christian Historical Perspective (Clark, “Food” 6)

While all of the meals to some extent represent the ideologies being presented, two of the menus are more explicitly allegorical—and more detailed—than the others. The most interesting of these comes when John and Vertue are walking north on their journey and knock at the door of the wealthy Mr. Sensible, following the pattern of the peripatetic strangers seeking hospitality from a host (*PR* 60). After Mr. Sensible provides a lengthy presentation of his “secular, superficial” philosophy, the strangers are seated to enjoy a feast which comes *à la russe*—that is, each course is brought out separately (Myers 20). Each menu item symbolizes something of Sensible’s scatter-brained worldview. Only two items are of his own making. According to Kathryn Lindskoog, the wild cowslip wine represents pensiveness, presumably because it must be handmade, and

has an unpleasant taste (54). The “very small” radishes, grown in only a half inch of soil, represent the shallowness and lack of nourishment Sensible’s philosophy provides (*PR* 64, 66). All of the other items come from Sensible’s neighbors, who represent Sensible’s philosophical eclecticism: sherry from the liberal theologian Mr. Broad; the joint from the materialistic Mr. Mammon; bread, salt, and apples from Epicurus; claret from Montaigne, who inspires Sensible’s eclecticism; and port from Rabelais, who received it as a gift from Mother Kirk, who, in turn, represents the church (65). Altogether, the meal portrays Mr. Sensible’s self-indulgent hedonism (Myers 20). Mr. Sensible is unsuccessful in transmitting his worldview to his guests, and the travelers depart afterwards in disgust (68).

Other elements in this cycle of hospitality meals illustrate their evangelistic nature as well. John and Vertue continue their journey the next morning, signaling that they have not fully accepted Sensible’s views. As they prepare to leave his house, Sensible chastises their lack of loyalty on the grounds that they have enjoyed his hospitality (67). This invocation of the table bond repeats when John calms his rages against Neo-Angular by reminding himself that Angular shared his food with John (75).

Since none of the hosts portrayed in the novel so far represent the Christian worldview—and are therefore each corrupted in some way—the hospitality process cannot yet be said to represent the evangelism of the church, but it does display how food and evangelism interact and remains the model Lewis uses for the rest of his novels. The entirety of the journey symbolizes John’s search for Truth, and as he gets closer to finding it, the meals become more deliberately religious. The unacceptably liberal clergyman Mr. Broad offers John cakes, honey, and tea as a sugary, ineffective substitute

for the Eucharist, symbolizing the relativism Broad has embraced by rejecting orthodoxy (Clark, "Food" 5). At the house of Mr. Wisdom the travelers receive bread, cheese, fruit, curds, and butter-milk, with the explicit omission of wine (*PR* 90). Wisdom's pure-minded idealism is the first philosophy Lewis treats positively. Wisdom provides a homely, nourishing meal of simple staple ingredients, unrefined, and mostly raw except for the bread (Lindskoog 73). As we have seen in *Out of the Silent Planet* and *The Magician's Nephew*, the use of raw ingredients signifies an increased spirituality.³⁴ The absence of the wine prevents a complete Eucharist, indicating that John has gotten closer to Truth, but has not yet discovered its full expression. At last John eats bread and water with a Man who represents Christ himself and discovers true religion, after which all of John's meals have a Eucharistic tone.³⁵

Hospitality Meals as Initiation

With *Pilgrim's Progress*, the functionality of hospitality meals as episodes used to introduce new ideas supported by symbolic food becomes clear. Now we may examine how Lewis turns this function to distinctly Christian purposes. Luke Johnson reminds us that the sacrament of initiation in the Church has historically been baptism. The meal-based sacrament, that of the Eucharist, is reserved for those who are already members of the body (Johnson 73). Lewis certainly does not ignore baptism as an initiation rite, but tends to favor meal-based initiations through meals of hospitality.³⁶ Occasionally Lewis uses such meals to recruit characters to hostile worldviews as we saw in *Pilgrim's*

³⁴ See chapter one for more on the significance of raw ingredients.

³⁵ Although the meal lacks wine, the theological foundation for a water-and-bread Eucharist will be explored in chapter three on Eucharistic meals.

³⁶ Eustace's bath and Shasta's face washing can be seen as examples of baptism (*VDT* 115; *HHB* 179; Gibson 154).

Regress, but, in general, hospitality meals are the recruitment tool for newcomers into membership of the novel's circle of True Believers.

In a recurrent pattern, Lewis employs the hospitality meal to draw strangers towards a body of True Believers. This routine demonstrates what Lewis believed was the two most important occupations of the church: evangelizing new members and educating existing ones (Mitchell 6). With this in mind, we might argue that *Out of the Silent Planet* represents a continual initiation ritual, the phases of which are marked by hospitality meals. Elwin Ransom, the novel's peripatetic hero, escapes his human captors on Mars and wanders on foot until he is discovered and befriended by Hyoi, a *hross*, a race of sentient, seal-like creatures (55). Hyoi's first act of hospitality is to give Ransom an alcoholic drink and to feed him "a spongy, orange coloured substance" (58).

Numerous critics note the significance of the meeting of alien species, but none that I have read note how the shared meal plays a crucial introductory role (Downing 106; Gibson 29; Schwartz 36). This meal creates a table bond between Ransom and Hyoi. They become closer and closer friends over the next several months. Ransom lives and eats with the *hrossa*, and Hyoi gradually initiates Ransom into the peace-loving, quasi-monastic contentment that pervades his people (Howard 84). Once Hyoi is murdered by the villainous Weston and Devine, Ransom must depart—again on foot—into the mountains to the tower of Augray, a giant species of feather-covered alien called a *sorn* (*OOSP* 91). Augray's food, as I have mentioned, seems Greek influenced. Augray brings Ransom vegetables, "strong drink" and a brown substance that turns out to be cheese. Ransom's indoctrinization from Augray begins with a humorous lesson in "milking and cheesemaking" from a race of shepherd-scientists whom Lewis compares to Homer's

Cyclops (*OOSP* 93). The topics of Ransom's education range from astronomy to theology. He also learns the social distinctions among the three sentient races and how they come under the leadership of the invisible Oyarsa, who turns out to be a kind of monarchical archangel (Howard 85). A second evening of hospitality among the sorns conspicuously excludes food. Augray takes Ransom to the home of an elder sorn filled with pupils who seem to form a Socratic school of philosophy. Instead being taught, this time Ransom teaches the sorns by answering scores of questions plied throughout the evening (*OOSP* 102). The lack of food and the questions that increase Ransom's self-consciousness of his own sinfulness indicate that Lewis is gradually dimming the hospitality theme to prepare for the final scene of the novel which examines humankind as a sinful invader of this unfallen paradise. To continue the rich theme of hospitality would create dissonance with the topic of these final conversations, for one need not show hospitality to an invader. That night Ransom falls asleep exhausted after the "very disagreeable conversation" (*OOSP* 103).

His last experience of hospitality is as a guest of Oyarsa himself, although now the theme is greatly diminished because of the coming climactic conversation. Ransom comes to the island of Meldilorn, where Oyarsa dwells, to answer for his and his captors' actions while guests on the planet. The Inquisitional nature of this meeting makes him too shy to ask for food. Lewis compares the shyness to that of a "new boy at school," further emphasizing Ransom as a catechumen (*OOSP* 110). His sense of shame for both himself and his race has built up throughout the novel due to the contrasts between the Martian Utopia and his own chaotic home planet. Instead of eating with the others, Ransom forages for naturally-growing food—which is still indirectly provided by Oyarsa—and

goes to bed early in the Malacandrian guest house. He is too humiliated to participate in the jolly atmosphere the natives enjoy (*OOSP* 110, 117; Schwartz 45). By the end of the novel, however, Oyarsa makes it clear that Ransom's period of indoctrination is over. Oyarsa grants him full membership within the Martian community and invites him to stay on Mars permanently (*OOSP* 142). Nevertheless, Ransom chooses to return to Earth, affirming his membership in his own community of the human race. He returns home a changed man and becomes a kind of evangelist himself, spreading the truth of what he has learned on Mars, a process which unfolds in the third novel, *That Hideous Strength*. By experiencing Martian hospitality and becoming a member of Martian fellowship, the perennial guest eventually becomes the perennial host.

From the standpoint of character analysis, it is worth noting that once the membership meal has taken place and the new recruit properly catechized, the fortunes of that character turn upward, just as Ransom's fortunes change for the better once he first eats with Hyoui. This positive turn often comes right after a hospitality meal. We can take as an extended example the tremendous upward swing in Jane Studdock's fortunes which follows in the wake of two notable hospitality meals in *That Hideous Strength*. Camilla and Frank Denniston surprise Jane Studdock with a delightfully incongruent picnic lunch on a cold and rainy day. The pair drive Jane to a "little grassy bay" surrounded by fir trees and lunch on "sandwiches and a little flask of sherry and finally hot coffee and cigarettes" (*THS* 113). Once the meal is over, Camilla declares, "Now!" and the conversation begins in which the Dennistons attempt to convince Jane to join Ransom's company at St. Anne's in opposition to the N.I.C.E. Jane's experience with the

Denniston's hospitable picnic in the car commences her initiation into the world of amicable, romanticized Christianity which Lewis knew and loved (Schwartz 111).³⁷

As Lewis builds up to this meal, the reader can immediately tell that Jane senses a commonality with Arthur and Camilla. She is "delighted" when Camilla addresses her and sees "at once that both the Dennistons were the sort of people she liked"; Arthur Denniston, she observes, is "obviously much nicer indeed" than the friends of her husband Mark, who has begun to associate with the demonically-influenced N.I.C.E. (112; Howard 138). The poor weather causes Jane to suggest that they go to her house or to a restaurant, but the pair insist on the remote setting, saying "We want to be private." The narrator notes that "'we' obviously meant 'we three' and established at once a pleasant, business-like unity between them" (113).

Ample critical evidence supports an interpretation of the N.I.C.E. as the forces of satanic evil striving against the company at St. Anne's, who represent the angelic forces of Maleldil, or God (Downing, *Planets* 53; Gibson 71; Howard 132; Schwartz 94). This common interpretation of the two groups means the company of St. Anne's should be considered as an analogue of the church.³⁸ Since we see here the Dennistons trying to increase the company's membership by initiating Jane into their circle, the meal can reasonably be seen as an example of Christian evangelism.

Lewis's notion of membership is worth examining in this context as well. The narrator's attentiveness to Arthur Denniston's inclusive "we" signifies the presence of

³⁷ The positive turn is similar to Tolkien's *eucatastrophe*—the happy accident—which he discusses in detail in his essay "On Fairy Stories" and which I discuss in chapter 5.

³⁸ I need not expand upon the depth of this analogy here, since it strays from my topic, and others have made the connection vividly. See chapter two of Downing's *Planet in Peril* or chapter five of Howard's *Achievement of C. S. Lewis* (now entitled *Narnia and Beyond*).

Lewis's theology of church fellowship, which Lewis spells out in his essay

"Membership." The first paragraph serves to adequately summarize his views:

No Christian and, indeed, no historian could accept the epigram which defines religion as "what a man does with his solitude." It was one of the Wesleys, I think, who said that the New Testament knows nothing of solitary religion. We are forbidden to neglect the assembling of ourselves together. Christianity is already institutional in the earliest of its documents. The Church is the Bride of Christ. We are members of one another. ("Membership" 158)

The metaphor of membership is Scriptural, derived from Paul's statement that Christians have membership in Christ in the way that organs are members of a body, precisely the source of the phrase "the body of Christ" as a term for the Church (Rom. 12:5; Downing, *Planets* 136; Gibson 85). If the Church is an organic unity, food plays an obvious supporting role in deepening this metaphor. Just as a physical body needs the sustenance of food, so does the spiritual Body of Christ require the sustenance of fellowship. Lewis's pairing of the spiritual requirement with the physical causes the scene between Jane and the Dennistons to resonate strongly with Christian fellowship. Furthermore, the scene also illustrates the body's desire to draw more members into itself to increase its fellowship. Evan Gibson points out that Arthur and Camilla want Jane to join them, not because they want to feed off of her, the way the repulsive villains at the N.I.C.E. exploit their members, but in a mutually nurturing manner which elevates all participants (85).

Evan Gibson reminds us that initially Jane is a reluctant convert, and she does not desire membership in “anything so exciting” (85; *THS* 114). Yet the companionship of these people whom she does not understand, but who unconditionally accept and love her, is a new experience which Jane at first finds suspicious but then delightful. That first delightful—if somewhat confusing—experience with the Dennistons leads directly to another hospitality meal. As a clairvoyant, Jane has had numerous frightening dreams, and decides to travel to the manor at St. Anne’s where the company has its headquarters (Schwartz 106). As she approaches, her desire for membership grows; she finds herself wanting “to be with Nice people, away from Nasty people” (137). Jane travels to the Manor at St. Anne’s. Her walk “up the steep hill” symbolizes the elevated spiritual quality of the place (137). The hill and Manor atop it are a “little green sun-lit island looking down on a sea of white fog” which signifies the evil swiftly overtaking Jane’s world (138). She is received warmly first by Arthur Denniston, with whom she has already developed a table bond. She perceives in him a kindred spirit stronger than that of her own husband (139). She is given tea and briefed by the rest of the company on how to behave in the presence of the Director, a transfigured Elwin Ransom, whose planetary voyages have converted him to an Adamite state (Downing 81, 118-9). Upon being ushered into Ransom’s presence, she converses with him while he eats a Eucharistic lunch of bread and wine, a meal to be scrutinized in the next chapter. During the interview, Jane’s “world [is] unmade” (143). She changes swiftly from a frightened skeptic to a novice who deeply desires the holy vivacity that emanates from the Director (*THS* 150; Downing 81). As she walks back down the hill from the Manor after the interview, the narrator notes that “the fog had begun to lift” (150). Jane’s fortunes have

changed permanently for the better. The process demonstrates an approach to evangelism that places relationship and social interaction at its core, without denying the role of the supernatural.

This approach to portraying evangelism via culinary fellowship is not unique to the Space Trilogy. We find a similar cycle of initiation in *The Horse and His Boy*. Shasta's initiation develops over three key meals. The orphan Shasta first experiences Narnian hospitality when he accidentally colludes with the royal Narnian entourage visiting Tashbaan. He arrives on foot and is mistaken for a missing Prince. They feed him a princely feast of lobster, salad, snipe stuffed with almonds and truffles, a "complicated" dish of chicken livers, rice, raisins, and nuts, melons, gooseberry fool, mulberry fool, ices, and white wine (80).³⁹ The menu itself does not appear to symbolize any specific ideology, but it is worth noting that Lewis has Mr. Tumnus deliver Shasta's meal—his second such meal of the series, a strong indicator that Tumnus embodies the spirit of Hospitality, at least in the Narnian Chronicles.

Lewis makes much of how rough and unmannered Shasta is. His confrontation with Narnian royalty is his first exposure to etiquette of any sort. Like Jane, Shasta is hesitant and mistrustful at first. He is used to cold stares and rough treatment; he has "no idea of how noble and free-born people behave" (*HHS* 79; Schakel 88). But as with Jane, Shasta's fortunes change for the better after this meal, for he not only gains the insight of Narnian kindness contrasted with the harsh manners of Calormen, where he was raised, but during the meal he also learns how to navigate the Great Desert, without which his

³⁹ The narrator declares that the meal is "after the Calormene fashion," supposedly what Lewis imagined to be exotic Middle-Eastern cuisine (80). In reality, the menu is quite European, even British; the snipe can be found in Mrs. Beeton (530-1).

mission to escape to Narnia would have failed (74). Like Jane, he finds himself wanting to be with those “nice people” (*HHS* 98 ; Schakel 88). Shasta also develops a curious table bond not because of who he eats with, but because of whose food he eats. Just after his meal, the real Prince shows up and asks for a drink (85). Shasta confesses his rapacity, but regardless, when the Prince helps Shasta to escape out the window, they look “into each other’s faces and suddenly [find] that they are friends” (86). Later we discover that the Prince and Shasta are twin brothers.

Shasta’s second meal is the drink from Aslan’s footprint in the mountain pass between Narnia and Archenland, a drink which does not fit the criteria for a Hospitality meal. Instead it fits better as a Sacramental meal because it is eaten in the presence of the Christ figure, an idea discussed in the next chapter. However, I include it briefly here because of its role in the process of Shasta’s initiation. Before drinking, he receives lessons in faith and providence from Aslan himself. The meal represents an important step in Shasta’s initiation because afterward Aslan teaches him the truth about the Narnian belief system and how Aslan himself stands at its center. When Shasta asks who Aslan is, the lion repeats “Myself” three times, an expression of the Trinity and an allusion to God’s declaration to Moses: “I AM that I AM” (*HHB* 176; Exod. 3:14). Shasta also learns that the half dozen or so cats that seem to randomly appear throughout the story have all been Aslan providentially guiding him to the land where he belongs (Kilby 52). After the lesson is over, Aslan vanishes, Shasta has his drink, and continues down the mountain.

During the third of Shasta’s meals of initiation, Shasta finally enjoys the famous Narnian hospitality in Narnia itself, and he is fully accepted as a member of its fellowship

(Ford 397). While lost in the mountains, Shasta has a hope that he might stumble upon a cottage and “ask for a shelter and a meal” (172). What he finds is a collection of red dwarves who treat him to a proper Narnian (i.e. English) breakfast of fried mushrooms, bacon, eggs, porridge and cream, coffee, milk, toast, and butter (185-6). The home-cooked meal is a perfect representation of the hearty British breakfasts Lewis himself enjoyed (*CL* 1.1921, 2. 17, 2.102, 2.383). Lewis has already associated red-dwarves with the faithful Trumpkin from *Prince Caspian*, and the homely menu further indicates that Shasta has once more stumbled upon a company of True Believers who will both sympathize and assist. Just as the dwarves light their pipes and loosen their tongues, however, Shasta promptly falls asleep, so no evangelistic conversation follows (186). James Sennett observes that Shasta’s pilgrimage leads him to become a “faithful believer in the true Narnia religion” (Sennett 238). Perhaps there is not enough meaty theology to constitute an entire religion here, but Shasta’s new-found membership in the Narnian society and his security in the knowledge that Aslan has been guiding him affords Shasta a level of comfort he has probably never before enjoyed (Gibson 153).

The insight gained by this survey of hospitality meals is clear. Nearly all of Lewis’s novels have some sort of focus on the initiation of a main character into a body of True Believers. That initiation takes place through a courtship that often begins with a hospitality meal. John seeks the truth from meal to meal and gradually gets fed by Christ Himself, who initiates John into an allegorical Christianity. Ransom discovers the unfallen religion of Mars while being hosted by the *hrossa*, who feed and teach him over a period of several weeks. Jane, who does not want to be involved with any religion, is brought to accept Maleldil through a series of hospitality meals which educate her more

fully and bring her under submission of The Director. Shasta meets the Narnians and is feasted royally, while the Narnians testify to their beliefs indirectly by showing him a kindness and graciousness that he has never known. When viewed as a unit, the many hospitality meals of initiation form a workable doctrine of evangelism within an ecclesiastic body that is based on fellowship, teaching, and food.

Fellowship Meals: Lewis's Personal Ecclesiology

As we move forward to examine Lewis's expressions of communal ecclesiastic fellowship, let us first look back at a previously unexamined pattern. Of the meals studied above, a variation exists in the menu that corresponds to the number of diners present. If the hospitality meal features just one host and just one guest, Lewis often patterns the meal after the British tea: John's tea with Mr. Sensible, Lucy's tea with Tumnus, and Jill's tea with Elwin Ransom are examples. But when the meal involves a group of more than two, the menu changes to include much more hearty food and includes alcohol or coffee and often the smoking of tobacco. We have seen this progression already with Jane's picnic in the car with the Dennistons and in Shasta's British breakfast with the red dwarves. In both cases, coffee is consumed and cigarettes or pipes are comfortably lit after the meal; Jane and the Dennistons also drink sherry (*THS* 113; *HHB* 186). This new pattern that emerges when multiple True Believing protagonists eat together will be the basis for our next discussion of Lewis's culinary ecclesiology. Critics have previously commented on the existence of this pattern by noting similarities between meals which share its characteristics, but the significance of the meals remains unanalyzed (Brown, *Prince* 52).

A look at one of Lewis's most famous meals provides further insight. Early in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the Beavers host the four Pevensie children in their lodge for a home-cooked meal. Here we have yet another hearty, English-inspired menu that certainly makes one's mouth water. The details are so rich and vivid that it feels as if Lewis is writing from memory rather than from pure imagination. Mrs. Beaver prepares freshly-caught, pan-fried trout, boiled potatoes slathered with "a great lump of deep yellow butter," and a surprise marmalade roll at the end, "gloriously sticky" and "steaming hot" (*LWW* 82). During the meal, the children sip milk, and Mr. Beaver enjoys a mug of beer, but once all have eaten, they drink tea and lean back against the wall uttering "long sigh[s] of contentment" while Mr. Beaver lights his pipe (82). Lewis uses this setting to provide his readers with expository information about the Narnian Christ figure, the lion Aslan. The method of delivery Lewis's chooses is to have Mr. Beaver instruct the children in what amounts to the Narnian religion. He tells of the satanic White Witch and of the Christ-like Aslan who opposes her. In response to hearing Aslan's name, Lucy, Peter, and Susan feel as if they have heard "good news," a phrase which bears direct relation to the word "gospel" (*LWW* 85). The meal certainly counts as hospitality because the children are guests and Mr. Beaver is indoctrinating them, but the new pattern indicates that a new theological statement is present (Ford 257).

The topic of the after-dinner instruction is the new aspect, and all three meals referenced above share similarities in this area. The Dennistons tell Jane about their leader, Elwin Ransom, and how he came to head the company at St. Anne's. Mr. Beaver teaches the children about Aslan. And Shasta falls asleep just as the dwarves begin telling him about Narnian geography, getting as far as ". . . away on your right is the Hill of the

Stone Table” before Shasta nods off (*HHB* 187). The Stone Table refers to the place where Aslan is slain during *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and is the Narnian analogue for Golgotha. This last episode may seem a bit of a stretch until we remember that in the scene just prior to his breakfast, Shasta has already received instructions about Aslan from Aslan himself and a repetition would have been unnecessary. So it appears that we have discovered a second version of the ecclesiastic meal, one that overlaps with the hospitality meal but also stands as a distinct counterpart to it. These meals include English-inspired menus drawn from Lewis’s own experiences—especially after-dinner drinking and smoking—and feature conversation or storytelling that focuses on uniting the novel’s protagonists under the Christ figure.

Eating with the Inklings

Turning briefly to Lewis’s own life will help us understand why meals with these specific features should be interpreted ecclesiastically. The simple, hearty food that Lewis loved figured importantly in his life and, not surprisingly, made its presence strongly felt in his fiction. Lewis states quite frankly that he nearly always crafted his menus around what he liked best to eat (“Three Ways” 31); and Lewis loved most the “plain wholesome” food enjoyed with a pint of beer in the good company of his friends at the Eagle and Child pub in Oxford (Carpenter 209; Glycer 18; Phillips 104; Sayer 253; Vallone 51;).⁴⁰ These gatherings of Lewis’s friends were famously known as “The Inklings,” the literary club of Christian authors founded by Lewis and his close friend J. R. R. Tolkien (Carpenter 255-6). In their biographies of Lewis, both George Sayer and Humphrey Carpenter confirm that meals the Inklings ate together did indeed follow the

⁴⁰ References supporting this claim are too copious to exhaustively list. One need only peruse Carpenter’s *The Inklings* or Lewis’s own letters to discover its thorough veracity.

progression discovered above. The friends ate sturdy English food while drinking beer, tea, or coffee, chain-smoking—especially Lewis—and read their stories to each other or talked theology and literature late into the night (Carpenter 131; Sayer 342-343). In January of 1940, Lewis wrote a letter to his brother reporting that “the usual party assembled on Thursday night, heard a chapter of the new *Hobbit*, drank rum and hot water, and talked” (*CL* 2.336).⁴¹

But Lewis’s joy of combining eating, drinking, and talking with his friends is not unusual; as Justin Phillips points out, drinking beer with fellow collegians is rather a staple of Oxbridge culture (104). And including such scenes in a novel was no innovation either. We see G. K. Chesterton do the same in *The Ball and the Cross* when the atheist and Christian co-protagonists debate their ideological differences over a pint in a local pub (128). An obviously non-Christian example of this same progression can be found in Lewis’s own *That Hideous Strength*. The fellows of Bracton College gather for a meal that includes both alcohol and tobacco and certainly lots of talking before and after (*THS* 26). But what is missing that makes the meal fail as ecclesiastic fellowship is that the fellows clearly share no true friendship, no shared beliefs, and their talk is devoid of what Tolkien called *evangelium*—the gospel tinge which Lewis’s friends believed all good stories should possess (Tolkien 71). These key ingredients cause Lewis’s personalized meals to stand out as practical ecclesiology. The ritualistic nature of the meal, the shared beliefs, the friendship, and the Christ-centered topic of conversation were to be found in every meeting of the Inklings and were almost certainly lacking to some degree in the scores of other Oxford patrons who were apparently otherwise doing the same thing

⁴¹ Lewis doesn’t mention smoking specifically here, but since he smoked after nearly every meal, its presence is a given (*CL* 3.719).

(Glyer 17, 224). In Lewis's meals of personal ecclesiology, we will see that he uses ritual to build a spiritual community. The protagonists' shared beliefs strengthen the community. The expression of friendship demonstrates the growth of Christian love. And lastly, the gospel-tinged storytelling both creates an occasion of worship and creates new believers through evangelism. Combining all of these elements, these repeated "Inklings" meals form a picture of Lewis's theology of the church.

The Fellowship Meal as Ritual

The first of these ecclesiological expressions is the ritualism of the meal itself. Luke Johnson describes ritual as "repetitive communal patterns of behavior," and this can certainly be observed in the behavior of the Inklings and the fellowship meals patterned after it (69). Meetings of the Inklings convened in the Eagle and Child pub on Tuesday afternoons and in Lewis's Oxford rooms on Thursday nights.⁴² The Tuesday meeting always included lunch, but the Thursday night meeting followed a High Table dinner in the Magdalen College dining room, after which the friends would drink tea, coffee, or spirits—Lewis smoking all the while—during their meeting (Carpenter 127ff.; Glyer 17). Diana Glyer notes that this ritualistic behavior gains significance when one considers that every member of the Inklings was a confessing Christian of one degree or the other (224). The thesis of her entire study—that the Inklings' community mutually benefited each member's creativity—upholds the Christian doctrine of "the communion of the saints" as a binding force that united the friends even when disagreements arose. For all Christians, especially those in liturgical denominations like Lewis's Anglicanism, the participation in

⁴² The Eagle and Child was not the only pub frequented by the Inklings. Other favorite haunts included the King's Arms, the White Horse, and the Eastgate Hotel, plus numerous other restaurants throughout Oxford (Poe 108).

rituals shapes the religious experience; it *is* the religion in many ways (Johnson 69). The ritualistic nature of the Inklings-style get-togethers as Lewis portrays them in his novels evokes ritualistic liturgical meals of both the ancient and modern Christian church. Just as Jesus drew people to Himself partly through the use of shared meals, so do Lewis's protagonists through the function of these meals (John 6:11-12; Mark 14:22-23).

Prince Caspian provides a suitable example to illustrate the point. Once the young Caspian is acknowledged king of the "Old Narnians", the dwarves Trumpkin and Nikabrik, along with the badger Trufflehunter, take Caspian on a tour of the Narnian countryside to meet the variety of talking beasts and mythical creatures who are his new subjects. The event unfolds as a ritualized moveable feast. Caspian makes several stops on his tour, and, at each stop, a brief hospitality ritual plays out. At each creature's dwelling, Trufflehunter calls out to the animal (or dwarf), it listens to Caspian's claim to be king, accepts the claim, and offers Caspian a gift, usually of food, and is invited to a feast at the Dancing Lawn that evening (Ford 154). The bears give Caspian honey; the squirrels give him a nut; and the centaurs offer an appropriately Greek-inspired lunch of oatcakes, apples, wine, and cheese (*PC* 76-82). That evening all the creatures unite together at the Dancing Lawn as promised, each having brought more of the above food to share, fulfilling the requisite Inklings' menu (*PC* 84). All join in a communal feast in honor of Caspian, after which Trumpkin lights his pipe, and the conversation between Caspian and Trufflehunter revolves around how they might defeat Miraz (*PC* 84-5). Lastly, a group of fauns arrive and lead the entire group in music and dancing that last late into the night (*PC* 85-6).

Lewis's meetings of the Inklings, of course, never ended with music and dancing, which is the whole point. Lewis is not trying recreate an Inklings' dinner so much as he is using its ritualistic qualities to illustrate those same qualities in ecclesiastic fellowship. This whole sequence recalls a tent revival meeting. The evangelistic recruitment in the name of the Christ figure, the large, pitch-in fellowship meal, and the worshipful celebration all elicit a comfortable resonance for Christian readers. The event greatly intensifies Caspian's confidence and joy. The narrator says that Caspian "had never enjoyed himself more. Never had sleep been more refreshing nor food tasted more savory" (87). The tiny band of rebels has formed a community that eventually becomes an ecclesiastic community of believers (Brown, *Prince* 91). When Caspian first assembles them, they do not all believe in the sovereignty of Aslan or in the magic of Queen Susan's horn. Skepticism is one of the novel's strongest themes, in fact. But this ritual meal unites them all under loyalty to Caspian, who does believe, and, as Ransom says to Jane in similar circumstances, "For tonight, it is enough" (*THS* 230).⁴³

Two more observations strengthen the understanding of this meal as an example of ecclesiology. First, those who reject both Aslan and his goodness do not share in the fellowship. When Trumpkin lights his pipe, Lewis notes in an aside that the traitorous dwarf Nikabrik "was not a smoker," indicating already that the Black dwarf has no real fellowship with the moral Narnians and providing a foreshadowing of Nikabrik's coming abandonment of moral goodness (84; Brown, *Prince* 94). The second observation comes from the word "ecclesiology" itself. The root word is the Greek *ekklesia*, meaning "a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place," which is also

⁴³ Lewis felt certain that the mere proximity to strong believers could be spiritually beneficial. Note Screwtape's displeasure at the Christian girlfriend Wormwood's subject has chosen (*Screwtape* 119).

the root for the word “church” (Thayer G1577). In the text, Caspian’s visitation to his subjects serves as a very literal “calling out” of the Narnian creatures to live, eat, and fight together. The early church’s interactions are described in similar terms in the book of Acts. The new Christians “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . And all that believed were together, and had all things common . . .” (Acts 2:42, 44). So not only can we understand the meal in terms of fellowship, but as expressly Christian fellowship.

The Fellowship Meal and Shared Beliefs

Lewis’s Inklings-style fellowship meals demonstrate how shared beliefs strengthen the life of the church by making it clear that believers—especially new believers—grow in their faith when they can rely on the advice of a mentor. We have seen how the Pevensie children react to Mr. Beaver just speaking the name of Aslan during their dinner, and Jane is taught by several counselors how to withstand the terror of her premonitions during meals eaten at St. Anne’s (*LWW* 74, 85; *THS* 139-42). In *The Silver Chair*, Eustace and Jill eat an Inklings-style meal hosted by their soon-to-be guide Puddleglum before setting out to rescue the lost prince Rilian. The three are united only by their shared belief in Aslan and the sign’s he has given Jill. Newly deposited in Narnia by Aslan himself, Jill and Eustace are delivered to the marshes near Ettinsmoor by a group of owls, who call upon Puddleglum to respond to “the Lion’s business” (*SC* 64). As a believer himself, Puddleglum offers his help without question. The next morning, Puddleglum, cooks a rather delicious stew of eels for Jill and Eustace over an open fire while smoking “a heavy sort of tobacco” that produces thick black smoke which “drifted along the ground like a mist” and sets Eustace to coughing (*SC* 71). While the meal is

cooking, Puddleglum advises how to plan their journey, and afterwards, the children drink tea while Puddleglum sips an unidentified liquor from a black bottle (*SC* 77). Both children respond with excitement when they realize that Puddleglum uses “we” instead of “you” while discussing their plans (*SC* 72). The same pleasurable membership that drew Jane to the Dennistons’ guidance creates a bond here as well.

We can see immediately, however, that these companions are not yet friends. Jill and Eustace are prone to bickering, only having just met at the story’s beginning, and Puddleglum’s staunch pessimism—which tries Eustace’s patience—forestalls the children’s appreciation of him until much later in the story (*SC* 75-6; Gibson 185). Lewis saw this unity in the midst of diversity—or even controversy—to be a strength of the church. In *Screwtape Letters* he has Screwtape explain why the local church should be targeted because it is not a “unity . . . of likings, it brings people of different classes and psychology together in the kind of unity the Enemy [God] desires” (*Screwtape* 81). The children do endanger their little unity by their bickering, but their shared beliefs and the shared goals which stream from those beliefs keep them together (Schakel 67). Lewis makes it clear that without this unity of belief, the mission to rescue Prince Rilian would have failed. Deep below Narnia, the three discover a curious Knight who treats them to a meal of pigeon pie, cold ham, salad, and cakes (*SC* 163). His strange manners but noble bearing leave them confused until the Knight, bound to the titular magic chair, calls upon “the Great Lion, by Aslan himself.” (*SC* 174). They realize that they have at last found the prince and that the strangeness of the meal was due to the evil enchantment of the Green Witch (*SC* 174). Nevertheless, the table bond and the shared belief of the company save the quest. Had they not been unified in looking for the signs Aslan gave and had

they not been united in their belief and in their obedience to them, all would have been lost (Ford 399).

The Fellowship Meal and Friendship

The third ecclesiastic principle to be learned from Lewis's meals of personal preference is that of friendship. By now, we have clearly seen how important Lewis's friends were to him. Walter Hooper wrote of Lewis's love of friendship: "What meant the most to him was friendship. The many hours spent in the pub – there was nothing he liked more than the sound of adult male laughter" (qtd. in Phillips 107). The fourth chapter of Lewis's book *The Four Loves* examines friendship love, or *phileo* in Greek, and Lewis expresses how friendship deepens when it is shared. Condensing the point of Charles Lamb's poem, "The Three Friends," he claims that friends enjoy each other more when their numbers increase (61-62; Lamb 513). Such an increase gives friendship "'a nearness by resemblance' to Heaven itself" (62). Using the same logic, he concludes the paragraph with a metaphor, saying, "The more we Thus share the Heavenly Bread between us, the more we shall all have" (62).⁴⁴ Lewis does not use the phrase "Heavenly Bread" as a mere metaphor. Instead, his life and his writings show how literally readers should understand the expression.

This growth of good company has already been established in the chapter as a staple of Lewis's fiction and of his meals. But this principle of enjoying one's friends—and eating with one's friends—takes on an eschatological tone in the light of the quote above. We will tackle eschatology directly in the final chapter of this study, but briefly we can see how Lewis demonstrates how literally he meant it when he said friendship

⁴⁴ This may sound like an evangelistic statement, and so it may be interpreted, but the primary sense is simply that of increasing joy by growing good company.

creates a resemblance to Heaven. In *The Last Battle*, King Tirian and his lifelong friend Jewel, the unicorn, must literally stand and watch as an invading force of Calormenes conquers Narnia. He tries desperately to assemble an army of True Believers around himself as Caspian successfully did, but largely fails. He does succeed in calling two English children into Narnia, who help him rescue Puzzle, the donkey who had been forced to impersonate Aslan. One last raid to rescue a group of enslaved dwarves yields a solitary dwarf ally, Poggin, who turns out to be just the sort of cook Lewis would have liked. The next morning, Poggin wakes early and catches a brace of wood pigeons and cooks them in a stew with wild fresney, which Lewis compares to wood sorrel (*TLB* 95). The hungry company eats, drinking only water from the stream, then listens while Poggin smokes a pipe and tells the story of “more news of the enemy” (*TLB* 96). It may not be apparent at first, but friendship plays a subtle but important role in this meal. Jill and Eustace became friends from their previous adventures together. The friendship of Tirian and Jewel is so deep that they “loved each other like brothers” and move through the novel almost as a single character (*TLB* 16). Newcomers Poggin and Puzzle soon join the circle of friendship. Tirian very swiftly begins calling the dwarf “friend Poggin,” and Jewel and Puzzle bond over their common interests, “like grass and sugar and the care of one’s hooves” (*TLB* 95-6). This scene of peaceful eating is the last extended period of peace experienced in the novel. They have been cheered by the increase of their company through the addition of Poggin and Puzzle, and they still hold out hope that Narnia will return to good times and “they’ll go on forever and ever and ever,” as Jill says (*TLB* 110). The ecclesiastic—and eschatological—point becomes plain once the novel’s story plays out. The friendships will last forever, but Narnia will not. The brief respite from strife

during which the company “share[s] the Heavenly Bread” turns out to be a literal “nearness by resemblance’ to Heaven itself,” for Narnia does end and the small company of friends who fought her last battle die and join a much greater company in Aslan’s Country, the Narnian Heaven (Lewis, *Loves* 62).

The Fellowship Meal and the Evangelium

The final component to ecclesiastic eating in Lewis’s fiction is probably the most important. All of Lewis’s hospitality and fellowship meals include some kind of persuasive talking or storytelling that either seek to evangelize or catechize the novel’s protagonists, as I have shown. But to understand this after-dinner storytelling in its most vibrant ecclesiastic light, we must examine the *evangelium*, or gospel infusion, that Lewis considered so crucial to storytelling itself.

We have already seen the *evangelium* appear directly during a scene of after-dinner storytelling. As Mr. Beaver instructs the Pevensie children, he repeats his prior claim that “Aslan is on the move” (*LWW* 84). The name has already had a quickening effect on three of the children, but here it stirs a “strange feeling” in the children, “like the first signs of spring, like good news” (*LWW* 85). Most readers will miss the subtle allusions to Christ in this statement. The “first signs of spring” foreshadows both the coming thaw of the White Witch’s magical winter and the Christological resurrection of Aslan. The “good news” is simply an expression of the gospel, for that is the literal definition of the word, and “*evangelium*” is merely its Latin equivalent. In both cases, we see through Mr. Beaver’s after dinner conversation that quality which J. R. R. Tolkien described as “the far off gleam or echo” of the gospel that he argued is a vital component of all truly successful fairy tales (Tolkien 71).

Lewis's enthusiasm for Tolkien's stress upon the *evangelium* component inspired him to become a co-conspirator in its dissemination. Lewis and Tolkien worked together on its inclusion in Lewis's novel *Out of the Silent Planet*. Together they realized that "any amount of theology can now be smuggled into people's minds under the guise of Romance without their knowing it" (Mitchell 4; *CL* 2.262). Far from seeking subversion, the goal was to gradually build up unconscious sympathies to the Christian narrative in order to increase a reader's receptivity to the actual gospel when it was finally presented overtly.

That the *evangelium* should be expressed during a meal should not seem unnatural if one remembers how often Jesus's own teaching took place during meals or how much of Lewis's Christian life revolved around meals (Matt. 26:18-30; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 10:38-42; John 6:1-13). Lewis actually structured two entire novels around lengthy examples of the gospel-tinged after-dinner storytelling. The first two chapters of *Perelandra* form a frame for the novel. Ransom has returned from Venus and is ready to tell the story of his adventures. First, the character Lewis summons his friend Humphrey, a doctor, and then prepares the requisite English breakfast of bacon and eggs, but Ransom, who has eaten nothing but fruit for over a year, eats only bread and porridge with tea (*Per.* 31; Patterson 31).⁴⁵ The rest of the novel consists of a story Ransom tells "all that day and far into the night" sitting at "Lewis's" table (*Per.* 31; Myers 56-7). The story, with its clear statement of Maleldil's analogy with Christ and Ransom's more subtle

⁴⁵ While there is no smoking in this instance, the allusion to the Inklings is rather stronger here than usual. Prior to the meal, "Lewis" recruits a doctor named "Humphrey" to attend to Ransom and mentions another person referred to as "B," the anthroposophist (*Per.* 32). These references are to Humphrey Havard, Lewis's personal doctor, and to Owen Barfield, author and lawyer, who were both regular attendees of The Inklings (Carpenter 255-256).

Christology, certainly represents an overt expression of the *evangelium*, but the ending of the novel connects the story with the worship of Christ (Downing 52). In a lengthy prose-poem, Lewis presents his image of “the Great Dance” as the assemblage of Perelandrian protagonists gather for a kind of coronation ritual for Tor and Tinidril, the king and queen of the planet (*Per.* 214; Schwartz 84). There Ransom learns “new things about Maleldil and about his Father and the Third One,” and the novel ends with a liturgical recitation of worship to Maleldil, each expression ending with the repeated phrase “Blessed be He!” (*Per.* 210, 214-8). So Ransom’s after-breakfast story ends with the full purpose of the *evangelium* completely and overtly expressed as a statement of the church’s central function of offering praise and worship the Christ.

The second of Lewis’s novels to feature lengthy after-dinner storytelling is *Prince Caspian*. The four Pevensie children have returned to Narnia but sit stranded on what they discover is the ruins of the castle of Cair Paravel where all four once ruled as kings and queens. While musing upon their purpose for returning, they inadvertently rescue Trumpkin the dwarf from the wicked Telmarines who now rule Narnia. When, they ask how he came to be a prisoner, Trumpkin answers that it is “a long story” and first asks for a meal (*PC* 35). Trumpkin helps them catch fish, which they roast over an open fire on the dais of the ruined castle of Cair Paravel (*PC* 38). Wild apples and well water round out the meal. The group eats, Trumpkin lights his pipe, and he then delivers the lengthy flashback of Caspian’s history that comprises over one third of the whole novel (Guroian 56).

Trumpkin’s expression of the *evangelium* is perhaps not quite so overt as in *Perelandra*, but this is because Trumpkin’s story deals less with worship and more with

testimony. The gospel writings and the letters of Paul and John with Luke's history of the church together form the New "Testament" of God's intervention in human history, so through such a clear precedent we can easily see how a testimony functions ecclesiastically. Trumpkin testifies to the actions of Caspian and the "Old Narnians" but does not yet accept Aslan as a real person or the Pevensie children's efficacy as a realistic solution to Caspian's problem (Ford 439). He believes that "your great King Peter—and your Lion Aslan—are all eggs and moonshine," but, as we have already seen, Caspian's own belief suffices to inspire loyal obedience in his subjects who do not yet believe (*PC* 100, 102). This is why Trumpkin volunteered to go on the mission to fetch the children in the first place (Ford 322). After Trumpkin tells his story, the children reciprocate by offering their own testimony, but it is a testimony of actions as they demonstrate to Trumpkin just how effective they are with a series of physical challenges. Edmund bests Trumpkin at sword play, Susan bests him at archery, and Lucy bests him at healing. The lessons cause Trumpkin to make his first proclamation of faith. When Peter begins, "And now, if you've really decided to believe in us," Trumpkin is quick to answer "I have" (*PC* 114). Eventually, they help Trumpkin come to full faith in Aslan as well, and Trumpkin gains full membership in the circle of True Believers.

This cycle of eating and *evangelium* by way of testimony also works as a capstone to this portion of the study. All four ecclesiastic features of Lewis's fellowship meals can be found together. Vigen Guroian and Nancy Lou Patterson suggest that Lewis's use of fresh fish in the menu of the ritual meal alludes to Christ's meal with the disciples on the

shores of Galilee after his resurrection (Guroian 56; John 21:1-12).⁴⁶ The observation enriches the ecclesiastic connection of the ritual Inklings meal. After Trumpkin's assistance with the meal, his story, and the children's challenge, a friendship based on this table bond develops and the children begin referring to him as the D.L.F., for "Our Dear Little Friend" (*PC* 21-2). And we have already seen how the gradual sharing of beliefs through the testimony within the *evangelium* of Trumpkin's story strengthens the company of believers and increases its numbers. In short, we must conclude that the purpose of True Believers consistently sitting down to eat together is to demonstrate Lewis's theology of the church, which involves strengthening the body of Christ through worship, edification, and growth (Erikson 1036; Jung 14).

Conclusion – A Culinary Model of Ecclesiology

A final demonstration of this evangelistic response and a fuller expression of the role of fellowship will be an examination of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. I have saved discussing *Dawn Treader* until the conclusion of this chapter because examining the novel as a unit best demonstrates how transformative an attentive analysis of food theology can be in interpreting Lewis's novels. Doris Myers claims that the crew of the *Dawn Treader* functions as a microcosm of the Church itself, so we may expect to see each of the principles argued in this chapter present in its pages (Myers 142).

From its beginning, Lewis works to establish a culinary fellowship of friends with *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Lucy, Edmund, and Eustace, of course, join the crew from the magic portrait in Eustace's upstairs bedroom. In Narnia, Caspian has settled the unrest which was the topic of *Prince Caspian*. Now he seeks to assemble a crew to find

⁴⁶ The Beavers also serve freshly caught fish, as does Aslan himself at the end of *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, as will be shown below.

the lost lords of Narnia. Caspian points out that before embarking, he secured “Aslan’s approval,” so this venture has Aslan’s personal blessing; the fact the Lucy and Edmund join Caspian magically further indicates Aslan’s approval, since all good magic in the Chronicles occurs through him (*VDT* 21). The hold of the Dawn Treader provides the first insight into the meals this company eats. The long list of flour, water, beer, pork, honey, wine, apples, nuts, cheeses, biscuits, turnips, bacon, ham, eggs, and onions makes reasonable sense for a ship voyage, since none of the items requires refrigeration (*VDT* 25). We might note a few items hold ecclesiastic significance, such as the wine and the flour, which are sacramental necessities. The honey, pork, apples, nuts, and cheese could indicate a Mediterranean quality, perhaps suggesting that *Dawn Treader* is fully equipped to offer hospitality in the classical style (Brown, *Dawn* 24). Lastly, the beer, turnips, bacon, ham, and eggs hint that the hearty English meals to be made from such stock will likely increase the potential for fellowship. The atmosphere with these early stages of fellowship is one of pure joy. Lucy’s emotions become nearly transcendent with the elation she feels; she is feasting so much on the beauty, nostalgia, and good company added to the thrill of new experience that she is “almost too happy to speak” (*VDT* 30). As I have shown, good food and friendship form the crux of joyful fellowship for Lewis, and these opening scenes exemplify the principle.

Very soon, however, the emphasis of the plot turns to Eustace, the recalcitrant outsider, and the only member of the crew there against his will. His story arc follows his increased alienation, leading to a time of crisis when he is transformed into a dragon, after which he becomes a convert and is gradually initiated into the full fellowship of the company. The meals Eustace eats (or does not eat) symbolize this process at each step.

The first page of the novel describes Eustace's family as "vegetarians, non-smokers, and teetotalers" (*VDT* 1). A glance back at the ham, bacon, and pork in the *Dawn Treader's* larder immediately indicates Eustace will have trouble fitting in. As we remember from the Inklings ritual, any crew member who enjoys smoking or drinking—which is all of them, as we shall see—cannot have fellowship with Eustace. When Eustace is brought spiced wine to warm him after his initial plunge into the ocean, he spits it out and asks instead for "Plumbtree's Vitaminized Nerve Food" made with "distilled water," a sterile, technological concoction that mirrors Eustace's own love of the lifeless and the technical (*VDT* 13; Clark, *Lewis* 33). Because of these restrictions and Eustace's own foul attitude, at no point in this first half of the novel does Eustace ever enjoy a good meal with his shipmates. He also remains thirsty and becomes obsessed with water, at one point even trying to steal a drink at a time when the ship is on low rations (*VDT* 70-73). Just before his ordeal on Dragon Island, the crew prepares a fine Homeric feast of roasted wild goat and spiced wine "which had to be mixed with water" (*VDT* 87). Eustace misses what would be a hospitality meal because he has lazily chosen to shirk his duties and sneak off for a nap. It is at this point that his self-alienation from the fellowship becomes complete. When Eustace wakes up, he finds he has been transformed into a dragon, an outward symbol of his inward sin (Martindale and Welch 107).

Eustace's character immediately begins a transformation, for like Shasta, he is now being guided directly by the Providence of Aslan. As with Shasta and Jane, he begins to long for the company of "nice people," realizing too late what goodness he had taken for granted (*VDT* 98). Lewis makes note that Eustace now eats all his meals raw, a fact that brings him shame and further solitude because even after rejoining the crew, he

cannot dine near them due to the messy nature of his eating (*VDT* 108). Shame, as Lewis points out elsewhere, leads only to self-pity on its own, but put to its proper purpose, it brings great insight (*Pain* 67). But we have already seen the significance of Lewis's use of raw food as a symbol for heightened spirituality, and Eustace's misery finally achieves a direct experience of the *evangelium*. Aslan appears to Eustace, the lion transforms him back into a boy, and Eustace returns to the camp on foot to seek the hospitality of the crew (*VDT* 116; Ford 352-353). The scene is reminiscent of the return of the Prodigal Son: "Great was the rejoicing when Edmund and the restored Eustace walked into the breakfast circle round the camp fire" (118; Luke 15:20). Now spiritually and physically converted, Eustace eats his first genuine fellowship meal, indicating that he is now a full member of the company of True believers ("Membership" 168).

Apart from Eustace's initiation, other eating elements enforce the ecclesiastic interpretation. Drinking is a major theme in *Dawn Treader*: no other Chronicle has so many different kinds of strong drink—spiced wine, ale, mead, grog—all culminating in the sweet waters of the Last Sea, which tastes "stronger than wine and somehow wetter, more liquid than ordinary water" (255). This theme is appropriate since the entire story is set in and around water, but the goal of the voyage, Aslan's country, is also the source of the Water of Life, an idea which infiltrates all other scenes of drinking in the novel (Patterson 38).⁴⁷ Lewis emphasizes drinking's importance to the body of believers when Caspian retakes the Lone Islands for Narnia. Instead of fighting, he commands "a cask of wine to be opened" so that the soldiers can drink to Caspian's health (*VDT* 57; Brown, *Dawn* 69). These men join in cheering Caspian because they understand the plain

⁴⁷ The importance of the Water of Life will be a central topic of chapter 5.

language of free drinks. Caspian is a model of leadership, doing all in the name of Aslan, and insofar as all good kings are connected to THE King, he is connected to Christ by the image of wine. Just as Christ substituted wine for His blood at the Last Supper, Caspian spills wine instead of blood in his conquest of the Lone Isles.

With drinking a central theme, a shortage of drink is an inevitable plot device. When the crew of the *Dawn Treader* runs short on water, Lewis uses the occasion to illustrate Eustace's selfishness and self-righteousness. Similar to Edmund's lust for Turkish Delight, Eustace's obsessive thirst brings him to steal, for which he is caught and is forced to apologize (Patterson 37). This scene represents Eustace's low point before his metamorphosis. His selfish longing for water offers a counterpoint to the dragon Eustace's desire to enter the pool and bathe his arm. Aslan's water is miraculous, and its transforming power is permanent. This power directly parallels the water of life that Jesus promises (John 4:10; Ford 284; Patterson 38).

As the novel draws to a close, the sacramental significance of the meals intensifies, which punctuates the emphasis of the ritual meals of the church. The culinary theology culminates with two important meals, both of which have significance beyond ecclesiastic fellowship and will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. The magical feast laid out on Aslan's Table offers one of the single most complex image clusters in any of Lewis's works. It is a table of kings, a medieval carnival of eating: turkeys, geese, peacocks, boar's head, venison, pies, ice puddings, lobsters, salmon, nuts, grapes, pineapples, peaches, pomegranates, melons, tomatoes, and wine. The table itself holds the stone knife from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* that was used to kill Aslan and is covered with a crimson cloth. These details associate the table with a kind of

altar or reliquary, raising the knife to the significance of the Christian cross and raising the table to the level of the church altar, which holds the Eucharistic emblems remembering Christ's death (Ford 101). The chairs surrounding the feast signify an invitation to eat, and indeed, as Ramandu's daughter explains, the feast was commissioned by Aslan "for those who come so far" (*VDT* 218). There are obvious Eucharistic allusions here which will be examined in the next chapter, but, in a larger sense, this scene is the closest Lewis ever gets to portraying a church building in Narnia. The platform which holds the table itself is long, narrow, and lined with pillars, bearing a very close semblance to the nave of a roofless cathedral.⁴⁸ Ramandu, the retired star who presides over the table, maintains the fatherly spirit of a priest and himself receives a kind of Eucharist every morning (Patterson 38). At this point it is useful to remember Caspian's goal for this trip; aside from finding the seven lost Lords, he hoped to find the edge of the world and the way into Aslan's country, an eschatological image and the logical goal of every True believer. Caspian succeeds in his quest to find the edge of the world, but is not permitted to stay, since his responsibilities as king lie with Narnia. Instead, Edmund, Eustace, and Lucy must stay behind. Edmund and Lucy will never be returning to Narnia, so this parting with Caspian symbolizes a sort of death. To ease the transition, Aslan himself meets the three children and feeds them one final meal of fish by the shores of the Last Lake, just as Jesus's disciples did by the waters of Galilee (Brown, *Dawn* 236; John 21:1-25). To help comfort Lucy in the wake of this disappointing news, Aslan offers a second direct expression of the *evangelium*. Lucy asks

⁴⁸ Roofless churches are common sights in England. Lewis himself lived within just a few miles of Godstow Abbey, a medieval chapel ruined during Henry VIII's seizure of Roman Catholic properties (Poe 168).

if Aslan will tell them how to get into Aslan's Country from their own world. Aslan responds that he "shall be telling it to you all the time," indicating the ongoing spiritual growth and strengthening that is chief function of the church. As a sort of Narnian last rite, it is the perfect culmination of the end of one kind of fellowship and the beginning of another. Aslan's final word to the children is that they must get to know him in their world by another name, Lewis's most overt reference to the name of Christ in the entire series (*VDT* 270).

Through this overview of a single novel, we see how ecclesiastic eating strengthens and deepens an existing critical interpretation. Doris Myers' suggestion that *Dawn Treader* can be seen as an allegory of the church bears itself out in rich detail. Present are the full activities of a body of believers. The crew worships in a church-like setting, partakes a type of the Lord's Supper, evangelizes new members of the crew, and mimics the Scriptural model of fellowship, continuing "daily with one accord . . . and breaking bread . . . did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46). The next chapter will focus exclusively on the second of these images, the Lord's Supper, to see how Lewis advances his culinary theology into the doctrine of Real Presence.

CHAPTER THREE

LIKE THE KING IN *CURDIE*: SACRAMENTAL MEALS IN C. S. LEWIS'S FICTION

The previous chapter examined how episodes of friends eating together form analogues to Christian fellowship throughout C. S. Lewis's body of fiction. The chapter used those episodes to argue that a study of such meals leads to a coherent theology of the church otherwise not fully appreciable in Lewis's novels. Through the course of that study, we came to understand that any gathering of a novel's protagonists united in the name of the novel's Christ figure can be understood to signify an analogy of the church. This next chapter continues to investigate this analogy by examining meals that share similarities to Holy Communion, also called the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper.

Plato's influence on Lewis was sufficiently strong that some scholars justify labeling him a Christian Platonist (Johnson, and Houtman 76). Lewis received his training in Plato both directly and indirectly from reading Plato himself and from reading works strongly influenced by Plato: Augustine, Dante, Sydney, Spenser, and Milton (Johnson and Houtman 76; Matthews 173). Lewis acquired from Plato and his followers the notion that reality is organized according to a hierarchy of lower, physical forms in imitation of higher, supernatural realities, and the idea impacted him tremendously (Plato 596d). Lewis summarizes the notion in his *Preface to Paradise Lost*, ". . . degrees of value are objectively present in the universe. Everything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior" (73). Numerous

critics have previously chronicled Lewis's admiration for the medieval "Great Chain of Being," the idea that similarities in forms start at the very lowest levels of existence and continue right up to the throne of God Himself (Howard, *Achievement* 141; Ward 23).⁴⁹

This study argues that Lewis understood the Christian life to operate on this hierarchy as well. Christians dwell in natural bodies but also possess supernatural souls, so they may fellowship within both realms, although they require help with the latter (Payne 20; 25). Lewis explains this position in "Membership," his essay on Christian fellowship:

We are summoned from the outset to combine as creatures with our Creator, as mortals with immortal, as redeemed sinners with sinless Redeemer. His presence, the interaction between Him and us, must always be the overwhelmingly dominant factor in the life we are to lead within the Body, and any conception of Christian fellowship which does not mean primarily fellowship with Him is out of court. After that it seems almost trivial to trace further down the diversity of operations to the unity of the Spirit. But it is very plainly there. There are priests divided from the laity, catechumens divided from those who are in full fellowship. . . . There is, in forms too subtle for official embodiment, a continual interchange of complementary ministrations. ("Membership" 166-7)

That said, we can see now how this study has so far been moving up the hierarchy of fellowship and how Lewis's meals demonstrate this hierarchy quite well. We have examined the hospitality meal, which recruits catechumens, and the fellowship meal

⁴⁹ Lewis's *The Discarded Image* explores the medieval understanding of a universe arranged according to this hierarchy.

which strengthens “those who are in full fellowship” (“Membership” 167). In this chapter, we will examine how Lewis’s sacramental meals continue up the ladder of fellowship to demonstrate how “priests [are] divided from the laity” and also how Christ’s “presence . . . must always be the overwhelmingly dominant factor in the life of the Body” (“Membership” 167). What this chapter will look for, then, is meals which expression Lewis’s doctrine of the sacraments, his understanding of the Real Presence, and the role of the clergy in administering the sacrament.

It is necessary at the outset to make clear how the notion of sacrament functions in this setting.⁵⁰ First it must be clear that while Lewis encouraged no specific loyalty to any denomination, he was by practice a high-church Anglican. *The Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* requires the observance of only two sacraments: the rite of baptism and Holy Communion (607). In both cases, only consecrated priests may confer the Sacraments. While Lewis does occasionally employ baptismal imagery, Communion imagery is much more common in his fiction, which fits with Communion’s status as a “continuing rite” (Erikson 1115). The word “sacrament” itself requires some explanation. Lewis understood the term to be an indication itself of the hierarchy I have described above. *The Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* formally defines sacrament as a “certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God’s good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him” (*BCP* 607). As a communicant in the Anglican church, Lewis certainly accepted this definition, but for clarity’s sake, Frank Riga provides an excellent working definition: “A sacrament is a material sign that participates in the reality it manifests”

⁵⁰ A note on capitalization. I capitalize the word “sacrament” when referring to the official Sacraments of the church. When referring to “sacramentalism,” or lesser sacraments, the word will remain in lower case.

(28). In terms of hierarchy, we may understand a sacrament to be a physical participation in a supernatural reality beyond the merely symbolic. This does not constitute an endorsement of transubstantiation, which the Anglican church rejected, but instead argues for consubstantiation, the notion that Christ is spiritually present at the administration of the sacraments (*BCP* 608). Another term for this doctrine is Real Presence (Payne 29-30). Lewis argues in *Miracles* that reality itself has daily incarnational interaction with the spiritual world by way of the human body interacting with its own soul (115). This realization opens up insights into manifestations of the incarnational reality all around us (Payne 16). Symbolism itself, according to Lewis, could become sacramental in this way, and therefore so could both art and literature:

The sunlight in a picture is therefore not related to real sunlight simply as written words are to spoken. It is a sign, but also something more than a sign, and only a sign because it is also more than a sign, because in it the thing signified is really in a certain mode present. If I had to name the relation I should call it not symbolical but sacramental. (“Transposition” 102)

Both Frank Riga and Leanne Payne comment that the symbol and the thing symbolized have a hierarchical relationship; in spiritual terms, the body of Christ is higher (e.g. “more real”) than the bread and wine that symbolize and participate within it (Payne 31; Riga 28). Proceeding down the hierarchy, Lewis hypothesized that the “higher” supernatural significance of Sacramental rites could work downwards to make more sacramental all instances that evoke them. Hence, bathing becomes quasi-

sacramental because of its association with baptism, and eating does the same due to its association with the Lord's Supper (*Loves* 98; *CL* 3.583).⁵¹

This chapter, then, will demonstrate how this sacramental hierarchy and Lewis's doctrine of the Lord's Supper may be discerned through his usage of bread and wine imagery and the presence of a Christ figure in numerous meals presented in his novels. These meals offer evidence that Lewis considered the function of eating to be sacramental: involving an interplay between "low" physical food and "high" supernatural realities. Examples of Lewis's hierarchical language such as "shadowlands," "further up and further in," "first and second things," and "lower sacrament" demonstrate his understanding that terrestrial reality is a lower thing than spiritual, or heavenly, reality (*TLB* 228, 197; *Dock* 489; *CL* 3.583;. The texts will suggest that the realities made most imminent by the Sacrament of Holy Communion were the Anglican doctrine of Real Presence and the function of the priest as an administrator of the Presence.

Culinary Language of the Eucharist

First, we must examine Lewis's culinary language as the means by which Lewis communicates these doctrines. In many regards, this component of the study is much less complex than the previous chapter. Of Lewis's meal variables, the Menu and the Diner categories reveal the Eucharistic themes. Since the Eucharist itself is composed of bread and wine, it only follows that when Lewis's meals include bread and wine, an argument of Eucharistic imagery may be made. I call all such meals Eucharistic meals (see table 3.1). Since the terms "bread" and "wine" are fairly general, I consider any iteration of

⁵¹ This is one of the many reasons Lewis refused to categorize his fantastic fiction as allegory (*CL* 3.1004-5). His first novel, *Pilgrim's Regress*, is an allegory, but Lewis later expressed regret for having written it that way (*CL* 3.1054).

bread and wine potential candidates for a Eucharistic meal (e.g. “oat cakes” or “sandwiches” may be considered as bread and “grapes” or “sherry” as wine), but as we shall see, to avoid inaccurate allegorizing, a candidate Eucharistic meal must also display consistencies with Lewis’s expressed doctrines to be considered a sacramental meal in the fullest sense.

Table 3.1: Criteria for Sacramental meals.

Sacramental Meals	Eucharistic	Bread and wine present
	Corporal	Christ figure present

For the category of Diners, we return to Lewis’s theological motif of how *who* one eats with affects spiritual nourishment. Each of the novels in this study includes a character identifiable with Christ. When any other character eats a meal with the novel’s Christ figure, an argument may be made that the meal in question demonstrates the doctrine of Real Presence. For this reason, I call such meals corporal meals (see table 3.1). Eating a meal with Christ Himself, of course, does not invoke Holy Communion in the liturgical sense. Instead, it harkens back to its origins to the Last Supper where Christ eats with His disciples to establish the Lord’s Supper as a memorial. Incidentally, this fact may also cause Corporal meals to overlap with Eucharistic meals. This is to be expected since both Christ Himself and bread and wine were present at the Last Supper.

Lewis uses six specific Christ figures in the twelve novels of this study. When characters first come across one of these figures, they usually have an experience of “the Numinous,” a term Lewis uses in *The Problem of Pain* to describe “the wonder and a certain shrinking” one feels in the presence of the supernatural; “uncanny” is an acceptable synonym (17-19). The sensation establishes the sacramental nature of the

Christ figure's supernatural intervention within the reality of story (Ford 320). For ease of reference, I will here provide a basic description of each character and a survey of key Christological elements.⁵² Lewis's first Christ figure is the son of the Landlord from *Pilgrim's Regress*. The Landlord (God) owns the land and appears cruel because he can evict (kill) any tenant (human) at any time (Hooper 183). The Landlord's Son, however, who is also called "A Man," appears to the main character John, feeds him bread and water, and teaches John how to accept Grace (*PR* 109-10). Lewis borrows the image of the Landlord and his son from Christ's parable of the husbandman (Matt. 21:33-40). Strictly speaking, *The Space Trilogy* has two distinct Christ figures. Maleldil is Christ Himself without any metaphorical trappings outside of the name change. In *Perelandra*, Lewis explicitly refers to Maleldil taking the form of Mankind on earth, and in *That Hideous Strength*, he plainly describes followers of Maleldil as Christians (*Per* 62; *THS* 316). Elwin Ransom, the protagonist of the series, develops into a human Christ figure as the trilogy progresses, especially in *Perelandra*. David Downing has studied the parallels between Ransom and Christ at length. Ransom has a last supper, a Gethsemane, experiences a pseudo-death, descends into a hellish underworld after battling Satan, and experiences a pseudo-resurrection (Downing 51-2). Downing also examines the apparent redundancy of dual Christ figures in the series by referencing a letter in which Lewis declares, "Ransom (to some extent) plays the role of Christ . . . because in reality every real Christian is really called upon in some measure to *enact* Christ. Of course Ransom does this rather more spectacularly than most" (*CL* 3.1005; qtd in Downing 52).

⁵² The purpose of this list is largely for the sake of reference. Numerous Christological studies have previously been performed on these characters, and I do not here seek to enlarge on what has already been said.

Lewis's most famous Christ figure, of course, is Aslan, the lion of the Narnian Chronicles. He is the "Son of the Emperor over the Sea," an allusion to Jesus as the Son of God (Ford 54). Unlike Lewis's other Christ figures, Aslan's Christology focuses more on individuals rather than entire populations. He personally guides the non-believing child protagonists of the first six Chronicles (Edmund in *LWW*, Susan in *PC*, Eustace in *VDT*, Jill in *SC*, Shasta in *HHB*, and Digory in *MN*) through a conversion experience (Sammons 94). Christological parallels, therefore, center on these individuals: Aslan dies and rises from the dead specifically for Edmund; he personally baptizes Eustace; he offers Living Water and teaching to Jill; and offers miraculous healing to Digory and his mother (Kilby 57; *CL* 3.1158). Aslan also functions as the creator of Narnia at its beginning and judges Narnia at its end (*CL* 3.1159; John 1; Rev. 22).

Lewis's final Christ figures are Cupid and Psyche.⁵³ As with Maleldil in *The Space Trilogy*, Cupid is literally Christ, but seen through the mythic veil of uninspired paganism (Myers, *Context* 193). Cupid only reveals himself to Psyche and to Orual, the latter in a sort of pre-death dream-vision (*TWHF* 308). With Psyche, on the other hand, Lewis has again given us a human Christ figure after the fashion of Elwin Ransom. Like Ransom, Psyche experiences a kind of death and resurrection, including being affixed to a tree in imitation of the crucifixion. As Cupid's wife, she is portrayed as the bride of Christ, and therefore becomes a living analogue of the church itself, or the Body of Christ (Gibson 232). Lewis describes her as an "*anima naturaliter Christiana*" and describes

⁵³ In the novel, Lewis avoids using the name "Cupid" due to its "now odious" associations with commercial romance and Valentine's Day (*CL* 3.1295). Instead, Lewis first uses "Shadowbrute," then "West Wind," then "the god," and eventually "Lord," to emphasize Cupid's mysterious nature and the gradual—albeit partial—lifting of the mystery. Lewis identifies Cupid by his proper name in the author's note at the end of the novel (*TWHF* 311).

the story as a supposal of what would happen to a family member who became religious (*CL* 3.830; Gibson 241). The sacramental significance of dual Christ figures will be examined below.

Now with an understanding of the language of Lewis's Corporal meals and Eucharistic meals, we may undertake an analysis of how they demonstrate Lewis's doctrine of the Holy Sacrament. We must tread cautiously, however. Not every meal Lewis describes somehow invokes the Eucharist, although some critics seem to suggest otherwise. It is true that Lewis says—on more than one occasion—that “Every meal can be a kind of lower sacrament,” (*CL* 2.43; 3.583). Lewis was not alone in this sentiment. Several writers have noticed that the latent sacrifice of living organisms required for all meals permit comparisons to religious sacrifice, especially to that of Christ on the cross (Cochrane 17; Glycer 225).⁵⁴ However, Lewis does not say that every meal can be “The” Sacrament. He draws a clear distinction between a “sacramental” view of all eating and Holy Communion itself, and this nuance might create confusion. One example of this indistinction is Nancy-Lou Patterson's 1998 article which claims that any of Lewis's meals which mention bread or alcohol in any form constitute some sort of “allusion” to Holy Communion (28). Her overly broad application of the word “allusion” leads to needless allegorization that ignores Lewis's specific theology of Holy Communion, a theology very much in agreement with the Church of England's doctrine. Patterson frequently labels meals as “Eucharistic” when only one of the elements are present, as when the trees in *Prince Caspian* eat various flavors of earth but drink “very little wine” (*PC* 227; Patterson 37). The absence of bread contradicts the *Book of Common Prayer*,

⁵⁴ George MacDonald and Charles Williams were two such thinkers whose well-documented influences upon Lewis are commonly known (Downing 132-3; Glycer 225; Sayer 106, 292).

which denies the efficacy of the rite if one of the elements is withheld (609). This makes the claim of allusion problematic.

While it may be risky to argue what Lewis *intended* by any of his fictional meals, we do know what he believed regarding Communion, and reason suggests that—whether consciously or no—his tendency would be to remain inwardly consistent to those beliefs, and a legitimate allusion on Lewis’s part would require the expected consistency. Hence, Mark Studdock’s meal of sandwiches and beer at the Two Bells pub cannot constitute an allusion to the Eucharist because the passage lacks any textual referent aligned closely enough with Anglican theology or biblical imagery to warrant that term (*THS* 87; Patterson 32).⁵⁵ Mark is not a believer; beer is not sufficiently analogous to wine; no priestly individual presides; no Christ figure is present, nor does the text make any use of Eucharistic themes such as sacrifice, worship, or mystery (Erickson 1116). I can grant that Patterson’s study is quite insightful and rather thorough, but if all such meals constitute allusions to Holy Communion, then an accurate portrait of Lewis’s doctrine of the Eucharist is well-nigh impossible to discern, for the wild mash-up of occasions, menus, and diners all add up to contradictions rather than harmony.

In the place of broad generalizations, then, this study only considers the two distinct sorts of meals I have previously mentioned as candidates for Eucharistic meals. Sacramental meals feature a distinct representation of *both* bread and wine in the menu, and Corporal meals are any meal—regardless of menu—eaten in the presence of the novel’s Christ figure. The body of this chapter first surveys Lewis’s own doctrine of Holy

⁵⁵ I limit my examples of flawed analyses from Patterson’s article for the sake of space even though a larger number of her examples can be subject to the same criticism. However, regarding the interpretation of meals which authentically constitute allusions to the Eucharist, Patterson and I usually agree, as shall be seen below.

Communion as Lewis expresses it in his non-fiction writings and letters to establish a criteria by which candidate meals may be assessed. From there, it examines how the priestly element plays a role in Sacramental meals and how Corporal meals demonstrate a clear model of the Anglican doctrine of Real Presence.

Lewis's Own Doctrine

Lewis's own theology regarding the Eucharist was influenced, of course, by Scripture. Biblically speaking, all of the New Testament teaching regarding the Lord's Supper streams from the Last Supper Christ ate with his twelve disciples just prior to his crucifixion (Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 13). That meal took place during the Jewish Passover, allowing the meal to resonate with the most important meal imagery of the Old Testament as well (Visser 36). Jesus created the sacrament of Holy Communion when He took the bread and the cup and commanded His disciples to "Take, eat; this is my body," (Matt. 26:26). The meal that has emerged from centuries of repetitions is what Margaret Visser calls "undoubtedly the most significance-charged dinner ritual ever devised" (36). Two other Scriptural images are important to understanding Lewis's sacramental meal imagery. The gospel of John presents Christ himself with the culinary metaphors of Water of Life and Bread of Life. Jesus tells the woman at the well "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Later, Jesus tells His disciples "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Both passages prefigure the Last Supper and the inception of Holy Communion. They both present

salvific images, which use the sustenance of physical food to evoke the spiritual salvation available through Christ (Cochrane 37-8).

Specific doctrines concerning the Lord's Supper are far-reaching and much-debated, so my focus here will only be on those theological points which Lewis specifically affirms, either directly, through his letters and non-fiction, or indirectly, through his novels. In general, Lewis followed a conservative evangelical doctrine of the Lord's Supper, but, in certain points of contention, affirmed the official positions of the Church of England. Those points which this brief overview will specifically address are the presence of Christ, the establishment of the Lord's Supper by Christ, the necessity of repeating the rite, the function of the rite as worship, its efficacy, the recipients of the elements, and the administrator of the elements (Erickson 1116).⁵⁶ With each theological criterion, I will provide an example of a Eucharistic meal from Lewis's novels to demonstrate how that aspect may be discerned in his fiction, confirming my claim that Lewis's Sacramental meals offer a recognizable theology of Holy Communion in accordance with Lewis's actual beliefs.⁵⁷

Real Presence of Christ

The Church of England rejects the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, but instead teaches that Christ is really present, not physically in the elements themselves, but spiritually through the fellowship of His Body (*BCP* 608). In *Mere Christianity*,

⁵⁶ Lewis never made a systematized statement of his beliefs concerning Holy Communion. However, for purely organizational reasons, I follow Millard Erickson's outline found in his *Christian Theology*. Erickson is a systematic theologian, not a Lewis scholar, but his survey covers the relevant doctrines of both Universal Christianity and of the Anglican Church.

⁵⁷ I do not assert that *all* of the following theological statements need to be present in each of the meals. To do so would imply that all of these meals are allegorical instead of figurative. My argument asserts instead that the claim of sacramental meal should be supported with consistent adherence to Lewis's personal beliefs.

Lewis describes the presence as Christ “actually operating through [Christians]; that the whole mass of Christians are the physical organism through which Christ acts” (*MC* 65). Holy Communion increases that “Christ-life” in believers incrementally, with each observation (*MC* 64). On a separate occasion, Lewis asserts that Holy Communion brings about “spiritual oneness” with Christ, although he also admits his astonishment that a wafer of bread and a sip of wine can carry such import and very much affirms its inherent mystery (*Malcolm* 102-3; *Grief* 67). Because this doctrine influences all the rest and because many meals can *only* be considered sacramental because of the literal or implied presence of a Christ-figure, this doctrine may be the most important of the all the criteria by which Lewis’s meals may be analyzed for sacramental allusions.

An example from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* shows how Real Presence can be such an essential ingredient for a sacramental meal that even food itself is secondary. After Aslan’s death, Lucy and Susan stay up all night to mourn, but upon Aslan’s resurrection at dawn, the two girls participate in a wild Easter romp during which Aslan leaps and gambols with the girls, all laughing together. Afterwards, Lewis curiously, yet explicitly, describes the girls’ condition in terms of culinary fulfillment: “they no longer felt in the least tired or hungry or thirsty” (*LWW* 164; Brown, *Narnia* 222). The girls are quite literally enjoying the Real Presence of Aslan, Narnia’s Christ-figure, and their time with him may easily be understood as a Holy Communion.⁵⁸ Adding the satisfaction of physical hunger ties the event to the ritual the Lord’s Supper, but no food is necessary because that which the food would stand for is already

⁵⁸ It may be useful here to remember that the word “communion” is a cognate of the Greek word *koinonia*, which means “fellowship.” In this sense “communion” and “The Lord’s Supper” are not necessarily synonymous. However, “Holy Communion” alludes to the Real Presence of Christ, for one cannot fellowship with Christ—or a Christ figure—unless He—or it—is present.

physically present. Aslan's specific removal of both hunger and thirst alludes to Christ's claim that those who partake of the Bread of Life and drink the Living Water will never hunger or thirst again (John 6:35; 4:14). By his very nature, Aslan satisfies the universal needs of sleeping, eating, and drinking. Because the episode is sacramental rather than allegorical, no food is necessary since no symbolism is required. The girls participate with the supernatural resurrection of Aslan in their physical actions, the very definition of sacrament (Riga 28).

Established by Christ

Lewis agreed with orthodox theology which held that the Lord's Supper was a required Sacrament of the church, established by Christ for all members of His Body (Matt. 26:26, etc.). In a letter dated July 1950, Lewis writes to Mary Van Deusen, "The only rite which we know to have been instituted by Our Lord Himself is the Holy Communion. This is an order and must be obeyed" (CL 3.68). Lewis emphasized that the Lord's Supper is a command by repeatedly stressing to his readers the importance of obeying the command (*Dock* 61; *CL* 2.994)

Lewis's first candidate for a clear Eucharistic allusion appears towards the end of *The Pilgrim's Regress*. John has been looking for "the Landlord," an allegorical figure of God, but has only found a series of false friends with bankrupt philosophies. He has eaten with nearly all of them as discussed in the last chapter, but he has never broken into the deeper fellowship that is truly nourishing spiritually. John finally finds himself on an allegorical "straight and narrow" path down a canyon, which represents the Fall of Man, and John's hunger and thirst are both physical and spiritual at this point (*PR* 109; Matt. 7:14; Kilby 100, 102). The Christ figure of the novel, called simply "A Man," appears

and offers John a loaf of bread and directs him to a stream of cool water (*PR* 109-10). Here we have an easily identifiable Christ figure establishing a sacramental meal of bread and water (Clark 6). Lewis eschews the strict Eucharistic imagery of bread and wine for this passage and instead uses the culinary metaphors associated with Jesus in the gospel of John. The bread and the water John eats with “a Man” symbolize the Bread of Life and the Living Water, an association made stronger when John asks the Man to eat with him, to which the Man responds, “I am full and not hungry” (*PR* 110). The meal is not a Corporal meal because John does not eat until after the Man departs. The substitution of water for wine may seem problematic for labeling the meal Eucharistic, but Lewis has altered the image to fit the narrative, for John has drunk much wine on his trip that gave no spiritual benefit. A well-documented orthodox ascetic tradition can actually be traced back to the Third century in which several early church fathers authorized bread and water Eucharists as a means of adhering to vows of austerity and to honoring Christ as the Living Water (McGowan 199-200). John’s meal establishes a standard for what becomes Lewis’s typically individualized salvation experiences: the Christ figure appears to the protagonist to offer redemption in the form of physical nourishment which also symbolizes supernatural nourishment. However, John is not merely being fed but is meeting salvation itself for the first time, and the Christ figure clearly initiates the sacramental relationship with a symbolic meal. The “Man’s” provision of food echoes Christ’s injunction for to “take, eat” (Matt 26:26).

Necessity of Repetition

Lewis held that the maintenance of spiritual nutrition required believers to communicate frequently; on the degree of frequency, Lewis’s opinion gradually changed

(CL 3.1285). He grew to depend upon Communion more as he grew older (Griffiths 20). George Sayer recalls that after Lewis's conversion in 1931, he at first reverted to his childhood routine of only partaking during major holidays (135). Later, Lewis wrote to his brother Warren that taking Communion once a month was "a good compromise between being Laodician and enthusiastic" (qtd. in Sayer 135).⁵⁹ Sayer reports that in the years before his death, Lewis habitually took Communion once a week.

We do not necessarily see bread-and-wine meals repeated with weekly, much less monthly, regularity, but occasional sacred or ritualistic repetitions can be found. An especially clear case is the building up of Corporal eating in *Perelandra*. Elwin Ransom's adventures on Venus are, among other things, culinary adventures, and with each meal Ransom becomes more aware of the sacramental interplay between the physical pleasure of eating and the supernatural reality of completing Maleldil's mission (Gibson 49). He drinks from the freshwater ocean and "meets Pleasure itself for the first time" (*Per* 35). The smells of the forest "create a new kind of hunger and thirst, a longing that seemed to flow over *from the body to the soul* and which was heaven to feel" (41, emphasis mine). After drinking from a delicious gourd he remarks that the pleasure was "almost . . . spiritual" (42). Here Ransom is tempted to quickly consumer another gourd but stops himself from an empty, impulsive repetition because to repeat an "experience which had been so complete . . . would be a vulgarity" (43). Nevertheless, Ransom does repeat his experiences, not impulsively, as Lewis warns against, but as the need arises. This may be a hint at the middle ground Lewis urges above in how often one should take Communion.

⁵⁹ It was to the church at Laodicea that Christ's famous rebuke was aimed: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue [sic.] thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). Lewis is referring to a medium between the extremes of apathy and fanaticism.

In the context of such transcendent eating, Ransom's meals gradually become more ritualized. Patterson notes that the "bread-like" berries Ransom finds and his corresponding impulse "to say grace" for the meal represent a building in the Eucharistic theme (49; Patterson 32). The release for this build-up comes just before Ransom fights the satanic Unman, completing the mission for which Maleldil has summoned him. As he once more—with appropriate respect this time—drinks the delicious gourds, Maleldil Himself speaks to Ransom about his mission (151). During this meal, he realizes his role as a Christ figure in subordination to the higher Christ figure of Maleldil himself; Ransom understands that "he stood for Maleldil" in both a symbolic and an incarnational sense (150). But Maleldil is not physically present. Ransom only hears a voice, demonstrating both the increase of Ransom's fellowship with God and also illustrating the Real Presence of Maleldil. From this realization, we may look back to the series of meals and see that they constitute a series of Communion, each taken as Ransom had a need, and each increasing his direct fellowship with the Christ figure through his growing realization of the Real Presence.

Communion as Worship

For Lewis, the chief function of the Lord's Supper is less to commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus than to celebrate His Real Presence as an act of worship (Payne 36).⁶⁰ The first paragraph of Lewis's longest discourse on Holy Communion, found in his last published work, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*, stresses how "adoration should be communal" and illustrates how one can find beauty during communion worship in spite of—or even because of—"an ugly church, a gawky server,

⁶⁰ Lewis said that bread and wine seemed to him "such a very odd symbol of" body and blood (*Malcolm* 102).

[or] a badly turned-out celebrant” (*Malcolm* 100-1). Even though Lewis disliked other components of the worship service, such as hymns, he maintained that participation in the service was obligatory as a means of the church testifying in unity to the Lordship of Jesus. Community worship, in Lewis’s words, is “the only way of flying your flag” (*Dock* 339).

The most notable examples of sacramental worship can be found in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Worship in Narnia takes place in a natural setting rather than within a building, where dancing is a more common activity than singing, and a big feast is nearly always requisite (Brown, *Narnia* 222; Schakel 44-5). Tumnus tells Lucy during her first visit to Narnia about summer festivals where Bacchus himself causes the streams to “run with wine instead of water and the whole forest would give itself up to jollification for weeks on end” (*LWW* 17). Bacchus indeed appears in *Prince Caspian* for by far the most exuberant of all the Narnian worship scenes. After a prolonged absence, Aslan has at last reappeared and with him the panoply of mythical demigods with which Lewis populates Narnia: fauns, dryads, water-nymphs, etc. Among these is Bacchus, Roman god of wine, wreathed in vine leaves and wearing a faun-skin (167).⁶¹ Bacchus gets permission from Aslan to host a “Romp” to celebrate Aslan’s return, and all involved enjoy a complicated dancing, game-like frolic which culminates in grape vines magically springing from the ground bearing “Really good grapes, firm and tight on the outside, bursting into cool sweetness when you put them in your mouth” (*PC* 168; Schakel 46). Devin Brown explains that the scene shows how “celebration, joy, and

⁶¹ Numerous other scholars have already explained the propriety—or impropriety—of a pagan god presiding over a divinely ordained feast, and the digression would be tangential to my purposes, so I will leave Bacchus alone for now (Brown, *Prince* 184-6; Ford 110; Gibson 166; Lindvall 171-181; Myers 138-9).

merriment are central to life” in Narnia, highlighting the worshipful aspects of this scene (Brown, *Caspian* 182). Patterson admits that the meal is only quasi-Eucharistic because of the absence of bread, but the miraculous appearance of the grapes affirms the presence of the supernatural (Patterson 37). In addition, the presence of Aslan, the Christ figure, makes the meal Corporal. Bacchus causes the miracle of grapes, but only with Aslan’s permission. Because Aslan personally presides over the festivities, a notable hierarchy of worship presents itself. Aslan authorizes Bacchus’s romp, while those present participate in it, honoring Aslan directly through his presence and indirectly through Bacchus’s miraculous festivities. In this way, Bacchus could be seen as an analogue for the priest, as we shall see. This hierarchy mimics the Anglican model of Holy Communion quite faithfully. Christ is worshipped both indirectly through the bread and the cup, and directly by the understanding of His Real Presence (Erickson 1127, 1130-1).

Efficacy of the Rite

Lewis spoke at length on the efficacy of the Eucharist. In *Mere Christianity*, he states that Christians progressively receive more of “the Christ-life inside” them and that God “uses things like bread and wine to put the new life into us” (*MC* 64-5). That the means of spreading this life pass through a material medium was significant for him as well, for the physical object reminds believers that they are part of a body (*MC* 65; “Membership” 166). By extension, Lewis rejected any notion that the bread and wine were merely symbolic reminders. Instead, he tells one young communicant that the emblems have a real function which works regardless of personal feelings; that “the things that are happening . . . are quite real things whether you feel as you wd. wish or not, just as a meal will do a hungry person good even if he has a cold in the head which

will rather spoil the taste” (*CL* 3.1587). Just what the emblems’ precise function was, he hazarded no guess, except to state that “Here a hand from the hidden country touches not only my soul but my body” (*Malcolm* 102-3). He compares the efficacy of the Lord’s Supper to both “medicine” and “magic,” enlarging upon the second notion in some detail. Calling the Sacrament “magical” affirms its mystery and guarantees that its full efficacy will never become merely “brute fact” (*Malcolm* 103; Payne 35; 38). Lewis defines this magical element an “objective efficacy which cannot be further analyzed,” a definition which helps justify the magical properties of sacramental meals like the Bacchanal described above (*Malcolm* 103).

In *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis uses the imagined pagan religion of Ungit worship to express the mystery of Holy Communion in mythical terms (Gibson 232). While convincing the King of Glome to offer his daughter, Psyche, as a human sacrifice to the god Ungit, the Old Priest says:

In the Great Offering, the victim must be perfect. For, in holy language, a man so offered is said to be Ungit’s husband, a woman is said to be the bride of Ungit’s son. And both are called the Brute’s Supper. And when the Brute is Ungit it lies with the man, and when it is her son it lies with the woman. And either way there is a devouring...many great mysteries. Some say the loving and the devouring are all the same thing. (49)

The passage confuses both readers and characters, but the confusion itself serves the purpose to demonstrate what St. Paul identified as the shadowy truth that is the best paganism can attain, and emphasizes the mystery Lewis perceived at the core of sacramental rites (Rom. 1:18; *Dock* 343). The Fox, a Greek slave belonging to the King,

responds to the confusion with typical Western rationalism: “Do you not see, Master, that the Priest is talking nonsense? A shadow is to be an animal which is also a goddess which is also a god, and loving is to be eating—a child of six would talk more sense” (49; Myers, *Context* 203). Upon examination, however, Lewis uses the Priest to express a religious paradox. Thomas Howard comments that in the kingdom of Glome, “Everyone is wrong and right at the same time” (*Achievement* 183). The Fox is right to question the cruelty of human sacrifice, but the priest is also right in perceiving “that blood and ritual and taboo are the paths to the very frontier of Reality” (Howard 184). It is useful to be reminded at this point that “the Brute” is Glome’s name for Cupid, who is revealed to be the Christ figure of the novel. Once the reader recognizes this fact, the contradictions and absurdities clarify into a figurative expression of Lewis’s Christian doctrine. Knowing that the God of the Mountain is real, and, ultimately, is Christ himself, the Old Priest’s word contain biblical parallels, although he does not fully know what he is saying. The Church is, indeed, the “bride of Ungit’s son,” and the Lord’s Supper is indeed, “the Brute’s Supper,” although it is Christ’s Body which is eaten rather than the Christians’ (Gibson 232; Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 10:16). Neither are Christians the sacrifices for sin, but the Son is. The priest possesses shadowy insight, but he has it backward. The mistake makes all the difference: one god is a loving savior, the other a devouring demon. Psyche eventually discovers, to her relief, that the former is true. The priest equates loving and eating, but the Fox identifies the logical fallacy, calling it nonsense. Orual is horrified that Psyche is to be “food for a monster” (72). Yet there is a sense in which the priest is correct: both marriage and supper stem from appetite and fellowship. Both have sacramental functions within the church. Holy Communion itself is a kind of eating that

is a loving. Marriage and eating both involve different types of consummation. At the same time, Christians are wholly incorporated into the Body of Christ by their membership in the Church. In that way they are “devoured” by Christ. The idea reinforces Lewis’s claim that the efficacy of Holy Communion by its nature depends a consummating fellowship with Christ in order to receive the “Christ-life.”

Who May Partake

Lewis agreed with St. Paul that those who took Communion in a state of disbelief were guilty of blasphemy (1 Cor. 11:29). He confesses that his first communion was taken in just such a state. Lewis admits in his autobiography, “I allowed myself . . . to make my first Communion, in total disbelief, acting a part, eating and drinking my own condemnation” (*Surprised* 161). In other words, a non-believer attempting to take Communion is not only ineffective, but sinful. This principle reiterates Lewis’s emphasis on the Fellowship of saints as the Body of Christ (“Membership” 166). *The Book of Common Prayer* likewise stresses that the wicked who eat the bread and drink the wine are “in no wise . . . partakers of Christ” (609).⁶²

The previous chapter discussed the notion of the “True Believer” found in Lewis’s fiction. True Believers are those characters who align themselves with the novel’s Christ figure and serve as Lewis’s analogues to Christians throughout the novel (Ford 353; Howard, “Triumphant” 141). In general, these characters are also the protagonists of each novel, and without exception, it is these characters who eat sacramental meals; characters outside the circle of true believers never consume sacramental meals. This strict either/or dichotomy provides the strongest evidence that

⁶² This principle will form a major component of the next chapter on transgressive eating.

Lewis consistently adhered to the Church's doctrine of who may partake of Holy Communion. Every novel embodies this principal to some extent. In *Pilgrim's Regress*, it is John, the seeker protagonist, who communes with the Christ Figure and not the characters whose meals represent Christianity's inferior competitors. In *That Hideous Strength*, the Company of St. Anne's has direct access to Ransom, the human subordinate Christ figure, and they eat in his presence regularly while the antagonistic members of the N.I.C.E., who seek to destroy St. Anne's, never once catch sight of Ransom (*THS* 149, 282, 321-6, 364). *The Chronicles of Narnia*, of course, feature British children who are called specifically to Narnia by Aslan and participate in a variety of sacramental meals (Sammons 94).

The most explicit of these is the joyfully somber Corporeal meal which concludes *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Edmund, Lucy, and Eustace have just finished sailing to the Edge of the World and are spending their final moments in Narnia. A lamb appears on the shore next to a fire upon which fish are roasting. The lamb calls the children to eat and then transforms into Aslan himself. Here Aslan tells the children they must return home, but before sending them through "the door in the sky" he affirms the children's membership in terrestrial Christianity (269). Aslan says that back in England he has "another name. And You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there" (270). The episode is a good candidate for the most intimate and most blatantly Christian of all Lewis's Corporal meals (Brown, *Dawn* 236). Aslan's Christ-figure status is augmented with two strong images connecting him directly to Jesus Christ: the lamb, symbolizing Christ as the lamb of God, and the fish, which Jesus fed to

His disciples on the shores of Galilee (John 1:29, 36; 21:9-13; Patterson 38; Hinten 45; Ford 70). Lucy, Edmund, and Eustace have proven dear to Aslan through their service to him, and their faithfulness has been rewarded by being granted personal access to the one they adore. Aslan's instructions to the children indicate that their status as Aslan's followers will not change back in earth, only that they will have to use Aslan's terrestrial name: Jesus. Likewise, Aslan's promise to Lucy that he will be telling them "all the time" how to get to Aslan's country exchanges the literal presence of Aslan which they enjoy in Narnia with the spiritual Real Presence of Jesus in their Communion back home (269; Myers, *Context* 143).

Who May Administer

Lewis aligned with the Church of England's doctrine that only an ordained priest may administer the Eucharist (*BCP* 607). This differentiates Holy Communion from other spiritual disciplines because "we can *only* have it thro' a priest" (*CL* 3.397). The role of the priest, he argues elsewhere, is to represent Christ to the congregation itself (*CL* 2.860). In that function, the priest must *be* God to the communicants whilst administering the sacrament (*Dock* 459). Here we are again reminded of Lewis's understanding of the hierarchical nature of the church. The layman looks to the priest, while the priest must look to God. During the rite, the priest becomes a mediator for the communicant and their relationship creates a perfect imitation of Christ's relationship with the entire church—the Body with the Head; the Bride with the Bridegroom (Payne 30).

Lewis's priestly characters are surprisingly common, although rarely studied among scholars. This is perhaps caused by a lack of clear knowledge of Lewis's beliefs concerning Holy Communion and an inaccurate understanding of his sacramental meals.

Once these two principles blend together, as I have attempted to accomplish thus far with this chapter, the role of the priestly character emerges. By extension, we might also argue that since Lewis affirmed the Church of England's teaching that only priests may offer Communion, then the only sacramental meals which truly suggest allusions to the Lord's Supper are those sacramental meals over which a priestly character presides.

Priestly Communions

A complete survey of characters who exhibit priest-like qualities is conceivable, but beside the point for this chapter, so I will only analyze characters who specifically bestow some form of sacramental meal. The list is short, but surprisingly comprehensive, since at least one such character may be found in each novel of this study, and each one includes specific imagery or descriptions that associate the characters with the priesthood. In *The Pilgrim's Regress* a hermit named History serves as the priestly character (112). He meets John immediately after John has his conversion experience with "a Man," the story's Christ figure. The hermit gives bread and water to John. It is the second ascetic Eucharist John has received in as many chapters, only this time, History drinks a little wine as well to round out both parts of the Sacrament and to demonstrate John's subordination to History (McGowan 199). The language of the passage helps to elevate the meal:

Presently [John] heard a bell struck, and he looked and saw a little chapel in a cave of the cliff beside him; and there sat a hermit whose name was History. . . .

"Turn in, my son," said the hermit, "and eat bread and then you shall go on your journey." (112)

The imagery of chapel and bell, the sacerdotal “my son” of the hermit, and the allegorical associations with the word “journey” indicate a ritualism which summons comparison with a liturgical celebration of the Eucharist with History as the presiding priest. To complete the image, History delivers a long instructional lecture afterwards, which could be seen as a homily or a catechism, although admittedly out of place in terms of the Anglican liturgy.⁶³

In Lewis’s Space Trilogy, Elwin Ransom assumes priestly attributes in the third book of the series, *That Hideous Strength*. Ransom remains sequestered as an invalid in the house at St. Anne’s; nevertheless, he receives Jane, teaches her about Maleldil and supernatural hierarchy, and takes bread and wine in her presence (*THS* 149). Lewis compares Ransom to King Solomon, using words like “king,” “magician,” and “priesthood” to link Ransom directly to the idea of a sacramental priest (*THS* 143; Myers, *Context* 100). Jane’s experience of the episode permeated with mystery and intense emotion, and the scene becomes the catalyst for her eventual acceptance of Maleldil as the God of the Bible (*THS* 318; Myers, *Context* 101). Psyche undertakes a similar priestly transformation in Lewis’s final novel, *Till We Have Faces*. Psyche has been sacrificed on the Holy Mountain as an offering to the Brute and as an image of Christ’s crucifixion (Gibson 232). When her sister Orual returns to the mountain to bury the remains, she discovers Psyche alive and healthy. Psyche claims to be married to the Brute, the in-story name for the god Cupid, but Psyche calls him “My Lord” and “Bridegroom,” titles that hint that the god may be Christ Himself (*TWHF* 115, 161). Psyche gives Orual wine and

⁶³ The *Prayer Book* places the Sermon before the Offertory and the Eucharist but does not make a rule regarding the placement (*BCP* 71). Lewis’s parish most likely followed the *Prayer Book*, but he may have chosen to change the order here for narrative reasons. Many Protestant churches do, in fact, reverse the order of communion and sermon.

honeycakes, and both feast in joy until Psyche discovers that Orual can neither see the rich palace of the god nor taste the bread and wine (119). Even though Psyche, as Gibson comments, “reflects the image of Christ” to her sister, Orual lives in a state of unbelief and has only perceived water and berries despite Psyche’s attempt to enlighten her (Gibson 243). Lewis identified one theme of the novel as the strain caused in a household by the conversion of a family member who also “does something like becoming a missionary or entering a religious order.” In the Anglican Church, religious orders are synonymous with priestly ordination, a hint that Psyche’s role is a priestly one (*CL* 3.831; *BCP* 610).⁶⁴

Several priestly characters can be found in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Dr. Cornelius, the half-dwarf mentor and tutor assigned to teach a young Prince Caspian, subverts the official skepticism of Caspian’s Uncle, King Miraz, and supplements Caspian’s medieval curriculum with teachings about “Old Narnia” (*PC* 52-6). One telltale sign of Cornelius’s priestly function is his title of “Doctor,” often used for skilled theologians and Church Fathers (*PC* 56). Cornelius refutes the anti-mythical propaganda of Miraz’s materialistic kingdom and affirms the existence of talking animals and of Aslan, whom they serve (Ford 132-3). Just before Caspian and Cornelius are forced into exile, Cornelius packs Caspian a meal for travel, which conspicuously includes bread and wine (*PC* 59). Cornelius’s last act as Caspian’s mentor is to send him off with a sacramental meal, which in this case would be a “private communion” (*CL* 3.1416). This

⁶⁴ In actual practice, Lewis objected to female priests, yet there are two reasons why a priestly Psyche is acceptable despite Lewis’s objection. 1) Psyche functions as a feminine “Bride of Christ” in order to parallel the relationship between Christ and the church, an image which he actually insisted upon maintaining as a reason why real priests must be male (*Dock* 460). 2) The characters in the original myth were sisters. Lewis is trying to adhere to the ancient narrative.

label might be seen as a stretch until we realize that the journey that Caspian inaugurates with this meal is one of sacramental discovery. Caspian's people refute the existence of the Old Narnians, some of whom refute the existence of Aslan. Caspian reveals to both the Telmarines and the skeptical Old Narnians that all three levels of belief are real, remaking the boundary between myth and reality with each revelation (Schakel 36-7).

A second priestly Narnian character is the magician Coriakin, who lives in a mansion on an island visited by the crew of *The Dawn Treader* and bears a number of priestly traits. Coriakin has been tasked by Aslan to rule over the island of the Dufflepuds, and Coriakin works to advance his "foolish" and "stupid" subjects to the point where they no longer need to be governed by "rough magic" (VDT 173-4). Coriakin's growing love for his wards functions more like the pastoral care of the clergy than the political disinterest of a governor (VDT 174). Coriakin wears robes and carries a staff, possibly in imitation of priestly vestments and crosier, and Devin Brown points out that Coriakin wears a "chaplet of oak leaves," an item that aligns him with the priests of Zeus (VDT 173; Brown, *Voyage* 153). In an act of rebellion, the Dufflepuds make themselves and Coriakin invisible, which causes the magician's house to be surrounded with an aura of fear and mystery (VDT 150). This sensation is reminiscent of the Numinous, or the awareness of the supernatural, and infuses the house with the holy atmosphere of a great cathedral (Lewis, *Pain* 17). Upstairs in the house, Coriakin keeps a spell book, which Lewis describes as massive and illuminated like a medieval pulpit Bible (VDT 161-2). And like a medieval priest, only Coriakin is authorized to read from the powerful book, but the Dufflepuds nevertheless send Lucy upstairs to read from it in order to break the spell of invisibility. Lucy does break the spell and makes Coriakin

visible again but also causes Aslan to appear. Aslan tells Lucy that he has “been here all the time,” a plain indication of Real Presence, and then swiftly introduces her to Coriakin before vanishing again (*VDT* 169). Coriakin conjures a sumptuous British breakfast for Lucy of omelet, green peas, and cold lamb while eating only the Sacramental bread and wine himself (*VDT* 175; Ford 146). This survey of Coriakin’s attributes makes clear his alignment with the priesthood, but the meaning of the episode as a whole remains ambiguous. One possible interpretation is that the scene may be an allegory or microcosm of medieval Roman Catholicism, with Lewis portraying a gentle parody of its laity through the Dufflepuds and of its priesthood through Coriakin. We will return to the magician later when we examine why only Coriakin eats the bread and the wine.

The last clearly priest-like Narnian character warrants closer examination because of the complex images surrounding the episode. Ramandu is a retired star who oversees Aslan’s Table and its magic feast, which I argued in the last chapter is the closest Lewis ever comes to portraying the Narnian religion in an actual church building. Every morning a flock of pure white birds emerges from the sun itself and brings Ramandu a gleaming “fire-berry from the valleys of the sun,” which they feed to him before the birds themselves feast on the rich menu found at the table, carrying away all non-eatable refuse (*VDT* 223-4, 236). All of the doctrines of Holy Communion previously studied are present. Recurring ritual attends this table; the ornate richness of the food and the luxurious settings are renewed every evening after being consumed (*VDT* 218). The table itself holds the stone knife which killed Aslan as a relic and is covered by a cloth and adorned with candlesticks, all reminiscent of Anglican Communion celebrations (Ford 101). Gibson argues that “The Table is not presented as a place of worship,” but the birds

sing beautifully as they approach, easily understood as a figure of the music and hymns of church worship (*VDT* 223; Gibson 181). The birds place the berry on his tongue much as priests place the host on the tongues of communicants. The berries help the aged Ramandu grow young again, a hint at the Sacrament's efficacy and its work of continuous renewal and redemption (*VDT* 226; Brown, *Dawn* 195).⁶⁵ The table replicates many of the doctrines we have seen above. It is established by Aslan, the Christ figure, it is magically renewed and is magically efficacious, and its presence shrouds the entire island in a sense of mystery (Patterson 38). Finally, the title "Aslan's Table" and the central role of the Sun allude to the Presence of Aslan himself (Schakel 62).

A study of Ramandu's name helps to solidify the connection between Aslan and the Sun. In *Reflections on the Psalms*, Lewis admits an admiration for the monotheistic religion of Akhenaton, the ancient Egyptian Pharaoh of the New Kingdom (*Reflections* 87; Ward 119). Akhenaton's monotheism focused on the Sun, called *aten* or *Ra* by the ancient Egyptians. Ra was worshipped specifically for its regenerative powers (Fiero 55). The "Ra" in Ramandu's name alludes to the Egyptian sun god, while "mandu" seems to be a truncated version of "manducation," which can mean "the act of participating in the Eucharist" (OED; Erickson 1126). Taken together, a viable interpretation of Ramandu's name is "he who eats the sun as Eucharist," which is more or less what Ramandu does.⁶⁶ Michael Ward confirms the association by asserting that Lewis uses the image of the Sun throughout *Dawn Treader* "to typify the divine figure" (Ward 119).

⁶⁵ Numerous critics note the similarities between this scene and the calling of the prophet Isaiah, during which winged seraphim bring him a live coal and place it on his mouth (Isa. 6:6; Brown, *Dawn* 196; Ford 101; Sammons 132). A key difference between the two passages, however, is that Isaiah's coal is not edible, whereas Ramandu actually consumes the berry.

⁶⁶ Numerous ancient images of Akhenaton show the sun (*aten*) with long rays extending hands to Akhenaton's face. In the hands are ankhs, Egyptian symbols of life. The images look very much as if the sun is feeding the Ankh to Akhenaton (Fiero 56).

Ramandu's role as a priest becomes clearer when we consider that Lewis's scene depicts more than one sacramental meal. The first is the feast at the table, which Caspian's crew eats, and the second is Ramandu's fire-berry. Understanding a typological connection between the Sun and Aslan, a Platonic hierarchy of fellowship emerges with the Sun (God/Aslan) at the top, from which the white birds proceed (like the seraphim to Isaiah) to bring the fire-berry to Ramandu (who eats the sun as Eucharist), who presides over the renewable feast at Aslan's Table, which is eaten by Caspian and his crew (Isa. 6:6). Lewis shows how the spiritual life, stemming directly from the Divine, is delivered layer by layer to the natural, physical believer. Lewis describes just this sort of cascade in his essay on Membership when he lists "priests divided from laity, catechumens divided from full fellowship" as examples of the hierarchy contained within Christianity ("Membership" 167). Not only does the sacramental symbolism interlock elegantly, but Ramandu's position in the middle of the chain gives him the status of mediator between God and humanity. Lewis also states this association unambiguously in the only article he ever wrote topic of priesthood:

To us a priest is primarily a representative, a double representative, who represents us to God and God to us. Our very eyes teach us this in church. Sometimes the priest turns his back on us and faces the East—he speaks to God for us: sometimes he faces us and speaks to us for God. (*Dock* 459).

Ramandu's Sun ritual embodies this principle as well. Until he has eaten the fire-berry and the birds have flown away, Ramandu keeps his back to the humans: "Now at last the Old Man turned to the travelers and bade them welcome" (*VDT* 225). In other words, Ramandu serves as a priest for the laymen in Caspian's crew.

A number of critics have noticed that many of Lewis's characters show similarities with priests but have failed to assemble them into a comprehensive portrait of Lewis's consistent depiction of the priest's role in the sacramental meal. Paul Ford sees that Coriakin's oak leaves connect him to the priest of Zeus, but then admits, "Precisely what Lewis intends to signify by Coriakin's priestliness is not clear" (Ford 147). Doris Myers comments at length on the Sacramental nature of Aslan's Table on Ramandu's island, but ultimately denies that the image can function as "Narnian" version of Holy Communion (Myers, "Compleat" 481). John Lawyer affirms the Eucharistic nature of Aslan's Table, and describes Ramandu as "lord," "numinous," and "radiant," but never "priestly" (11).⁶⁷ Critics commonly observe Elwin Ransom's Arthurian kingliness when he meets with Jane, but none seem to know what to do about his bread and wine (Downing 77; Schwartz 108). Thomas Howard draws analogies between St. Anne's and the Church, and to Ransom as its Head, but not as its priest (*Achievement* 134). Sanford Schwartz points out similarities between Psyche and Ransom, but does not pursue the comparison (108). Nancy-Lou Patterson sees Psyche's meal as possibly the clearest "of all the Eucharistic motifs in all the novels" but misses Psyche's priestly role (43). Even though David Landrum's article specifically studies the priest characters in *Till We Have Faces*, and Psyche precisely matches his definition of priest, Landrum does not consider Psyche as a potential priestess (59).

Conclusion – Lewis's *Curdie* Meals: Mediated Sacraments

Yet the role of the priest character in Lewis's sacramental meal forms the first ingredient of my final point, that only the sacramental meals which include a priest

⁶⁷ Lawyer's exclusion is particularly surprising considering he writes for *The Anglican Theological Review*.

character and an explicit reference to the Real Presence of Christ can justifiably be said to exemplify Lewis's doctrine of Holy Communion and, by extension, only meals with both features can be supported as explicit allusions to The Lord's Supper. The definition of "priest" used by Landrum helps explain why this is:

A priest is a person who functions officially to establish or preserve contact between the superhuman world and a human community. His office precedes his individuality. Because of his *mediating* function he has a leading part in ritual and has the task of guarding and preserving the knowledge of the religious tradition. (Bolle 766; qtd. in Landrum 59, emphasis mine)

This mediating function of the priest, as mentioned in connection with Ramandu, affirms the hierarchical relationship between God and His followers. According to Anglican church doctrine, if the mediating role is missing, Holy Communion literally cannot happen (*BCP* 608). Therefore, those meals in Lewis's fiction which include both an idea of the Real Presence and a mediating priest character can be expected to indicate the most complete references to Holy Communion.

Within the canon of Lewis's fiction, I find only four such meals. The first, that of Ramandu's mediation over Aslan's table, we have already examined. The remaining three, however, should be studied together because of their remarkable similarities, in spite of their occurrence across the spectrum of Lewis's fiction. The first of these is the bread and wine Elwin Ransom eats in front of Jane in his rooms at St. Anne's (*THS* 149). The second is the meal Lucy and Coriakin share after Lucy speaks the invisibility spell on the island of the Dufflepuds (*VDT* 175-6). The third is the reunion feast Psyche

provides to Orual on the threshold of Cupid's palace at the top of the Holy Mountain (*TWHF* 104). The meals share surprisingly similar features. All three are fully Corporal and fully Eucharistic. In other words, they all take place in the presence of the novel's Christ Figure, and they all include bread and wine on their menus—in fact, for at least one diner in each meal, bread and wine are the *only* items on the menu. All three include a priest character who mediates the Corporal presence of the Christ figure to a lay-recipient. Ransom mediates the presence of Maleldil to Jane, Coriakin mediates the presence of Aslan to Lucy, and Psyche mediates the presence of Cupid to Orual. As such, each of the priestly figures are subordinate Christ figures; not just for their roles in the sacramental meals but in other ways as well. All three meals demonstrate private Communion rather than corporate; each priest character meets with a solitary, visionary female. Lastly, all three exemplify Lewis's doctrinal statements concerning Communion already documented above (see Table 3.2).

One might question how these meals can be full expressions of Communion when the secondary characters do not eat bread and wine in any of the three examples. Only Ransom, Coriakin, and Psyche consume the bread and wine. This is appropriate when we remember that for two out of the three meals, the secondary character is not a True Believer at all. Jane has yet to “put herself under the protection of Maleldil,” that is, become a Christian; and Orual is in a state of spiritual rebellion against the gods (*THS* 225; Payne 61). Only Lucy is a believer, but she has just come from the literal Real Presence of Aslan himself and is not one of Coriakin's subjects; she is outside her home parish, in that sense. That the mediating, priestly characters take communion is entirely appropriate, for although they serve as priests and subordinate Christ-figures, they also

are believers who are communing with their Lords. This implies that the priest enjoys the Real Presence in a more direct way, whereas for the laymen, the Presence must be mediated through the priest, which aligns precisely with Anglican doctrine. The Sacrament becomes a mode for transferring the Christ-life in an evangelistic way (*MC* 65; Payne 29-30). Lewis seems to be suggesting that non-believers who witness an especially moving communion service are more likely come to full faith in Christianity .

Put together, these three meals form Lewis’s most complete vision of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Their similarities and doctrinal consistency encourage their communal categorization, but what first begins to tie them together is a literary allusion in the first of these meals Lewis makes to George MacDonald’s *The Princess and Curdie*.

Table 3.2: Lewis’s Mediated Sacramental Meals

	Group / Individual	Real Presence	Bread and Wine	Novice’s Gender	Eucharistic Visions	Hierarchy (priest as Christ figure)
Jane and Ransom	Individual	Jane senses a divine “hugeness” in the room (150).	Ransom eats a small loaf and some wine; Jane eats nothing (149).	Female	Jane’s prophetic dream visions throughout the novel	Maleldil → Ransom → Jane
Lucy and Coriakin	Individual	Aslan literally present in the scene (169).	Lucy’s British breakfast contrasts with Coriakin’s bread and wine (175-6).	Female	Lucy’s recurring visions of Aslan in <i>LWW</i> , <i>PC</i> , and <i>VDT</i> .	Aslan → Coriakin → Lucy
Psyche and Orual	Individual	Cupid’s palace looms in the background (118).	Psyche offers transfigured “honeycakes” and wine but Orual sees only berries	Female	Orual’s vision of palace (132); dream visions at	Cupid → Psyche → Orual

			and water (104, 119).		conclusion	
Ramandu and <i>Dawn Treader</i> Crew	Group	The Sun— as literary type (226)	Feast of Aslan’s Table contrasts with Ramandu’s solitary fire- berry.	Mixed	None	Sun (Aslan) → Ramandu → Crew

Lewis’s enthusiasm for George MacDonald has been well-documented, and Lewis himself enthusiastically recommended the “Curdie books” as “absolutely first class” (*CL* 2.639; Sayer 106). This enthusiasm leads to the scene in *That Hideous Strength* in which Elwin Ransom tells Jane during his meal of bread and wine, “You see, I live like the king in *Curdie*. It is a surprisingly pleasant diet” (*THS* 149). Jane has just appeared before Ransom for the first time, and her world is in the process of being unmade (*THS* 142). This holy, transfigured saint with the wounded foot and the ascetic diet has done more to reveal the supernatural to her in five minutes than all of her other life experiences combined (Gibson 87). Jane has never read about the King and has probably never heard of *The Princess and Curdie*, a fact she most likely has in common with Lewis’s reader (*THS* 149). During her next quiet moment after the meeting, one of her first impulses is to read “the *Curdie* books” (*THS* 163).

The Princess and Curdie is perhaps the most allegorical of all George MacDonald’s long fantasies for children (Hein 37). The story tells of a young everyman, Curdie, who comes to a belief in a Christ-like Grandmother and is sent on a mission to heal the city of Gwyntystorm of its spiritual woes, which stem from the poor health of its King. The King, who can be seen as both temporal sovereign and spiritual monarch, is being slowly poisoned to death by his traitorous ministers, but Curdie and the King’s daughter Irene nurse the sick King back to health with a steady diet of plain bread and

“honest wine” (MacDonald 164-5). This Eucharistic meal revives the king, and, true to the Fisher-King legend which the story parallels, the entire city of Gwytystorm is spiritually restored (Manlove 26).⁶⁸ The allegorical nature of the story leaves no question as to how to interpret the King’s bread and wine, in addition to the fact that we get no notion from Victorian cook books contemporary with MacDonald that wine and bread alone could properly nurture an invalid back to health (Beeton 893-904; Nightingale 74-5).⁶⁹

Lewis appropriates MacDonald’s explicit allusion to the Eucharist and applies it to his invalid Christ-figure, Ransom. Lewis, like MacDonald, demonstrates the efficacy of the Lord’s Supper by emphasizing its regenerative power. As Carolyn Walker Bynum has pointed out, many hermits and monks throughout the history of the church have attempted to live solely on the spiritual nutrition of Communion alone, taking no other food or drink (Bynum, “Fast” 140). Both Lewis and MacDonald connect their characters to this tradition through their ascetic diets. MacDonald’s meal also sets up a pattern which Lewis replicates in all three of the meals in question here: a spiritual leader in need takes communion in front of a younger, less advanced communicant—or potential initiate—thus demonstrating the power of the priest to mediate the Real Presence of God to his or her subordinates. Patterson observantly notes that Curdie’s King, Ransom, and Coriakin are all rulers; the fact that they hold sovereign power and spiritual power relates them to Melchizedek, the priest-king in Genesis who “brings forth bread and wine” to

⁶⁸ Lewis makes a nod to the Fisher-King allusion built in to *Curdie* by giving Ransom the new surname of “Mr. Fisher-King” (*THS* 117).

⁶⁹ Mrs. Beeton emphasizes the importance of milk and broths of varying ingredients for those recuperating from sicknesses (893). Florence Nightingale expressly instructs invalids to stay away from bread (75).

Abraham's servants and who has famously been interpreted prefiguration of Christ (Patterson 38; Gen. 14:18).

Lewis's apparently liked how MacDonald's image of the Eucharist meshed well with Lewis's own conception of Platonic hierarchy ("Membership" 166-7). For all three meals, the "high" Christ figure stands in direct communication with the priestly subordinate, or "low" Christ figure (see Table 3.2). Maleldil is in constant communication with Ransom (*THS* 150). Aslan has specifically given Coriakin regency over the Dufflepuds in what amounts to a microcosm of Narnia, or even earth (Brown, *Dawn* 159). Psyche has literally taken up residence with Cupid, the god of the Holy Mountain (*TWHF* 108). Conversely, the human characters over which the priestly figures officiate both observe the symbolism of the Eucharist and also receive a transcendent experience of the Real Presence. Invariably, the event marks a turning of the plot for the novice character. From her meeting with Ransom on, Jane becomes more and more aligned with the Company of St. Anne's until she has a direct experience of Maleldil herself and converts to Christianity (*THS* 318; Howard, "Triumphant" 155). For the first time in the series, Lucy functions independently of her brothers and sisters, and her companions accept her vision of Aslan without question, a demonstration of her increasing maturity (*VDT* 185; Schakel 57). Orual shifts her entire focus from trying to bury Psyche to trying to manipulate Psyche; Orual's depraved decisions and her refusal to act on faith haunt her for the rest of her life, until she finally sees the truth in the novel's concluding dream-vision (*TWHF* 308).

Orual is not the only one who sees visions. Lucy has stood out since the first Narnian Chronicle as the one character who sees Aslan the most and is most often

persecuted for her visions (Ford 292). Jane's entire story arc revolves around the fact that she has visions of the future and is wanted by both the N.I.C.E. and the company of St. Anne's as a powerful spiritual tool. That the visionaries are all female fits with Lewis's understanding of the feminine quality of all believers in comparison to the overwhelming masculinity of Christ himself (*THS* 316; Howard, "Triumphant" 157). Their femininity, then, serves as a figure for all mankind.

Caroline Walker Bynum confirms that medieval dream visions were most commonly had by females who has just partaken of the Eucharist (Bynum, *Holy* 73, 227). This touch of mysticism regarding these episodes fits with the mystical nature of Communion Lewis expounds upon in *Letters to Malcolm*. Lewis's claim that Communion is "magic" refers to magic's "objective efficacy," not its foolish attempt "to control nature" (103). Both Ransom and Coriakin are called "magician" at some point, not in reference to their trickery or involvement with the occult, but to the fact that they mediate this objective efficacy to their subjects (*THS* 143; *VDT* 148). The magic nature of communion simply means that its truths cannot "be got rid of by explanation" (103). This principle alone, Lewis argues, prevents Christianity from being explained away into a mere collection of ethical values, philosophies, or psychological phenomena (104).

At the end, the three portraits of similar sacramental meals assembles to become the clearest picture we have of Lewis's vision of sacramental eating and the role priests and the Lords' Supper play within that vision. Recalling Frank Riga's definition of "sacrament" from the beginning of this chapter, "a material sign that participates in the reality it manifests," we can see how vividly these episodes fit the definition (Riga 28). Lewis's priestly figures insert the participant into the realm between the natural and the

supernatural. Ransom's very nature as a conduit for Maleldil's spiritual servants renders nearly all interaction with him supernatural. When Jane is in his presence, the bread and wine he eats serves as a precursor to the divine powers entering the room just moments after the meal (*THS* 150). Coriakin's book of spells which Lucy reads to reverse the invisibility is likewise a supernatural conduit, and the wizard's house functions as a sort of temple since Aslan can be found there. Coriakin's lordship over the Dufflepuds, his easy communication with Aslan, and his magical abilities all indicate an interplay between the natural and supernatural realms, which elevates his meal with Lucy beyond the merely symbolic. She is actually participating with Coriakin's (and Aslan's) magic by eating the magic food and speaking the magic spells. Orual stands at the threshold of the realm of the gods. Psyche lives in an invisible, supernatural proto-paradise which Orual's materialistic eyes cannot see, but Psyche's insistence on its reality causes her hidden world to haunt Orual for the rest of the story. The dual-natured meal of wine/water and honeycakes/berries signifies the dual image of the Eucharist and the dualistic nature of bread/body and wine/blood. To those who do not accept the greater reality to which the Sacrament points, the elements can never be anything other than material food.

In Lewis's depictions of sacramental eating, we see a complete doctrine of the Lord's Supper clearly spelled out. They demonstrate the necessity of the rite through their spiritual nourishment, the efficacy of the rite through their "magical" nature, and their function as worship through the joy they elicit. At their most explicit, Lewis's sacramental meals combine the Anglican doctrine of Real Presence with the Anglo-Catholic role of the priest to demonstrate the necessity of a priestly figure to mediate the Real Presence for novice believers in order to spread the "Christ-Life" to them. Due to

the central role of these most explicit iterations and the remarkable consistency with which they are expressed, we may conclude that Lewis considered the heart of the Holy Sacrament to reside just here. In the next chapter, we turn from those who eat and drink the holy meal with purity of heart to those who “eateth and drinketh judgment” upon themselves by their sinful behavior (1 Cor. 11:29). As we shall see, Lewis spends just as much time examining how meals can create distance between God and humanity as he does showing how meals can create communion.

CHAPTER FOUR

TURKISH DELIGHT, PLEASE: FOOD AND SIN IN LEWIS'S FICTION

Lewis was an expert on sin. He admits freely that he was an experienced sinner, of course, but he also made a name for himself by writing well about humans at their worst. A great deal of Lewis's non-fiction explores the themes of sin and the human condition (Harmon 237). Lewis made his literary reputation on *The Screwtape Letters*, an epistolary satire of one demon discussing sin and temptation with an underling tempter. His well-known work of apologetics, *The Problem of Pain*, outlines human suffering, much of which, he says, is caused by the wrongdoings of other humans. Several chapters of Lewis's landmark work *Mere Christianity* discuss specific sins such as pride and intemperance. His quasi-novel, *The Great Divorce*, follows a handful of damned characters and chronicles Heaven's attempt to rehabilitate them. Lastly, Lewis's seminal work of literary criticism, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, examines the Fall of Man as John Milton portrayed it in his epic poem. With both *Screwtape* and *Preface to Paradise Lost*, we can begin to see clear illustrations of how Lewis connected eating to his theology of sin. The setting of the first book's closing chapter, "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," has the various devils gathered at a fine feast. On the menu is a variety of sinners served up as wines, roasts, and other consumables symbolically laid out for the devils' devouring appetites. As might be expected, the latter work discusses the role of the famous Forbidden Fruit in some detail both in Milton's epic and within the biblical account.

With such a quantity of theological studies on the topic, it is no surprise that sin constantly enters into Lewis's fiction as more than just fuel to power conflict within his plots. One may argue that each of Lewis's stories emphasizes the effects of sin in some way, but this is not the purpose of the current study. Instead, we shall consider how eating participates in Lewis's fiction as a means of deepening the ongoing discussion of hamartiological themes which Lewis and his critics have continued for years. This chapter will analyze Lewis's transgressive meals to demonstrate how his protagonists and antagonists interact through what I call the Satan-apple-Eve paradigm. We will see how the symbolic and literal uses of food-as-sin combine to demonstrate various degrees of fallenness expressed by four culinary stages of degradation. These stages begin with temptation, then continue to addiction and deprivation, culminating in Lewis's ultimate expression of transgression, culinary or otherwise: the complete alienation of the sinner from both friendship and divinity (see Table 4.1). I also suggest a new method of character analysis for Lewis's fiction. After examining the four stages of culinary sin, one may track the moral condition—and hence the character arc—of any individual character by examining what he or she eats at a given moment. The conclusion of this chapter will provide an example of this method. The result reveals how the culinary details of Lewis's fiction constitute a microcosm of Lewis's understanding of the human condition.

Culinary Language of Sin

Lewis's pervasive use of food imagery in relation to sin is easily identifiable to even the general reader, and critics have indicated its assorted iterations in Lewis's novels for years. We will begin with the various meal categories established in chapter one of this study which I have identified as the proper starting point for confirming food-based

theological themes in Lewis's novels. Lewis's themes of sin emerge when we examine the Menu, the Diners, and, occasionally, the Location of these meals. These three categories often yield specific biblical allusions that further connect the meal with a theology of sin. In the Menu category, images and corollaries to the Forbidden Fruit of Genesis abound (Gen. 3). Scenes of culinary excess of all sorts easily evoke Christian doctrines concerning gluttons and drunkards (Prov. 23:21). Diners may be portrayed as sinfully eating through excess or simply displaying a bad attitude, evoking the culinary injunctions by St. Paul to always "eat, or drink . . . to the glory of God" because those who do not "eateth and drinketh damnation" to themselves (1 Cor. 10:31; 11:29). Lewis's protagonists usually eat with other protagonists, so by extension, we find that sinful meals emerge when an antagonist is present during a meal, especially when the antagonist is the one who offers the food. Such an event triggers connections with the satanic serpent who tempts Eve to eat of the Forbidden Fruit. Occasionally, Lewis sets such an event in an actual garden, eliciting Lewis's most explicit allusions to Eden and the Fall of Man (Myers 97).

Table 4.1: Meal categories for Lewis's four types of transgressive meal.

Culinary Language		Temptation Meals
Diners		1. When an antagonist offers a protagonist an . . .
Menu		2. apple or some other symbolic food,
Location		3. especially in a garden setting, the meal constitutes a recreation of Edenic temptation.
		Gluttonous Meals
Diner		1. When a sinful protagonist or antagonist . . .
Menu		2. eats or drinks intemperately or fastidiously, the meal evokes Lewis's doctrine of gluttony.
		Anti-Pleasure Meals
Diner		1. When the sinful attitude protagonist or antagonist . . .
Menu		2. nullifies the pleasure of otherwise good food, the meal demonstrates the deeper depravity of choosing desire over pleasure.

Anti-Relationship Meals	
Diner	1. When protagonist or antagonists deliberately and continually chooses evil . . .
Menu	2. the character stops eating altogether, signifying a state of hellish separation from God.

Lynne Vallone considers the moral binaries in Lewis's meals sufficiently consistent to warrant a general observation that "For Lewis, the functions of food and taste are not merely mimetic, but also metaphoric in nature, and it is the food itself, as well as the consumers of it, that communicates a moral vision" (51). Sheldon Cashdan says that such a dichotomy marks a regular feature of fairy tales, the source of which stems from tendencies deeply seated within the human psyche; however when Lewis utilizes the thematically meaningful meal, his biblical allusions add a dimension of theology (Cashdan 72-3). Food can function in one of two ways in Lewis's sinful meals. Either the food symbolizes sin, and therefore becomes associated with the Forbidden Fruit, or the act of eating itself is portrayed as sinful, causing a simpler scenario in which the meal becomes associated with the uniquely culinary sin of gluttony and its opposing virtue, temperance. In either case, Lewis persistently shows that any such eating eventually causes alienation, both from one's own companions and from any sort of Divinity.

Lewis does not pioneer this moralistic use of food imagery; quite the contrary, he stands in a long tradition of writers who pair morality and eating as metaphors for other vices. Chaucer's food imagery also displays a binary symbolism: negative characters are gluttons and drunkards while positive characters eat in moderation (Nichols 498). On the one hand Chaucer may present virtuous characters like the humble widow of the Nun's Priest Tale, who eats an austere diet of wholesome milk and homemade "broun breed, in

which she found no lack" (Chaucer 8.4034). On the other hand, Chaucer handily portrays the evil latent within the Pardoner and the ruffians in his tale by making the excessive intake of wine "virtually synonymous with carnal sin" (Nichols 500). John Milton's treatment of the Forbidden Fruit motif enlarges the Genesis account to epic proportions, but whereas Chaucer's food is both literal and figurative—signifying sinful eating and sin itself—Milton's "fair Apples" of "Ruddy and Gold" function more symbolically (Hardy 33-5, 70; Milton IX.578, 585). The fruit awakens Eve's desire and her senses, "rais'd by the smell / So savoury of the Fruit, which with desire, / Inclinable now grown to touch or taste, / Solicited her longing eye" (Milton IX.740—3). Milton's wording reverberates with St. John's famous three-part description of temptation: "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Once Eve actually eats, Milton shows how this first, seemingly simple transgression actually blossoms into nearly every sin imaginable, further establishing the symbolic nature of the Fruit (Wiltenburg 781). As both Milton and the Bible portray, the event causes God to break off fellowship with Adam and Eve, signifying to medieval Scholastics that the rift between God and the entire human race was caused by a meal (Adamson 186).⁷⁰ As a literary expert on Chaucer, Milton, and the Bible, Lewis knew these texts well, and while he never published a specific critique of "The Pardoner's Tale," his landmark study of Milton stresses at great length how Eve's corruption extends to many more sins than just disobedience (Lewis, *Preface* 125-8). As we shall see, Lewis assimilated both Chaucer's literal and Milton's symbolic use of food—what Vallone calls the mimetic and the metaphoric (51). But as I have already hinted, Lewis eventually sides with Milton in

⁷⁰ This, in turn, lead to the medieval categorization of gluttony as one of the mortal sins (Aquinas II q. 163, art. 1; Gregory XXXI.45).

asserting repeatedly that the chief benefit of transgressive culinary imagery is its ability to vividly depict the spiritual alienation caused by habitual sin.

Turkish Delight: the Model

While Lewis borrows from Chaucer and Milton in how food may be used to represent sin, he parts company with them both regarding the manner in which humans become sinful. Lewis considered sin itself to be a process that gradually takes hold of an individual rather than a predisposition or a sudden choice to do evil (Markos 152). In *The Great Divorce*, the character of George MacDonald offers an abstract sketch of this path to degradation, which “begins with a [sinful] mood, and yourself still distinct from it: perhaps criticizing it. And yourself, in a dark hour, may will that mood, embrace it. Ye can repent and come out of it again. But there may come a day when you can do that no longer” (*Divorce* 77-8). Screwtape makes much of the value of this process because it is less likely to be noticed by the humans: “Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts” (*Screwtape* 61; Markos 153). Lewis demonstrates this path time and again in his fiction, and often uses food imagery to mark its progress. Lewis’s most famous example of this process is the sequence which follows the White Witch feeding Edmund Pevensie “several pounds” of Turkish Delight in an attempt to recruit him for her evil plans (*LWW* 35-45). Easily the most frequently analyzed of Lewis’s meals, the scene’s popularity is partly due to its central function in what is probably Lewis’s most popular novel. But the scene also happens to exemplify each of the culinary stages of degradation mentioned above and serves as an excellent starting point for analyzing the rest of Lewis’s transgressive meals (Harmon 238; Martindale, and Welch 106).

Lewis includes the episode as the second of two paired scenes of eating which display the typical moral dichotomy found in fairy tales (Vallone 52). Lucy's innocent fellowship meal with the faun Tumnus ends in redemption and friendship (Katz 194). She is the "good" girl who eats with good manners and is justly rewarded with her freedom. The opposite happens to Edmund. He enters Narnia already armed with a sinful attitude, having unkindly teased Lucy concerning her incredible story about a secret world inside the wardrobe (*LWW* 28). The White Witch, arriving with malice and eager ambition, interrogates Edmund and then baits his loyalties by offering whatever he "would like best to eat" (*LWW* 38). Edmund chooses Turkish Delight and is instantly caught. He "shovel[s] down as much Turkish Delight" as he can, betraying vital information to the enemy all the while (*LWW* 38). In Edmund, Lewis uses a device common in the nineteenth century of marking the sinful child by its indulgence in sweet treats (Labbe 93). The candy dulls his conscience, preventing him from wondering "why the Queen should be so inquisitive" (*LWW* 38). The hyperbolic consumption of "several pounds" of candy in such a short time further indicates Edmund's depravity, and the narrator reveals that anyone consuming the Witch's enchanted food would crave more and more and "go on eating it till they killed themselves" (*LWW* 39). Once Edmund is reunited with Lucy, his character noticeably degrades. His betrayals of his siblings begin almost at once and continue for some half dozen chapters, as we shall examine in detail below. Through his feelings of ill-treatment and his desire to "pay Peter out," Edmund cultivates a "sense of injur'd merit," a characteristic that Lewis and Milton show to be distinctly satanic (*LWW* 96; *Preface* 95; Milton I.98; Hardy 69). In *The Great Divorce*, Lewis connects just such an attitude directly with its satanic predecessor:

Milton was right. . . . The choice of every lost soul can be expressed in the words ‘Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.’⁷¹ There is always something they insist on keeping even at the price of misery. There is always something they prefer to joy—that is, to reality. [You] see it easily enough in a spoiled child that would sooner miss its play and its supper than say it was sorry and be friends. (71)

Enormous amounts of critical comment have been made concerning Edmund’s ordeal, much of which is repetitive, so I will only provide a cross-section here. I have already argued that the psychoanalytic approaches comparing the White Witch to a sexual devourer provide some insights on the nature of desire and transgression, but are not sufficiently contextualized with Lewis’s theological foundation to provide useful material for this study (Daniel 125; Nicholson 50; Werner 20; Nikolajeva 129; see Chapter One). More valuable is Elizabeth Baird Hardy, who finds parallels between the White Witch and Satan, showing that both are tempters who offer food as part of an attempt to “corrupt and contaminate the people they envy and the kingdoms they covet” (37). David Clark’s theological analysis of desire shifts the focus to Edmund. Clark follows Lewis’s hint and connects Edmund’s wounded pride to Satan’s since both are forced to submit to authority (*Lewis* 104). This weakness opens Edmund to his addiction to Turkish Delight, which drives him into betrayal, connecting him with the biblical Judas Iscariot (104). The combinations of pride, addiction, and betrayal show how Edmund, like Eve, is guilty of multiple, nested sins that primarily affect his relationships. Gilbert Meilaender explores how Edmund’s obsession for Turkish Delight affects his

⁷¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1.263.

spiritual condition. The four children of the novel represent “True Believers”: they become analogues for Christians in the tale. Edmund’s addiction “makes a god of Turkish Delight, a god that leads him on and controls him” (Meilaender 9). As a result of this “idolatry,” not only does Edmund sever contact with his siblings, he also avoids contact with Aslan, the Christ figure, leading directly to Edmund’s hellish torture at the hands of the Witch and, ultimately, to Aslan’s death (Meilaender 9; Reed 63). In other words, Edmund’s character arc paints an accurate portrait of what Lewis understood to be the fallen human condition.

That character arc shows how eating plays a role in each of the four stages of human fallenness. First Edmund is tempted by a satanic protagonist to eat forbidden food, and, by his own free will, indulges in sin. Second, by consuming so much candy, Edmund is guilty of gluttony and becomes addicted to the corrupt food. Third, at the house of the beavers, Edmund loses the ability to take pleasure in normal food and the healthy relationships that it fosters. Lastly, Edmund leaves his siblings and enters the hellish state of physical and spiritual alienation emphasized by a forced fast and tortured captivity under the White Witch (Meilaender 9-10). After briefly examining Edmund’s journey through each stage, the rest of the chapter will examine how Lewis’s other scenes of transgressive eating align along these same stages.

Tempted by Turkish Delight

Edmund’s first exposure to sinful eating functions as a temptation. Edmund freely, and almost instantly, surrenders to the temptation to eat the witch’s food (Markos 151). The Witch has given plenty of indicators that her intentions are foul: her harshness, her name-calling—she calls Edmund an idiot—and her menacing gestures with her wand,

not to mention her dwarf, whose smile is “not a very nice smile” (*LWW* 37). As St. Paul says of all sin, Edmund’s choices are without excuse (Rom. 1:14). Judith McKinlay asserts that one of the biblical roles of food is as a semiotic tag for choice, especially noting how the story of Adam and Eve exemplifies the principle (75). The White Witch’s Turkish Delight, then, serves as a metaphor for sin, or the Forbidden Fruit, and the White Witch herself parallels Satan. Edmund is an autonomous agent, similar to Eve, and Narnia represents a kind of Eden, producing the complete Satan-apple-Eve paradigm documented above. But rather than producing merely an allegory of Eden, Lewis does not generalize Edmund’s actions to the entire human race. Instead, he remains focused on personal fallenness as a component of Edmund’s own character arc and continues to explore the consequences of Edmund’s personal conduct.

Edmund’s Addiction

The first and most obvious consequence of Edmund’s failure to resist temptation is his gluttonous consumption of Turkish Delight and the ravenous addiction which immediately results (Clark, *Lewis* 104). Lewis makes Edmund’s over-indulgence very clear when he notes that afterwards he feels “uncomfortable from having eaten too many sweets” and, on the next page, that “he was feeling very sick” (44,5). The subsequent addiction to Turkish Delight commences almost immediately and persists for nearly 100 pages. Eight times over the course of the next seven chapters, the narrator mentions some variation of Edmund wanting more Turkish Delight (*LWW* 39, 40, 42, 44, 77, 95, 96, 121).⁷² He thinks about it, asks for it, and craves it “more than he wanted anything else” (44). Lewis shows that not only does excess lead directly to obsession, but Lewis also

⁷² Curiously, no mention of Edmund’s craving occurs in chapter five, which takes place entirely back in England, possibly signifying that the magic lies dormant outside of Narnia.

uses Edmund's culinary transgression to punctuate his descent into chronic iniquity in general, leading to Edmund's ultimate sin of betrayal, which occurs immediately after the fellowship meal with the beavers (Martindale, and Welch 106).

Pleasurable Meal Ruined

Edmund's non-participation in the good food and good company that his siblings enjoy with the beavers indicates Edmund's transition into the third stage of transgressive eating, the loss of pleasure (Reed 63). As the children progress further into Narnia, Edmund remains fixated on food. He complains that they "haven't even got anything to eat" as the group decides how to deal with the missing Tumnus and that there is "no chance of dinner either" as night begins to fall (65, 68). However, once the children meet the beavers and are treated to their fine hospitality, Edmund's interest in eating suddenly recedes. Lewis develops this point subtly in order to increase the drama of the after-dinner revelation that Edmund has gone missing. During dinner preparations, all three of the other children receive specific descriptions of how they assist their hosts, whereas Lewis is silent regarding Edmund's participation, presumably because he refuses to help (*LWW* 78-82). Edmund eats some of the meal but cannot enjoy it at all (Brown, *Narnia* 73; Martindale, and Welch 106). The narrator explains that "there's nothing that spoils the taste of good ordinary food half so much as the memory of bad magic food" (*LWW* 95). Edmund's sin has corrupted his palate and ruined the glorious meal (*LWW* 95; Vallone 52).

Edmund's Alienation

Edmund enters the final stage of transgressive eating, spiritual and physical alienation, when he sneaks out midway through the meal. The table talk has given him no

joy since he has imagined that his siblings have been giving him “the cold shoulder,” and all the news of Aslan has given him “a mysterious and horrible feeling” (95-6). He cannot enjoy true fellowship in his sinful condition; in fact, he hates it, which drives him out of the beavers’ lodge to complete his act of betrayal. During his walk through the snow to the White Witch’s house, he continues to solace himself with delusions of grandeur and spiteful plans for revenge, but upon arriving at the palace of the witch, Edmund enters a hellish state of torture and deprivation. Instead of giving him more Turkish Delight, the witch forces dry bread and water upon Edmund, who sulks, barely choking down a nibble in response to a menacing look from the witch (Myers 129). She tells Edmund, “You may be glad enough of it before you taste bread again,” indicating that she intends Edmund to fast from here on (123). Edmund’s sinful addiction and its accompanying behavior have alienated him from all relationships and all joy. True to form, Lewis weaves his themes of salvation into Edmund’s hopeless condition, and Edmund’s curse becomes his cure. The dry bread seems to effectively cure his addiction, since after eating it Edmund never again mentions Turkish Delight. While in captivity, he witnesses the Witch turn a group of feasting animals to stone. His sadness at the sight of proper fellowship and healthy eating destroyed by evil is the first time he feels “sorry for someone besides himself” (LWW 128; Gibson 137; Brown, *Narnia* 161). Shortly afterward, Edmund is rescued and becomes the object of the Christological climax of the novel in which Aslan agrees to die in his place.

Edmund’s descent into “Hell” through culinary sin is not merely an idiosyncratic feature of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Accordingly, we must now turn our attention to Lewis’s other novels. Critics have commented plentifully on each of

Edmund's eating sins, but none have yet assembled those events into a coherent theology of transgressive eating represented across Lewis's canon. Upon examination, we find multiple illustrations of each stage in each of Lewis's novels, and numerous supporting comments on the principles behind each stage can be discovered in his nonfiction.

Stage One – Temptations Successful (and Unsuccessful)

The first stage of culinary degradation is inspired, as I have noted above, by the narrative of Adam and Eve in Genesis, a topic on which Lewis was a particular expert. I have already established how Lewis's Milton studies developed his expertise, but Lewis expresses the principle behind the culinary theology of Eden in his allegorical novel *Pilgrim's Regress*. In the novel, Mother Kirk delivers a figurative retelling of the Fall of Man. Through this early example of Lewis's culinary temptations scenes, we can see how Lewis appropriates the images of Forbidden Fruit, Tempter, and Tempted to demonstrate his theology of sin.

Forbidden Fruit as a Symbol of Divine Power

In this story the Landlord has decided to let new tenants on his land and builds a farm for them in the middle of the choicest section of pasture. Among the plants is the "mountain-apple" which the Landlord and his servants eat "for refreshment" but it is too strong for humans and cannot be digested properly (58). A rebellious son of the Landlord visits the farmer's wife and persuades her to eat of the fruit, thus creating a deep chasm between the Landlord's mountain and the rest of the country, which Lewis calls "the Grand Canyon" (59). As an allegory, the symbolism closely parallels Genesis until Lewis delivers his explication of the mountain-apples themselves:

. . . the taste created such a craving in the man and the woman that they thought they could never eat enough of it; and they were not content with all the wild apple trees, but planted more and more, and grafted mountain-apple on to every other kind of tree so that every fruit should have a dash of that taste in it. They succeeded so well that the whole vegetable system of the country is now infected: and there is hardly a fruit or a root in the land—certainly none this side of the canyon—that has not a little mountain-apple in it. You have never tasted anything that was quite free from it. (*PR* 60)

From this passage we see plainly that the mountain-apples symbolize sin itself; not a particular sin, such as gluttony or lust, but the idea of sin as an infectious desire that spreads throughout the life of the human to corrupt all behaviors that would otherwise have been good. This parable frames all of Lewis's theology of sin—we can already see something of Edmund's Turkish Delight in it—and the culinary metaphor which usually accompanies it.

The image of the mountain-apple itself is worth an investigation. Lewis says that the "Landlord"—who represents God—and his "servants"—who are angels—could eat the mountain apples for refreshment without guilt. The statement alludes to the fact that the biblical forbidden fruit was said to reveal "the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17). The suggestion seems to be that certain actions which are permissible for God and for angels are sinful when humans pursue them. Here Lewis participates in ancient debate concerning precisely what the fruit represented. Augustine claimed it stood for free will; Chaucer's Pardoner associated it with gluttony alone, and Milton identified it with

idolatrous pride (Augustine 14.17; Chaucer 6.505-12; Milton 9.838; Wiltenburg 481).

Lewis's position can be discerned by examining his similar uses of the image in other novels. On the planet of Perelandra, Elwin Ransom arrives in an Edenic garden landscape filled with fruits that alter his consciousness and lengthen his life, yet he was sent there by Maleldil to serve, so is not guilty for eating the fruit. In another garden paradise, this time the outskirts of heaven depicted in *The Great Divorce*, the ghost of a damned spirit tries to steal a Hesperidian gold apple from a divine tree, but the fruit is fantastically heavy and moving it is a torture. A nearby angel rebukes the spirit's foolishness, admonishing him to "Stay here and learn to eat such apples" (49). Taken together, the episodes reveal that to Lewis, the Fruit of Eden represents Divine power itself which can be wielded by God since it belongs to Him, but for any human to take it by force is sin. In this regard, the act of eating a "magical" forbidden fruit may be seen as a kind of sorcery, since the aim of both is to wrest divine power away from God, its rightful owner. Eating the Forbidden Fruit, then, implies humanity's attempt to overthrow God, which is the same type of sin that caused Satan's downfall (Milton 5.865-6; Wiltenburg 481).⁷³

But as we have already seen in our study of Turkish Delight, apples are not the only food Lewis uses to in temptation scenes (Werner 20). The poisoned food motif colors all remaining eating in *The Pilgrim's Regress*. John proceeds from tenant to tenant sampling food that symbolizes the many false ideologies which represent rebellion against the landlord and are corrupted by the taint of sin (*PR* 74).⁷⁴ As a result, the word "food" itself has dual meanings which Lewis bats back and forth throughout most of the

⁷³ Lewis saw the sin of pride as essentially a state of open rebellion against God. In *Mere Christianity*, he calls pride "the essential vice, the utmost evil" (*MC* 109).

⁷⁴ Chapter two includes a chart of most of these meals and the false philosophies Lewis critiques with them.

novel. The first sense is the literal one; food is the stuff people eat when they are hungry. The second meaning unites this gastronomic sense to its allegorical nuance; food symbolizes the philosophical nourishment of shared ideas. Lewis often employs both senses simultaneously. A flustered John exclaims during an after-dinner debate with Neo-Angular, “But I am getting angry. And you have shared your biscuit with me” (75). Not only does the biscuit signify food which Neo-Angular has given John, but also the ideas of liberal Anglicanism which Neo-Angular represents. Lewis works hard at matching the menu with the particular weaknesses of the philosophy in question. Neo-Angular serves dry biscuits shaped like perfect squares to signify his pure, analytical religion, free from mysticism (Clark, “Food” 3). This tendency is unique to *Pilgrim’s Regress*, however. Usually when Lewis wants to align a food with sinfulness, he also associates it with an antagonist.

Satan: Lewis’s Antagonists as Edenic Tempters

Lewis’s scenes of temptation in which an item of food symbolizes sin nearly always include a tempter, a Satan figure who is usually also the novel’s antagonist. As with the forbidden fruit, Lewis’s first use of this biblical prototype occurs in *Pilgrim’s Regress*, but remains a feature of most of his novels. The allegorical retelling of the Fall of Man near the beginning of *Pilgrim’s Regress* does include an ambiguous mention of “the Enemy,” but a fully-realized satanic tempter does not emerge until nearly the end of the book (59). John is traveling in the country of Luxuria and meets a colony of deformed individuals suffering from a vile parasitic infestation. John watches in horror as the demonic parasites threaten to detach from their human hosts to spawn entirely new creatures while the human hosts live on in agony (143). The disease is caused and

perpetuated by a wine-like potion administered by a witch. The addictive forbidden fruit and the satanic tempter are here easily identified, but of special interest is Lewis's description of the witch.

The narrator describes the woman as "dark but beautiful" (143). She offers the cup with a "kindly" smile on "her dark, red mouth," and relentlessly tempts with sweet words and brutal honesty (144). The poem John recites to ward off her temptation identifies the witch with Lilith, the mythical figure said to have been Adam's first wife, which also associates the witch and her cup with the sexually devouring female (King 284; Schell 454). Looking forward to *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, it becomes plain that we have discovered the direct ancestor of the White Witch. She, too, offers a poisoned cup, is described as "beautiful," having a "very red mouth," and Mr. Beaver explicitly identifies her as a descendant of Lilith (*LWW* 34, 88). However, contrary to Mary Werner's assertion, the White Witch's characteristics do not explicitly evoke sexual desire so much as they depict the ravenous appetite in general, which is more fitting for both Lewis's audience and the theology that he is attempting to express (Werner 20). While the female witch as a devourer of children is a common element of European fairy tales, and the ancient Hebrew vision of Lilith does portray the "night hag" as a succubus, none of Lewis's witches seek to eat their victims (Tatar 202; Nicholson 46). Instead, Lewis's connection with Lilith stems from George MacDonald's vision of Lilith as "a personification of evil" (Schell 455). While the two witches certainly recall their folk sources, their spiritual roles and narrative similarities to the biblical serpent align them more closely with Satan than with succubae.

Other examples of antagonists who function as satanic tempters abound. The Unman of *Perelandra* tries to gain control over the planet Venus by tempting Tinidril, the Eve character, to sleep on dry land, the novel's analogue for Forbidden Fruit.⁷⁵ At the beginning of *Out of the Silent Planet*, Dick Devine, the novel's secondary antagonist, drugs Elwin Ransom after enticing the thirsty traveler by very slowly opening a bottle of whiskey, gradually lowering Ransom's suspicions as he grows more fixated on the bottle (16-7). In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Pug the slave trader tricks Lucy, Edmund, Caspian, and Eustace into captivity by kindly offering the adventurers refreshments (VDT 43). The key interest in these tempters lies not so much in the characters of the antagonists, for generally Lewis's villains are static and predictable, but in the response his protagonists have to the temptations offered by the villains.

Eve: The Satan-Apple-Eve Paradigm

Beyond his witch characters, Lewis frequently uses the paradigm of satanic antagonist bearing symbolic food to an as-yet innocent protagonist. Yet Lewis does not adhere strictly to the biblical narrative; the protagonists do not inevitably fall into sin the way Adam and Eve do (Kilby 22-3).⁷⁶ This can be seen in the conflict between Unman and Tinidril in *Perelandra*, in the unfallen Martians of *Out of the Silent Planet*, and the garden temptation of Digory by Jadis in *The Magician's Nephew*. Because Lewis revises the biblical outcome, these parallels cannot be seen as allegorical. Instead, Lewis himself

⁷⁵ Admittedly, Unman does not use food as the object of temptation even though *Perelandra* sports an abundance of fruit. This is partly to avoid creating too allegorical a parallel to Eden. See chapter five for an understanding of how Lewis uses fruit as a counterpoint to the temptation.

⁷⁶ Clyde Kilby's *Images of Salvation* includes an entire chapter, entitled "The Eve Who Did Not Fall," regarding unfallen paradises in Lewis's fiction.

suggested that the biblical parallels in his novels be enjoyed as “supposals.” He explains in a 1958 letter to a Mrs. Hook:

If Aslan represented the immaterial Deity in the same way in which [Bunyan’s] Giant Despair represents Despair, he would be an allegorical figure. In reality however he is an invention giving an imaginary answer to the question, “What might Christ become like if there really were a world like Narnia and He chose to be incarnate and die and rise again in *that* world as He actually has done in ours?” This is not allegory at all. So in “Perelandra.” This also works out a *supposition*. (“Suppose, even now, in some other planet there were a first couple undergoing the same that Adam and Eve underwent here, but successfully.”) (CL 3.1004)

Such “supposals,” imagined re-enactments of the temptation scene with a different set of characters and circumstances, are an important feature for understanding both Lewis’s theology of sin and his literary style (CL 2.1158). Lewis often depicts his protagonists in moral dilemmas requiring them to choose between good and evil. Rather than using the psychomachia of medieval morality plays, he chooses instead to recreate the Edenic temptation as a means of illustrating a theological claim. To Lewis, the balancing point for all humans between salvation and damnation occurs at key moments of temptation.

At the end of *Magician’s Nephew*, Lewis explores such a point when Digory is sent to a walled garden, reminiscent of Milton’s Eden, to fetch an apple for Aslan (Hardy 116). The instructions written on the gate are explicit:

Come in by the gold gates or not at all,

Take of my fruit for others or forebear,
 For those who steal or those who climb my wall
 Shall find their heart's desire and find despair. (187)

The moral lessons concerning theft and obedience which Lewis crafts for his young audience are plain enough, but the paradox of the last line unfolds more slowly. Upon entering and plucking the fruit, Digory catches the scent of the apple, and his temptation formally begins. "A terrible hunger and thirst" comes over him, corresponding to the "eager appetite" of Milton's Eve, "rais'd by the smell / So savoury of that Fruit" (*MN 188*; Milton 9.740-1). But unlike Eve, Digory masters his internal impulse and turns to leave. Then he is shocked to see that Jadis, the White Witch, has already both climbed the wall and stolen an apple, just as Milton's Satan does in Eden (Hardy 116). Lewis again assigns the witch the role of satanic tempter, and she tells Digory of the apple's power of conferring immortality, trying to get Digory to keep the apple to give to his dying mother (Kilby 56). Mary Werner erroneously labels this apple as equated with sin itself, but clearly the "apple of life" cannot also equal sin (Werner 20). Instead, Jadis's description of the fruit as the "apple of life" shows that it represent the great power which emanates from Aslan, who has just created life in Narnia. That power is not free for all to take without Aslan's permission. The apple is "magic," that is, imbued with Divine Power, so the restrictions Aslan places on it parallel God's restrictions against sorcery, further emphasizing my earlier point about Lewis's Forbidden Fruit symbolizing Divine power (*MN 192*).

With great effort, Digory also resists this temptation and successfully brings the apple to Aslan, who uses it to plant a tree that protects Narnia from the White Witch for a

thousand years (*MN* 207; Duriez 120). Finally Aslan reveals the full meaning of the poem's paradox. The delicious smell of the apple, "is death and horror and despair" to Jadis (207). She indeed has gained immortality, but her evil heart guarantees that her life will be misery, just as Digory's life and his mother's would have been had he disobeyed (208). Digory was at the balancing point between salvation and damnation, but Lewis takes pains to emphasize the redemptive nature of Digory's spiritual victory. Not only is Digory spared from "despair," but all of Narnia falls under protection because of his efforts, and his mother receives a cure for her terminal disease. Aslan's description of what "would have happened" had Digory given in reveals how death would have been preferable to the stolen life the apple would have given (209). Peter Schakel comments that the alternate history Aslan tells to Digory shows how every individual humans' story turns toward tragedy or comedy depending on how successfully they avoid temptation (Schakel 98).

Stage Two – Pleasure in Excess: Gluttony and Intemperance

While successfully confounding temptation leads to salvation, Lewis also frequently demonstrates that yielding to temptation leads inexorably to more sin. The second stage of culinary degradation marks this transition. The protagonist, having once indulged in sin, cannot stop sinning and becomes a slave to desire, a condition better known as addiction. The progression of this stage, associated with out-of-control desires, or lust, is abstracted by the George MacDonald character in *The Great Divorce*:

The sensualist . . . begins by pursuing a real pleasure, though a small one. His sin is the less. But the time comes on when, though the pleasure becomes less and less and the craving fiercer and fiercer, and though he

knows that joy can never come that way, yet he prefers to joy the mere fondling of unappeasable lust and would not have it taken from him.

(Divorce 72)

As we saw with Edmund's addiction, the focus at this earlier stage is upon the actual consumption of food or drink and the sinful nature of overindulgence. This marks a contrast with the previous stage in which forbidden foods symbolize sin in general. This section will examine the two main divisions of the sins of excess, the overindulgence in foodstuffs, associated with the deadly sin of gluttony; and overindulgence in alcohol, more commonly—but not exclusively—related to temperance.

Lewis's gluttons are not usually like fairy tale gluttons. The tradition in fairy tales is to portray the antagonist as ravening, seeking to "gobble up" the protagonist as we see in Jack's Giant, who wants to grind men's bones to make his bread, or with the wolf in Little Redcap, who swallows entire humans whole (Cashdan 80). Such powerful images of rampaging hunger serve as metaphors for the equally powerful fears of poverty and death, and the defeat of the antagonist celebrates the opposing powers of prudence and life (Cashdan 64). Lewis's instances of gluttony, however, do not merely signify these powerfully universal human fears and do not fall just to antagonists.⁷⁷ Instead Lewis uses gluttony to make a more theological point. He shows both protagonists and antagonists falling prey to gluttony, but, usually, gluttony is a signifier of spiritual weakness rather than of rampaging evil.

⁷⁷ In fact, the majority of Lewis's truly dangerous villains abstain from food altogether, an image of isolation from the divine which I will discuss below.

Gluttony of Delicacy: Pickiness

In Lewis's celebrated *Screwtape Letters*, the senior devil Screwtape describes two distinct categories of gluttony: "gluttony of Delicacy" and the "gluttony of Excess" (87). As Gerard Reed points out, these two classes are a diminution of a larger catalog originating with Gregory the Great (62). Gregory extols five classes of gluttony which Thomas Aquinas succinctly summarizes as food that is eaten "Hastily, sumptuously, too much, greedily, daintily" (Gregory XXX.18; Aquinas II-II, 148, 4). Lewis apparently thought "Hastily, sumptuously," and "greedily" were either too finely distinguished or less of a threat than "too much" and "daintily." Screwtape dismisses the former as mere intemperance but extols the effectiveness of the latter "as a means of catching souls" (87; Martindale, and Welch 107). As an example, he offers the mother of Wormwood's charge, John, whose enslavement to gluttony is not based on excess, but on fastidiousness (Reed 68). She causes domestic strife by her refusal of "too much" food and her insistence upon getting "a cup of tea properly made, or an egg properly boiled" (88). Screwtape comments on this attitude in detail:

Because what she wants is smaller and less costly than what has been set before her, she never recognizes as gluttony her determination to get what she wants, however troublesome it may be to others. At the very moment of indulging her appetite she believes that she is practicing temperance The real value of the quiet, unobtrusive work . . . on this old woman can be gauged by the way in which her belly now dominates her whole life. (*Screwtape* 88)

A variety of other characters from Lewis's novels display the same gluttony of delicacy. Edmund first comes to mind. He only wants Turkish Delight and sulks when he is offered anything else, even a delicious feast of fresh fish. Eustace, too, shares the same sulky attitude towards food. Once on board the *Dawn Treader* he complains loudly when he cannot get "Plumbtree's Vitaminized Nerve Food . . . made with distilled water" instead of the luxurious spiced wine he is offered (*VDT* 13). Edmund concisely sums up the dilemma: "I don't think we can do anything for him. It only makes him worse when you try to be nice to him" (*VDT* 19; Brown, *Dawn* 46). In *The Horse and His Boy*, we see Bree, the Narnian talking horse, stubbornly pause in a hurried march across the desert to graze, despite an enemy army bearing down on Narnia. Bree explains his delicacy only with "A fellow's got to have a mouthful of grass" and forces his companions to wait, nearly losing their race to warn Narnia and Archenland of the coming invasion (*HHB* 144).

No less picky, but more insidious examples can be found among the ranks of Lewis's villains. Shift, the ape, begins his evil career simply over his discontent that the market in Chippingford is out of oranges and bananas (*TLB* 8, 13). He exploits his friendship with Puzzle, the donkey, and always eats "the nicest things" that Puzzle brings back from the market (2; Myers 175). His greedy insistence on getting what he wants sparks the downfall of the entire country of Narnia, which begins as a parody of Communism (Schakel 120). All money will be shared, all citizens enslaved, with, of course, "oranges and bananas pouring in" (38). But for all his grand schemes, the ape ultimately becomes distracted by his obsession with food, and his evil plan can only be fulfilled when an invading army of Calormenes takes over (Ford 398). Uncle Andrew,

from *The Magician's Nephew*, is likewise distracted by his gluttony. Although Lewis certainly depicts him as an alcoholic, it is Andrew's delicacy rather than his drunkenness upon which Lewis focuses. Numerous times, Andrew slips upstairs to indulge in one of his "nasty grown up drinks," which we soon discover is brandy (*MN* 88, 105, 214). So often does Andrew ask for the drink that the talking animals of Narnia eventually name him "Brandy," and he becomes what Paul Ford calls "a figure of fun" (*MN* 202; Ford 46). Andrew fancies himself to be a powerful magician, but, like Shift, he merely initiates the evil plot and is quickly replaced by the Empress Jadis, a witch with power and stamina beyond Andrew's imagination.

It is significant to note that the examples of delicate appetites include a mix of protagonists and antagonists. As the characters of Eustace and Edmund testify, however, all such personalities are at least somewhat antagonistic at the outset; the gluttony of delicacy is a particularly anti-social vice (*Screwtape* 89). Lewis offers only two solutions for such people: they must either be cured or be swept aside. Those who are cured become protagonists. Edmund, Eustace, and Bree all eventually come to repentance and easily leave their fussiness behind (Brown, *Dawn* 46; Gibson 150). Those who cling to gluttony stay villains, but only as the weak sort of tool villains who are always subservient to a greater evil. Shift continues to fall into a culinary debauchery, sitting around eating nuts all day and eventually "taken to drinking," becoming increasingly absurd and impotent as a villain (34, 97). Uncle Andrew's weak magic cannot compete with Jadis's, and he is swept aside, left on the sidelines of the plot, never to reform, but never having truly threatened the protagonists (221; Gibson 204). Both Shift and Andrew are notable for their whining and complaining, ever the marks of the more comic,

ineffectual sort of villains who descend from the vice lieutenants of Medieval morality plays (*TLB* 124; *MN* 112).

Lewis sheds more light on the condition of such individuals in *The Great Divorce*. The “Lewis” and “George MacDonald” characters have just witnessed an exemplum of a man possessed by a lustful spirit that takes the shape of a lizard. The man permits the lizard-like creature to be killed, and it immediately transforms into a beautiful stallion which the man mounts and rides up into the mountains of heaven (*Divorce* 112). MacDonald explicates the image: “Lust is a poor, weak, whimpering, whispering thing compared with that richness and energy of desire which will arise when lust has been killed” (114). Since gluttony is surely a variety of lust, Lewis seems to be suggesting that gluttony does not register the importance with Lewis that orthodoxy assigned it. Earlier MacDonald remarks of the sensual sinner, “His sin is the less” (72). The evil caused by lust is a weakening sin, and categorized by the early church as sins of the flesh, whereas the more malevolent evils of pride and wrath are stronger and more serious, and were categorized as sins of the spirit. Rather than agreeing with Gregory that it must be considered a mortal sin which leads to idolatry, Lewis sides with Aquinas in demonstrating how gluttony results in a “dullness of sense in the understanding” (Reed 69; Aquinas II-II, 148, 6). In other words, picky people are irritating, certainly, but weak and slow and no serious threat, other than to themselves. These weak villains are to be pitied for the misery they suffer, but they are also being served justly since their suffering is self-caused.

Gluttony of Excess: Intemperance

The second type of gluttony, the gluttony of excess, is essentially synonymous with intemperance, so I will examine the two concepts as one, especially considering that Lewis's images of the gluttony of excess almost always involve alcohol. Lewis's personal practices regarding the consumption of alcohol were problematic to many Protestant readers in America where this issue tends to be divided between teetotalism and alcoholism (Carpenter 185).⁷⁸ He rejected teetotalism as "tyrannic and unscriptural" on the grounds that "Christianity arose in the Mediterranean world where, then as now, wine was as much a part of the normal diet as bread" (*CL* 3.580; qtd. in Brown, *Dawn* 24). Instead, Lewis's doctrine of temperance stems from biblical injunctions which approve a moderate consumption of wine and condemn only drunkenness (Eph. 5:18; 1 Tim. 5:23). As a leading advocate of measured temperance of his time, Lewis had plenty to say about this topic, starting with his most famous nonfiction work, *Mere Christianity*. He defines temperance as "not abstaining, but going the right length and no further," and he does not limit the definition to alcohol only, but to all manners of appetite, culinary or otherwise (*MC* 76). Regarding Lewis's apparently permissive use of wine in his books for children, Paul Ford reminds us that "The spirit of revelry is alive in Narnia, and wine is an important part of the celebration" (457). Consequently, most of the times Lewis includes alcohol in a scene, the image is one of refreshment and celebration, and his protagonists model sobriety alongside the enjoyment of holy pleasure (Brown, *Dawn* 24).

However, Lewis was no stranger to the damage caused by alcoholism, and his books most certainly do not constitute an advertisement for a debauched lifestyle.

⁷⁸ Chapter two of this study provides specific examples of how and why Lewis enjoyed alcohol. For the sake of space, I will refrain from further elucidation on the matter here.

Lewis's brother Warren wrestled the specter of alcoholism all of his adult life, and one only need read Lewis's letters during the times that Warren was pinned under its grip to see the pain it caused the family (*CL* 3.648; 878; 1181). While Lewis certainly drank beer every day, nowhere in his letters or among Lewis's biographers do we find any account of drunkenness in Lewis himself. His personal domestic contrast of temperance dwelling alongside drunkenness appears subtly in *The Magician's Nephew*. The clearly alcoholic Uncle Andrew displays his dependence on drink by whining "A drop of spirits is just what I need" whenever he is under stress (*MN* 114). On the other hand, his sister Letty takes a more medicinal approach. Her only alcoholic intake is a sensible dose of *sal volatile* to assist her recovery from having been knocked across the parlor sitting room by Jadis (95).

Other examples of drunkenness point readers to the theological principal Lewis saw at the core of all intemperate practices. Edmund's trouble truly escalates when he takes the *second* bite of Turkish Delight. From that moment on, "the more he [eats] the more he wanted to eat" (*LWW* 38). The gluttony of Shift the ape starts as that of delicacy but turns swiftly to one of excess as he sits all day greedily eating the store of nuts the squirrels have gathered for the winter. He viciously declares to the head squirrel that "These you've brought aren't anything like enough" (*TLM* 35). Like Edmund, Shift continually wants more. Alcoholism eventually takes Shift, and he descends into a stupefied fog. Lewis depicts Dick Devine, the secondary antagonist in *Out of the Silent Planet*, as having "a flask of spirits ever in his hand." Lewis never goes so far as to claim that Devine is an alcoholic, but his tendencies toward intemperance are made clear by how frequently alcohol and Devine share the stage in both *Out of the Silent Planet* and

That Hideous Strength. Other types of intemperance reveal the same trend. Devine's whole purpose for joining the expedition to Mars is his thirst for "Sun's Blood," or gold. His rapacious personality dominates his physiology so much that the narrator describes him as having "a mouth like a shark" (*THS* 245). David Downing comments that "his only interest lies in getting ahead" (129). Like Shift and Edmund, Devine always wants more.

The drive to get more, the unifying feature of these three characters, implies one of Lewis's favorite theological principles: the fact that addiction results when desire itself runs amok (Reed 62). Alcoholics become what they are because they are perpetually thirsty. They never know satisfaction, a joy that is the fulfillment of pleasure, because they continually repeat the act of drinking rather than savoring the memory of its goodness (Meilaender 15).⁷⁹ Ransom's Martian friend Hyoui catechizes Ransom on this subject when he comments that "A pleasure is full grown only when it is remembered" (*OOSP* 73). Lewis's longest sustained examination of the dangers of seeking the same pleasure multiple times occurs while Ransom is enjoying the fruits of Perelandra. He first comes across a grove of yellow, round fruit, and, upon drinking of its nectar, becomes astonished at a pleasure so intense as to be almost spiritual (*Per.* 42). His impulse is to immediately pick another fruit and enjoy the sensation again, yet something stops him. He thinks that "Perhaps the experience had been so complete that repetition would be a vulgarity" (43). He wonders "how often . . . he had reiterated pleasures not through desire, but in the teeth of desire and in obedience to a spurious rationalism?" (43). Fruit after fruit, pleasure after pleasure, Ransom experiences the same impulse, halting a

⁷⁹ Gilbert Meilaender's chapter "The Sweet Poison of the False Infinite" explores this concept in much greater depth.

repetition after the first shock of delight. Ransom eventually forms a hypothesis that “this itch to have things over again” may possibly be “the root of all evil” (48; Meilaender 16-7). Lewis shows how the human appetite must be turned towards holiness through temperance or else unleashed to become, as Thomas Howard puts it, “the servant of death and hell” (93).

Lewis firmly establishes where the out-of-control appetite leads in his relatively rare displays of raging and ravaging appetites. Here we finally see Lewis making good theological use of the hunger-as-horrible-evil imagery which Mervyn Nicholson says abounds in fairy tale villains like Jack’s Giant and Little Red Cap’s Wolf (Nicholson 46). One brief, but chilling, portrait comes from a self-description given by the werewolf whom the dwarf Nikabrik brings to Caspian’s council meeting in Aslan’s Howe:

A dull, gray voice at which Peter’s flesh crept replied, “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. Show me your enemies.”
(*PC* 176)

This nightmare creature is the personification of the ravaging appetite. Caspian knows instantly and instinctively that the creature is irredeemably evil, and it is slain almost at once.

The werewolf’s execution helps draw a sharp contrast between Lewis’s hungry villains and their fairy tale counterparts which shows that Lewis’s utilization of the device has a specific—and often explicit—theological purpose. Fairy tale villains are

usually hungry for various socioeconomic reasons involving poverty or famine and usually threaten to consume the protagonist (Cashdan 64). Lewis's satanic devourers typically appear only briefly in order to make his theological point, only to swiftly disappear or be destroyed, and they only succeed in devouring other, weaker, antagonists. Protagonists cannot be devoured by the ravenous antagonist and are usually depicted as victorious over them. Invariably the relationship depicts Lewis's understanding of the pure, raging desire of Hell itself and Heaven's unassailability to the power of Hell's craving (Reed 70).

The Northern Dragon in *Pilgrim's Regress* is Lewis's first such character. It appears in a single chapter towards the end of the book, one of several satanic trials which John must experience as tests of his spiritual strength. The dragon lives by the classical aphorism, "*Serpens nisi serpentem comederit [non fit draco]*," which translates "A serpent must eat another serpent to become a dragon" (*PR* 146; Bacon 166).⁸⁰ It has devoured all other dragons in the area, including his own wife (*PC* 147). Like Caspian with the werewolf, John easily dispatches it, indicative of his growing ability to overcome evil. A similar devouring spirit can be found in *The Last Battle*. During their conquest, the enemies of Narnia have repeatedly called upon Tash, the pagan deity of Calormen, and Tash finally comes, appearing as a ghastly bird of prey with multiple clawed arms (*TLB* 101-2). Tash's ravenous evil serves as a moment of reckoning for the plot's mortal villains. He gobbles up Shift the ape in "one peck" and carries off Rishda Tarkaan to presumably do the same, but at Peter's simple command, "Begone, Monster, and take your lawful prey to your own place," Tash disappears for good (*TLB* 166, 179).

⁸⁰ Lewis only quotes the first four words of the proverb. Francis Bacon provides the complete saying in his essay "Of Fortune."

Poggin the dwarf identifies Tash as a demon, leaving no ambiguities as to Lewis's theological point, suggesting that Tash's "own place" where Peter banishes the monster is, in fact, Hell (*TLB* 104). Lewis depicts a second pagan deity as a devourer in his image of Ungit, the maternal god of Glome from *Till We Have Faces*. Ungit worship involves human sacrifice and is frequently referred to as a "devouring" (48-9). This devouring characteristic of Ungit is mingled with the loving characteristic of God so that, to Ungit's worshippers, "the loving and the devouring are all the same thing" (49). By this blend of holiness and depravity, Lewis demonstrates his notion that all pagan religions, however fallen, were still intermingled with some spark of truth (Myers 210).

These images provide internal references to Lewis's most extensive portrayal of satanic devouring found, appropriately enough, in Lewis's epistolary discourse between two demons. Gilbert Meilaender shows how "the image of 'devouring' pervades" *The Screwtape Letters* (90). Screwtape gradually reveals that the whole purpose of Hell's campaign to draw new souls into itself is for the purpose of a devouring assimilation. In letter five, the tempter-in-training Wormwood enjoys his first taste of human suffering, which goes down like a fine wine to the devils, upon which Wormwood becomes quite drunk. Screwtape chastises him and reveals how satanic hunger operates:

If any present self-indulgence on your part leads to the ultimate loss of the prey, you will be left eternally thirsting for that draught of which you are now so much enjoying your first sip. If, on the other hand, . . . you can finally secure his soul, he will be yours forever—a brim-full living chalice of despair and horror and astonishment which you can raise to your lips as often as you please. (*Screwtape* 22)

Screwtape confesses that all devils remain permanently ravenous, craving human souls as a type of food (23; Harmon 247). As with Tash or Little Redcap's Wolf, their aim for all humans is to gobble them up, but in a spiritual sense. They seek "the absorption of [their] will into ours, the increase of our own area of selfhood at [their] expense" (*Screwtape* 38). Lewis also demonstrates that the demons cannot entertain fellowship with one another, so Screwtape seeks to unite himself with Wormwood "in an indissoluble embrace" in much the same way he seeks to assimilate humans (121, 171). Meilaender says that this state of devouring may masquerade as love but reveals itself to be the exact opposite of love (90). Screwtape always misleadingly signs himself "Your affectionate uncle" until the last letter when he removes all pretenses and more honestly signs "Your increasingly and ravenously affectionate uncle" (175). Through the moral inversions of Screwtape's infernal advice, Lewis reveals what he asserts to be the source and destination of the gluttonous appetite. Not only is it a product of Hell that leads directly back to its source, but it is also one of the key characteristics of those who have aligned themselves with ultimate Evil (Meilaender 91).

Stage Three – Anti-pleasure: Getting to Like Bad Eggs

Screwtape's formula for addiction is "an ever increasing craving for an ever diminishing pleasure" (44). Eventually, the pleasure disappears altogether, and the individual arrives at a new low, the inability to experience pleasure, which is the third culinary stage of degradation. In this stage, the character denies pleasure to embrace anti-pleasure by either rejecting good food in favor of bad or by calling the good food being eaten bad. Yet in the face of the complete absence of pleasure, the character often still chooses to crave because, as Lewis's character George MacDonald puts it, "He'd like

well to be able to scratch; but even when he can scratch no more he'd rather itch than not" (*Divorce* 72). The Green Lady of Perelandra casts the same notion in a culinary mold. She suggests that clinging to the idea of a fruit one wanted instead of the fruit one finds is choosing to "refuse the real good; you could make the real fruit taste insipid by thinking of the other" (*Per* 69). Meilaender suggests that the heart of this matter is "the appropriate attitude toward created things" (17). Desired solely for themselves, created things swiftly lose their real value.

We have seen this in Edmund's inability to enjoy the beaver's hospitable meal of fish and potatoes because his "memory of bad magic food" had spoiled "the taste of good ordinary food" (*LWW* 95). Lewis abstracts the principle for this stage in his essay "First and Second Things." In the essay, Lewis cautions that too often humans surrender greater goods (i.e. "first things"), like love or salvation, in favor of secondary goods (i.e. "second things"), like possessions or minor pleasures. He stresses that "by valuing too highly a real, but subordinate good, we . . . come near to losing that good itself" (*Dock* 490; *Hooper* 560). As one of his examples of the principle, he states that "the man who makes alcohol his chief good loses not only his job but his palate and all power of enjoying the earlier (and only pleasurable) levels of intoxication" (490; *Markos* 158). This is just what Edmund has done with Turkish Delight, and it is the logical next step after gluttony (*Brown, Narnia* 72). By making candy his only good, he destroys not only whatever minor good the candy could have given but also the greater goods of companionship and loyalty by rejecting the delight and solidarity represented by the beavers' meal and by choosing to betray his family in order to get more candy (*Harmon* 238).

Lewis seems to suggest a paradox inherent in such an attitude. Once an individual singles out a “lower” good to pursue in exclusion of all else, that good becomes excluded itself rather quickly. We can witness the self-destructive nature of this paradox in a number of scenes. Perhaps the most extreme example is the “Hard-bitten Ghost” from *The Great Divorce*. All of the ghosts depicted in the book suffer in prisons of their own making, but the Hard-bitten Ghost’s is particularly constrained. He has totally eradicated all goodness, trust, and pleasure in his life in favor of a vast network of conspiracy theories. Because of his refusal to be “taken in,” he cannot even enjoy Heaven itself while visiting there. All the ghosts’ feet are wounded by the crystalline grass that their phantom bodies cannot bend, but they are promised that they will get stronger if they stay longer. When asked what he thinks of the hard, bright reality of Paradise, the Hard-bitten Ghost’s response shows the depths of his self-torment:

. . . if the people who run the show are so clever and so powerful, why don’t they find something to suit their public? All this poppycock about growing harder so that the grass doesn’t hurt our feet, now! There’s an example. What would you say if you went to a hotel where the eggs were all bad and when you complained to the Boss, instead of apologizing and changing his dairyman, he just told you that if you tried you’d get to like bad eggs in time? (55)

By means of a humorous, but indirect, culinary metaphor, the ghost negates all of Paradise as a “bad egg.” His commitment to “seeing through” imaginary conspiracy theories—surely a “second thing”—has stripped away all possible chances of enjoying superlative good for eternity—what Lewis would claim is the *only* true First Thing

(Gibson 120). The paradox is that the ghost has, in fact, embraced bad eggs as the only eggs there are, and while he certainly does not seem to enjoy them, he dutifully munches away for lack of any other sustenance (Lindvall 102).

An important difference between the Hard-bitten Ghost and Edmund is that Edmund is a protagonist and the ghost is an antagonist—although admittedly a minor one. As we have seen with sins of culinary excess, protagonists and antagonists respond differently to the culinary stages of degradation, chiefly regarding their ability to be redeemed from their situation. Edmund's character arc does eventually return to equilibrium when he is cured of his habitual sin. The Hard-bitten Ghost, on the other hand, drifts aimlessly back to Hell (56). Lewis uses the comedic arc of the protagonists' plots to provide hope that even the most hardened sinners can be pulled from the brink of destruction, as seen with Eustace and Orual, but Lewis employs his antagonists' rejection of pleasure to provide insights into the symptoms of their spiritual disease, as can be seen with the Hard-bitten Ghost and the Dwarves of *The Last Battle*.

Anti-pleasure Protagonists

One characteristic shared by anti-pleasure protagonists and antagonists is misery. Once a sinner has rejected moral pleasure in favor of immoral appetite, misery becomes a lifestyle that threatens to become permanent. With his protagonists, however, Lewis shows that the mindset can be reversed while illustrating how challenging that process can be. Both Edmund and Eustace must undergo enormous personal trials before rediscovering pleasure, but once they do, their redemption becomes assured. For Edmund, the combined torture of starvation and witnessing the White Witch's cruelty breaks her spell over him (*LWW* 128; Ford 217). From that point on, he can enjoy honest

pleasures again, starting immediately with the delightful sights and sounds of the rapid arrival of Spring (*LWW* 129-133). Likewise, Eustace must endure similar self-imposed tortures. He clearly eats well while on *The Dawn Treader*; he never rejects food and even is even willing to take extra helpings from Lucy during a shortage (*VDT* 76). But like Edmund at the beavers' lodge, he calls the food on board "frightful," unable to enjoy it because he has rejected the crew's goodness in favor of his own emaciated, self-centered version of it (*VDT* 32). But Eustace is not under a magic spell; he is merely a snob. He remains immune to all delight until the moment of his correction arrives, and he is transformed into a dragon as punishment for his "greedy, dragonish thoughts." (*VDT* 97; Gibson 169). Once he actually is under a magic spell, Eustace desperately wants to be free from it and from his attitude of anti-pleasure. Lewis demonstrates Eustace's swift reformation by having him eat "nearly all" of the carcass of the dragon who previously inhabited the island. This distasteful cannibalism may shock the reader, but Lewis presents it in terms of honest pleasure, for "there is nothing a dragon likes so well as fresh dragon" (100).⁸¹ Eustace's "tastes and his digestion" are tuned to dragon physiology, and his meal is a return to the enjoyment of natural pleasures—albeit dragonish ones. The narrator specifically says that "Eustace's character had been rather improved by becoming a dragon," and while still distressed over his condition, Eustace now gets to enjoy real pleasures, a thing he has not permitted himself the entire voyage (*VDT* 107; Brown, *Dawn* 101). He experiences the "pleasant surprise" of being able to fly, the "pleasure . . . of being liked," and he "like[s] his food raw now" (*VDT* 108; Brown, *Dawn*

⁸¹ The narrator's next sentence, "That is why you so seldom find more than one dragon in the same country" is a subtle second reference to the motto of the Northern Dragon's from *The Pilgrim's Regress*: "*Serpens nisi serpentem comederit.*"

102). Although rather a messy and bashful eater now, he never complains about meals again.

Easily the most extended portrayal of a protagonist's journey from the sinful, anti-pleasure state back to stasis and harmony with the Divine is Orual, the chief character of *Till We Have Faces*. From early in the novel, Orual plainly has made her motherly love for her sister, Psyche, her primary good to the exclusion of all other goods, including the selfless, holy love she ought to have for Psyche and the rest of her family (265). A pivotal scene in Psyche and Orual's relationship occurs at a meal Psyche serves to Orual at the doorstep of the supernatural palace where Psyche lives as the bride of the Christ-like god Cupid. In the previous chapter, I examined this meal as a Eucharistic image because Psyche perceives herself to be serving honeycakes and wine to Orual, a parallel to the Lord's Supper. However, the meal also has a transgressive side because Orual does not see the cakes and wine at all. Instead she perceives only berries and water. The fundamental dissonance in their perspectives frames the central conflict of the novel, leading Thomas Howard to label the event as a "Black Mass" (*Achievement* 184). Orual's impercipient stems from her ordering of second things first, causing her to reject goodness. She has come to Psyche to possess and manipulate her and therefore cannot properly enjoy Psyche's meal. She and Psyche miscommunicate throughout the scene. Psyche refers to the wine and the cakes, but Orual assumes she is being figurative (*TWHF* 104). Horror arises as the two become aware of the miscommunication, but rather than placing her faith in Psyche and trusting her, Orual remains committed to her own inferior, needy love.

In the moment of the scene, Orual becomes progressively more sunk into the anti-pleasure state, assuming an if-I-can't-have-her-no-one-can attitude towards Psyche. So depraved are her choices that she begins to function as an antagonist and assumes the characteristics of the devouring deity Ungit as she seeks to possess and consume Psyche. The gods give Orual a vision of Psyche's palace, but she rejects it in an act of sheer will (133). She stabs herself in the arm in an attempt to blackmail Psyche, forcing Psyche to betray her divine husband, and not only shattering her relationship with Psyche but also ruining Psyche's marriage with Cupid (164; Myers 209). Back home in Glome, she becomes the Queen but exploits her counselors exhaustively, including her chief captain Bardia, forcing those who love her to give more and more of themselves to their own great detriment.

The rest of the novel pivots around Orual trying to make sense out of what she has witnessed on Psyche's doorstep. Orual becomes stuck with supernatural doubt, for if Cupid's palace was an illusion, then Orual acted in Psyche's best interest, but if the palace was real, then Orual knows she has acted abominably. Her pain causes her to continue her role of devourer, enlarging her appetite to swallow up all meaningful relationships. She receives a moment of epiphany from Ansit, the wife of Bardia, who tells her in disgust, "Faugh! You're full fed. Gorged with other men's lives, women's too: Bardia's, mine, the Fox's, your sister's—both your sisters'" (265). Through her process of self-discovery, she comes to realize the truth of the devouring nature of her love, admits to herself, "I am Ungit . . . that all-devouring womblike, yet barren thing. Glome was a web—I the swollen spider, squat at its center, gorged with men's stolen lives" (276; Howard 188). Writing a book of complaint to the gods begins her process of

repentance and, like Eustace and Edmund, she eventually finds pleasure again (Howard 164). After a lifetime of doubt and self-pity, Orual receives another vision just before her death and this time embraces the holy goodness of Psyche and affirms the Christological Cupid as her “Lord” (308; Myers 211).

Anti-pleasure Antagonists

Lewis uses the anti-pleasure meals of antagonists to symbolize the reversal of moral values. Like Orual, they ruin good food through a supreme act of self-will by calling it bad and are left with an inability to enjoy anything (Harmon 237). At the end of *The Last Battle*, most of the dwarves of Narnia turn against both Narnia’s invaders and her defenders. Instead they favor only themselves, exemplified by their battle cry, “The dwarves are for the dwarves” (*TLB* 91). Disillusioned by the competing claims of Aslan worship and Tash worship, they settle into a stubborn, self-centered agnosticism (Harmon 239). When Narnia comes to an end and all Narnians find themselves in Aslan’s Country—the Narnian heaven—the dwarves are present, but remain resolutely committed to the delusion that they are only in a donkey stable (*TLB* 182). Lewis summarizes their attitude and their imprisonment when Aslan arrives and provides the dwarves with “a glorious feast” of “pies and tongues and pigeons and trifles and ices” with a “goblet of good wine” for each dwarf (*TLB* 184). The dwarves cannot appreciate the meal or even see it, insisting instead that they are eating hay and old turnips and raw cabbage leaves (Patterson 43). They eventually fall to bickering and destroy most of the meal, showing that the dwarves are not really for the dwarves after all (*TLB* 185).

The feast symbolizes their sin of self-delusion. They deny the luxury of their feast by insisting it is stable fodder. Aslan has given them Heaven, and they choose to call it

Hell; by pursuing the secondary good of autonomy, they surrender the primary good of truth and lose both in the process. Self-condemned in the Hell of their own design, the dwarves, like the Hard-bitten Ghost, cannot even be helped by Aslan himself (183, 185-6; Harmon 240; Johnson, and Houtman 84).⁸² As Lewis describes in *The Great Divorce*, “Good beats upon the damned incessantly as sound waves beat on the ears of the deaf, but they cannot receive it First they will not, in the end they cannot, open their hands for gifts, or their mouth for food, or their eyes to see” (*Divorce* 139). The anti-pleasure stage is short lived. Very few antagonists arrive at this stage and stay there. As we shall see in our discussion of the final stage, most anti-pleasure antagonists move relentlessly to the fourth stage, alienation, and cease eating altogether.

Stage Four – Anti-relationship: Alienation and the Mindset of Hell

Orual’s character arc demonstrates how the anti-pleasure state can degrade a heroic protagonist into a villainous protagonist, a state which alienates the self from all other relationships, both mortal and Divine. Lewis suggests that this state of alienation is a precursor to a divorce, the Great Divorce, which is a permanent separation from God, a state normally referred to as Hell (*Divorce* 70; Erickson 1242).⁸³ This is the fourth culinary stage of degradation. In this stage, characters eat meals which show relationships, instead of merely pleasure, breaking down. Lewis believed all good meals fostered good relationships, so he counterpoints with these bad meals to show the

⁸² Lewis includes a subtle self-reference in the novel that confirms the association of the dwarves’ state of living in Hell. They repeatedly call the stable in which they think they live a “black hole” (*TLB* 182). Lewis uses the same phrase as his allegorical image of Hell in *The Pilgrim’s Regress* (137; Downing 92; Ford 186).

⁸³ The Bible linguistically affirms this association. The Greek word for divorce, *apostasion*, is etymologically identical to “apostasy,” the act of falling away or defecting from the faith (Matt. 5:31; Thayer G646, G647). A second Greek word often used to refer to divorce, *chōrízō*, simply means “to separate” or divide (1 Cor. 7:10; G5563).

isolating function of sin. In Edmund's case, the stage begins the moment he rejects not just food but the actual company of his siblings and the beavers, sneaking out of the lodge to betray them all to the White Witch (*LWW* 96). Edmund, who ought to be—and will be once more—a protagonist, joins forces with the antagonist, and has become something of a villain himself. His condition worsens when he arrives at the Witch's House, where he is subjected to her torture and is given a starvation diet of stale bread and water. The separation from all friendly relationships, his forced fast, and his bondage in the abode of the antagonist indicate that Edmund has hit the bottom. He is in Hell.

In an essay entitled "The Sermon and the Lunch" Lewis explicates the principle behind the anti-relationship mindset while—perhaps inadvertently—also demonstrating its connection to meals. In the essay, Lewis recalls a singularly unpleasant luncheon he ate with the family of his parish vicar. Lewis describes how the vicar and his wife nitpick and bluster on topics about which they are ignorant, while the son and daughter attempt to maintain sanity:

Lunch at the vicarage nearly always follows the same pattern. . . . The father storms; the mother is (oh, blessed domestic queen's move!) 'hurt'—plays pathos for all she is worth. The daughter becomes ironical. The father and son, elaborately ignoring each other, start talking to me. The lunch party is in ruins. (*Dock* 493)

Analyzing the brief narrative, we find a number of similarities between this meal and Lewis's other anti-relationship meals. First, we note that not all parties are equally guilty. Usually the potential for fellowship is shattered by only one or two iniquitous diners. Second, the consequent inequality creates alienation. This family, which should

be fellowshiping together during their meal, is in a very real microcosm of Hell by meal's end. Third, we are not told the menu. For the reader to enjoy the description of the food would harm the mimesis of the spiritual state Lewis is expressing. Lewis's own interpretation of the meal confirms the message of the images. He declares that sinful attempts to form relationships "will produce only particular temptations, corruptions, and miseries" but that when "offered to God" all occasions of togetherness "can be converted and redeemed, and will then become the channel of particular blessings" (*Dock* 493).

The anti-relationship meal is one of Lewis's most recurrent culinary devices, and since it is recurrent, it is also complex. The meal always depicts a hellish environment, but depending on the combination of diners, various nuances of this environment may be discerned. If a morally pure protagonist eats with a morally neutral or mildly negative character, the resulting moral incompatibility may be merely a time of suffering, as in "going through Hell," with varying degrees of severity ranging from awkwardness to acute emotional pain. However, if a protagonist has begun to slide into disbelief or sin, the anti-relationship meals become purgatorial, meant to teach or to cleanse the protagonist of error (Lewis, *Divorce* 68-9). The alienation of these first two is always shown to be reversible. However the strongest iteration of anti-relationship comes whenever an antagonist refuses food altogether. Lewis portrays these individuals as permanently mired in a hellish state of isolation brought on by sin. We shall examine all three of these nuances.

Incompatible Moral States

Lewis often uses awkward dining occasions to show incompatible moral states between two characters. The biblical principle here may be summarized by St. Paul's

command not to be “unequally yoked with unbelievers.” (2 Cor. 6:14). The Greek word for “yoked” in the verse means “to have fellowship with one who is not an equal,” referring specifically to believers interacting with idolaters or non-believers, which is just how Lewis depicts such meals (Thayer G2086). When one of Lewis’s True Believers—that is, characters positively aligned with the novel’s Christ-figure—dines with non-believing characters, fellowship cannot occur, and the meal is invariably unpleasant to some degree.

We see this in mild forms in the *Chronicles of Narnia* where Lewis plays the awkwardness of such occasions with humor. The strange meal that Aravis and Lasaraleen share offers a prime example. Aravis has become separated from her Narnian traveling companions in the great city of Tashbaan, the capital of Calormen. She stumbles upon her “friend” Lasaraleen, a fellow member of Calormen’s aristocratic Tarkaans. The two girls are almost completely incompatible. Independent Aravis has rejected the cruel Calormen society and is running away to Narnia while Lasaraleen embodies the pampered, self-centered life Aravis is leaving behind (Ford 282; Gibson 149). Their friendship is a mixed blessing; Lasaraleen does help Aravis, but only after subjecting her to a tedious round of giggly talk about parties and clothes. The meal they eat together is “chiefly of the whipped cream and jelly and fruit and ice sort,” and its menu perfectly matches the saccharine, insubstantial nature of Lasaraleen’s personality (*HHB* 104-5).

Another of the comic examples occurs in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* when the crew lands on the island of the Dufflepuds. These one-legged little dwarves are in open rebellion against their sovereign, the magician Coriakin, whom Aslan has appointed to rule over them (Gibson 178). They have sneaked into his house and used Coriakin’s

spell book to make themselves invisible without permission, then take up arms against the crew of *The Dawn Treader* to force Lucy to help make them visible again. The dinner the Dufflepuds serve to the crew that night highlights these creatures' inherent silliness and irrationality. The narrator relates that the Duffers "feasted their guests royally," by measure of the menu, which consists of "mushroom soup, boiled chickens, ham, gooseberries, red currants, curds, cream, milk, and mead" (VDT 556). However, the narrator qualifies the otherwise good meal by commenting that "it would have been pleasanter if it had not been so exceedingly messy, and also if the conversation had not consisted entirely of agreements" (556). The invisible, one-legged dwarves must hop about the room carrying dishes, which creates a humorous but chaotic setting, and the chief Duffer makes an endless string of inane observations followed by a chorus of repetitive agreements from the others (Brown, *Dawn* 138). Their rebellion against Coriakin, poor manners, and irrational conversation ruins the crew's chance of forging any real relationship.

Certainly neither Lasaraleen nor the Dufflepuds have committed any major evil. Instead, their transgressions are social and their violations are more against good manners than good morals. According to Sally Stabb's discussion of the function of manners in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, both parties fail to cooperate with their companions to achieve goals, and neither properly honors expectations in manners of speech (Stabb 283). Both are serving as hosts to the novel's protagonists, which I have shown in chapter two is a major test of fellowship for Lewis. Neither offers much material assistance in helping the protagonists achieve their goals. Lasaraleen delays Aravis, and the Dufflepuds add to the list of tasks the crew must accomplish. Both speak overmuch, and their words focus on

themselves rather than on their guests. And in both cases, the meals display serious flaws, further signifying a lack of solidarity and good manners. Lasaraleen serves a flawed menu of non-nutritive sweets while the Dufflepuds offer flawed table service. It is true that the narrator never openly declares their behavior to be rude, but the fact remains that these characters are largely incompatible with the True Believing protagonists.

Lasaraleen functions as a foil for Aravis, and the Dufflepuds are actually minor antagonists since they oppose the crew with weapons. While none of the Diners at either meal can truly be said to be “in Hell,” an argument can be made that both are in the temporary, purgatorial state Lewis describes in *The Great Divorce*.

Sliding into the Hellish State

The anti-relationship meal becomes more serious when the protagonists themselves bring guilt to the table. Instead of the comic awkwardness that comes from mere moral or religious incompatibility, such meals display increasing danger and depravity, indicating that the protagonist has entered a serious spiritual drift. A key feature of these meals is that they are usually eaten in the antagonist’s dwelling or with an antagonist physically present. Elizabeth Baird Hardy notes that this topos is common to fairy tales, but Lewis’s use aligns more with Edmund Spenser’s or John Bunyan’s allegorical repurposing of the device (Hardy 62). The various prisons, castles and dungeons belonging to the villains of both *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress* usually represent some allegorical precursor to Hell (Hardy 73). Colin Manlove observes that Bunyan’s protagonists only tangle with antagonists when they fall into sin by veering from the path (Manlove 17). Lewis appropriates the same device a surprising number of times but always adds a culinary element. The Spirit-of-the-Age Giant, the

entire corporation of the N.I.C.E., The White Witch, the Green Witch, and the giants of Harfang all have some sort of headquarters from which meals are served to stray protagonists (Nicholson 57). Like Bunyan's, Lewis's antagonists serve as general analogues for Satan, so a protagonist dining with an antagonist necessarily signifies spiritual peril. Also like Bunyan, Lewis's protagonists rarely realize the potential danger when they enter the dwelling of the antagonist, but their destination is nevertheless the result of choices they have made (Lewis, *Divorce* 75).

The biblical explanation for the culinary element is one of personal significance for Lewis. In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis confesses that he had brought judgment upon himself as a teenager when he insincerely took his first communion only to please his father (*SBJ* 161). His language again evokes the Scripture in which St. Paul cautions, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself" (1 Cor. 11:29). "Damnation" here refers to temporal judgment that could be reversed, but still indicates the slide towards the hellish state of mind and an alienation from God (Hardy 72).⁸⁴ The most vivid representation of the process can be found in *The Silver Chair* when Eustace, Jill and Puddleglum allow themselves to be led from the path Aslan has given them, and they fall into the hands of the Giants of Harfang.

The Silver Chair is a quest story revolving around finding the lost Prince Rilian, son of King Caspian, with whom Eustace sailed on *The Dawn Treader* in the previous book. Rilian has been kidnapped by a Green Witch, and Aslan has sent the two children to find him, giving them four signs to remember to aid them on their way. As an analogue to Christian spiritual discipline, Aslan exhorts Jill to ". . . remember, remember,

⁸⁴ Modern English versions usually favor "judgment" over "damnation" as a better translation of the Greek.

remember the signs. Say them to yourself when you wake in the morning and when you lie down at night, and when you wake in the middle of the night” (*SC* 25).⁸⁵ As they push northward on their quest, they come across the Green Witch herself, disguised as a beautiful woman and accompanied by Prince Rilian, likewise disguised in a suit of black armor. In a scene of Edenic temptation, the Green Witch tells the travelers of the giantish castle of Harfang, making sensual promises of “steaming baths, soft beds, and warm hearths” and assuring that “the roast and the baked and the sweet will be on the table four times a day” (*SC* 91; Tatar 196). All they need do is present themselves as “two fair Southern children for the Autumn Feast” (*SC* 91).

Puddleglum, their guide, doubts the Green Lady’s motives, but her words work upon the children like Turkish Delight. They thus move into the first culinary stage of sin. The narrator shows how the temptation causes them to slide progressively deeper into sensual selfishness (Schakel 71). They can “think about nothing but beds and baths and hot meals . . . they never talk about Aslan, or even about the lost prince And Jill [gives] up her habit of repeating the signs over to herself every night and morning” (*SC* 94). As the temptation works, they become “more sorry for themselves and more grumpy and snappy with each other” (*SC* 95; Myers 152). Michael Ward appropriately points out that Jill has clearly begun to put second things first, in violation of the principle Lewis has strongly supported (Ward 134). Puddleglum continues to incite Jill to remember Aslan’s signs, but Jill grumbles, “Bother the signs!” and tells Puddleglum to “Shut up” when she sees the gates of Harfang and thinks of “hot soup or juicy sirloins” (*SC* 104).

⁸⁵ Their instructions echo God’s instruction to the Israelites concerning His commandments, “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut. 6:7).

Their entrance into the castle of Harfang marks the second culinary stage of sin as they begin to eat in excess and luxuriate in other sensual ways (Hardy 66). Even Puddleglum displays a weakness in this area when he overindulges in the giant's liquor and becomes drunk, disgracing himself with ridiculously humorous behavior (110). The giant Queen, who is enormously fat, makes every effort to pamper the children with lollipops and caraways and comfits (115). Jill takes a pleasurable hot bath and sinks her feet into the soft giant's carpet (Hardy 65). The reader's own senses are enticed by Lewis's sensual descriptions, so that we share vicariously in Jill and Eustace's excesses.

But as the reader soon discovers, Puddleglum's intuition was correct. The giants do not want the children as guests for the Autumn Feast; they are to *be* the feast. This is the anti-relationship stage. For all its appearances of good, the children cannot enter into good fellowship with the giants because the giants are antagonists, and the children have strayed from the path. Their greedy choices have caused them to blunder into the villain's lair. Lewis's many culinary double-entendres subtly hint at this grisly fact (Reed 64-5). As the big door of the castle shuts behind them, effectively making them prisoners, the giant porter calls them "shrimps," a word referring to both their size and their function as cuisine (SC 108). The giant King astonishes Jill with his "very large and red" tongue as he licks his lips at his guests (114). When Jill begins to cry with exhaustion, the Queen frets that she "won't be good for anything when the feast comes" (115). The first meal they eat with the giants may be the most subtle warning. Its menu of cock-a-leekie soup, roast turkey, steamed pudding, roasted chestnuts, and fruit all indicate either dishes that can be stuffed or are used for stuffing (SC 118; Beeton 70, 189, 244). The text also indicates that they receive "as much . . . as [they] could eat" (SC 118). In other words,

they are stuffed. The giants are fattening the children up, a cultivation that Jacqueline Labbe says is expected in fairy tales about bad little children (Labbe 96).⁸⁶

The most horrific sign of spiritual and physical danger comes with the second full meal the little party eats with the giants. As the three sit at their own table eating cold venison for lunch, Puddleglum overhears the giants boasting that they have been “eating a *Talking* stag” (SC 132; emphasis original). Each of the three respond differently to this news. Jill merely feels sorry for the stag; Eustace reacts as if having just heard of a murder; but Puddleglum, a native Narnian who does not see human beings as the only creatures possessing souls, feels as if he has “eaten a baby” (SC 132; Myers 151) It is, perhaps, the most macabre image in the entire Lewis canon. What makes the scene particularly appalling is that the giants are not the only devourers. Instead Lewis arranges the meal so that Puddleglum and the children have also broken the taboo against cannibalism. This infernal coercion palpably emphasizes the mortifying guilt that now alienates them from their fellow Narnians and from Aslan himself. Puddleglum acknowledges his fault by bemoaning that they have “brought the anger of Aslan on us” (132; Ford 358). He expects the severest of punishments for this crime because they have partnered with enemies to perform an abominable act. They become aware that their errors have landed them in a Hellish environment.

The event marks the lowest point the travelers reach. While they have not discovered the truth about the Autumn Feast, they now know that the giants are wicked and that to get back in Aslan’s good graces, they must renew their commitment to following the signs. Escape must be their first objective. The final revelation of the

⁸⁶ One might go so far as to argue that the scene constitutes an allusion to “Hansel and Gretel.”

Giant's true intent comes as they prepare to sneak out of the castle by an open scullery door. Jill absently peruses the giant's cook book while they wait for the kitchen maid to fall asleep. There she read recipes for "Marsh-wiggle" and "Man," discovering at last that they are to be the Autumn Feast (SC 135).⁸⁷ Here Lewis returns to the familiar fairy tale topos of the man-eating giants (Tatar 196). After Puddleglum's lament, we might expect them all to be eaten as retribution for sin. For, as Labbe explains, bad children in fairy tales often get eaten as a way to "consolidate [their] badness. When their eaters are giants, the enormity of the badness of the sinful child takes on a physical shape" (Labbe 96-7). Instead, we find the more Anglican redemption through penance. Although no priest decrees it, they experience a kind of self-imposed excommunication. They do not speak to or eat with a friendly Narnian until they make the proper penance of finding the lost Prince (BCP 609; Gibson 188). Elizabeth Baird Hardy stresses that Lewis's extended plunge of the children into depravation ultimately emphasizes that those who stray from the path do find mortal peril, but that they also can still achieve salvation (Hardy 73).

Hell and Sinful Fasting

However, Lewis does not shy away from affirming that one can reach such a distance from God that the possibility of return becomes forever closed. The sinful mind will eventually succumb to a state of hellish separation. Biblically speaking Paul calls this state the "destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9). The phrase refers to an eternal divorce as much as it does eternal punishment (Thayer G575; Erickson 1242).

⁸⁷ Lewis appears to have been rereading Beeton's *Book of Household Management* while writing *The Silver Chair*. No other Chronicle includes so many dishes that can be found in Beeton, especially apparent in the novel's emphasis on poultry. We see dishes of peacocks, chicken, moor [Guinea] fowl, wild geese, mallards, turkey, and pigeon, all of which can be found in Mrs. Beeton's chapter on poultry (409ff.). Additionally, the giants' cookbook is almost certainly a pastiche of Beeton. Its recipes are even arranged alphabetically just as Beeton arranges hers.

In *The Great Divorce*, Lewis underscores that Hell is the culmination of the anti-God, anti-relationship attitude and is a function of free will (Markos 151). Those in Hell are not having something done to them but are fulfilling a conscious desire (*Divorce* 75). For these utterly miserable wretches, the right to crave becomes more desirable than the satisfaction of the craving (*Divorce* 72-4). From Lewis's understanding of Hell we begin to see how the rejection of pleasure leads swiftly to the rejection of relationship, and for those who have sunken to the final degradation, Lewis symbolizes this finality by having them refuse food altogether.

Not surprisingly, Lewis only portrays antagonists as having reached this state for the simple reason that all of his protagonists are True Believers and eventually experience redemption. But many of Lewis's antagonists are so fixed in their refusal of goodness that they stand out not for what they eat, but for what they do not eat. The difference between the devouring antagonist and the anti-relationship antagonist is symbolic. The devouring antagonist symbolizes what Satan wishes to do to human souls. The anti-relationship antagonist symbolizes what it can do to itself. Their villainy has pushed them into an immoral fast because their rejection of good is so complete that it includes everything and everybody that might ever do them good. Ravenous villains eat what should not be eaten, while anti-relationship villains refuse to eat what *should* be eaten. Lewis puts this quite plainly in *The Great Divorce* when he describes the residents of Hell as those who "cannot open . . . their mouth for food" (139). In *The Problem of Pain*, he explains the same condition with a different metaphor; the damned have closed the doors themselves and locked them "from the inside" (*Pain* 130; qtd. in Markos 151). This is the precise logic behind the White Witch.

The corruption of Jadis, Empress of Charn, can be tracked across two novels by examining her interactions with food, of which there are a surprisingly large number. Despite this frequency, Lewis only depicts her as eating once.⁸⁸ I have already examined the character of the White Witch as a satanic tempter to both Edmund and to Digory, but she has her own moment of temptation and fails the test utterly. When Digory enters the walled garden to fetch the Apple of Life for Aslan, he sees Jadis “throwing away the core of an apple she had eaten” (*MN* 190). She has disobeyed the law of the garden on both of its points: she has climbed the wall to enter and has stolen the fruit for herself (191). Digory immediately sees the effects of the fruit: its dark juice leaves a “horrid stain” on her mouth, she looks “stronger and prouder than ever,” and her skin has turned a “deadly white, white as salt” (191). Lynn Vallone asserts that these outward signs signify Jadis’s dire spiritual state (Vallone 52). The “horrid stain” suggests the invisible stain of sin on her soul, her proud, triumphant look demonstrates unrepentant hard-heartedness, and her white skin echoes the biblical story of Lot’s wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt for her disobedience (Gen. 19:26). Lewis notes in a letter that this apple eating is analogous to Adam’s sin in Eden, but is different because the act is not Jadis’s first sin (*CL* 2.1158). Instead, the act deepens her depravity.

The fruit works its magic, and Jadis receives eternal life from it (*MN* 192). But as Aslan tells Digory later, what Jadis has really done is to condemn herself to a hellish existence of constant culinary horror. The tree Digory plants for Aslan protects Narnia

⁸⁸ Lynne Vallone notes a slight ambiguity to this claim. Early in *The Magician’s Nephew* Uncle Andrew complains of an “exceedingly expensive, not to say ostentatious, lunch” he endures with Jadis (*MN* 125). Lewis does not describe the meal nor does he explicitly state that Jadis eats, but she probably does (Vallone 52). This does not much alter my assertion since the lunch takes place *before* she eats the apple in the garden.

from Jadis with its smell which “is death and horror and despair to her” (*MN* 207). Aslan describes how the Witch’s hell-state functions:

That is what happens to those who pluck and eat fruits at the wrong time and in the wrong way. The fruit is good, but they loathe it ever after. . . . She has won her heart’s desire; she has unwearying strength and endless days like a goddess. But length of days with an evil heart is only length of misery and already she begins to know it. All get what they want; they do not always like it. (207-8)

Aslan’s words resonate in Lewis’s other depictions of Hell and judgment. Eating “at the wrong time and in the wrong way” once more recalls St. Paul’s warning concerning those who eat unworthily, eating and drinking damnation to themselves (1 Cor. 11:29). Lewis’s descriptions of the damned in *The Great Divorce* echoes Jadis’s loathing of good fruit. And her heart’s desire to get exactly what she wants resonates with the closing words from *The Problem of Pain* on the topic of the damned, who “enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved . . . “ (*Pain* 130).

Since Jadis has exercised her horrible freedom through a culinary source, all delight in food has now been taken from her. The hell she has manufactured is both joyless and abstemious. All of her remaining interactions with food show this to be true. When she meets Edmund in the Western Wilds of Narnia, not only does she serve him food that functions as a travesty of good health and healthy relationships, she inhospitably fails to eat with him (*LWW* 38). Once she has him in her power back at her castle, she forces him to fast alongside her, offering him only stale bread and water, only

so “the brat” will not faint (*LWW* 122). However, Lewis reveals the full depth of her wicked fast when she and her dwarf come upon a party of animals feasting in the woods after having been visited by Father Christmas. The Witch demands, “What is the mean of all this gluttony, this waste, this self-indulgence?” before turning them all to stone (*LWW* 126). Vallone points out that the good food and fellowship represented by a Christmas feast are at this point completely antithetical to the witch (Vallone 53). She simply can no longer tolerate either of these things. Therefore she hatefully labels them in sinful terms, ironic since she is the chief sinner present (Brown, *Narnia* 161).

Aside from the ostentatious White Witch, Lewis’s abstemious villains develop more subtly than his eating characters, since the drama involved in eating and the descriptions of meals are both absent (*MN* 125). Take, for example, Rabadash, the militant prince of Tashbaan from *The Horse and His Boy*. At no point in the entire novel does Lewis ever depict him eating, which, on its own, makes no argument for culinary theology. However, in the novel’s final chapter, Rabadash is captured after his invasion of Narnia and is brought before King Lune of Archenland for judgment. As Rabadash is brought in, the narrator very specifically describes the prince in terms of what he has *not* done:

To look at him anyone would have supposed that he had passed the night in a noisome dungeon without food or water; but in reality he had been shut up in a quite comfortable room and provided with an excellent supper. But as he was sulking far too furiously to touch the supper and had spent the whole night stamping and roaring and cursing, he naturally did not now look his best. (230-1)

Rabadash has *not* eaten, he has *not* slept, and now he does *not* look good (Ford 362). By obsessively focusing on the pride he would have enjoyed for conquering Narnia and his anger at being captured, he has condemned himself to reject merciful hospitality, comforting sleep, and sustaining food. He has rejected first things for second things; the fruit he receives for the fruit he expected. His rejection of all goodness has left him in a permanent state of moral and physical fasting, and it alienate him from humanity and moral kindness. Rabadash remains “sulky,” a word which Lewis uses to describe the mindset of the citizens of Hell (*Divorce* 71).⁸⁹ Rabadash already lives in a Hell of his own making that no amount of comfort or charity can assail.

In short, his case is nearly hopeless. Emergency measures are called for, so Aslan appears—as he does with Eustace in *Dawn Treader* and with the Dwarves in *The Last Battle*—and warns Rabadash, “Forget your pride (what have you got to be proud of?) and your anger (who has done you wrong?) and accept the mercy of these good kings” (233). We should remember at this point that pride was also the chief transgression of the White Witch and also what Lewis labels as “The Great Sin” in *Mere Christianity* (*MC* 109). Pride is the ultimate satanic vice, for “it was through Pride that the devil became the devil” (*MC* 110). Like Satan whom he now imitates, Rabadash refuses to abandon his “horrible freedom,” and his doom comes swiftly (*Hardy* 57). As Satan alienates himself from the angels and was turned into a serpent, Rabadash alienates himself from humanity, so Aslan transforms him into a donkey in order that he might learn humility and restraint (*HHB* 236; *Hardy* 58). The cure only partially works. After his transformation, Rabadash continues to refuse food, aiming a kick at a palace guard after

⁸⁹ Edmund and Eustace also get described as “sulky” on numerous occasions (*LWW* 122; *VDT* 65).

hearing the suggestion that he be given the “freshest carrots and thistles” (237). He returns home to Calormen and becomes a human again and is even credited with being a peaceful ruler, not because he has reformed but because his punishment stipulates that if he departs more than ten miles from the city of Tashbaan, his transformation will return permanently (*HHB* 237; Ford 363). For Rabadash, Tashbaan itself embodies one of the principles of Hell: sometimes the only remedy for evil that will not change is a cage.

Conclusion – Character Study: Mark Studdock at the N.I.C.E.

I close out this study of culinary sin and transgressive eating with an analysis of the character of Mark Studdock from *That Hideous Strength*. The purpose of this approach is two-fold. First, the novel’s many scenes of culinary sin run the entire spectrum of the stages discussed above and will serve as a synopsis of their spiritual functions in Lewis’s fiction. Secondly, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, these culinary stages of degradation reveal a new way by which Lewis’s characters may be analyzed. We may assess the spiritual condition of any given character in any of Lewis’s novels by examining what the character is eating and with whom.⁹⁰ Analyzing a character’s meals will produce an arc that parallels the character’s moral and narrative arc, as we shall see (fig 4.1). Mark participates in thirty-two distinct eating events during the course of the novel, by far the most of any Lewis character. So governed is the pace of the plot with meals that we find out very little about what Mark does in between meal times. By organizing his meals according to their categories of sin, we may examine Mark’s descent by slow degrees into the hellish state of anti-relationship and his emergence from it when he receives redemption at the end of the story (Patterson 32).

⁹⁰ Many of Lewis’s other characters descend in similar manner, as this chapter has demonstrated, but Mark’s descent occupies the whole of the novel and is therefore a most complex and rewarding study.

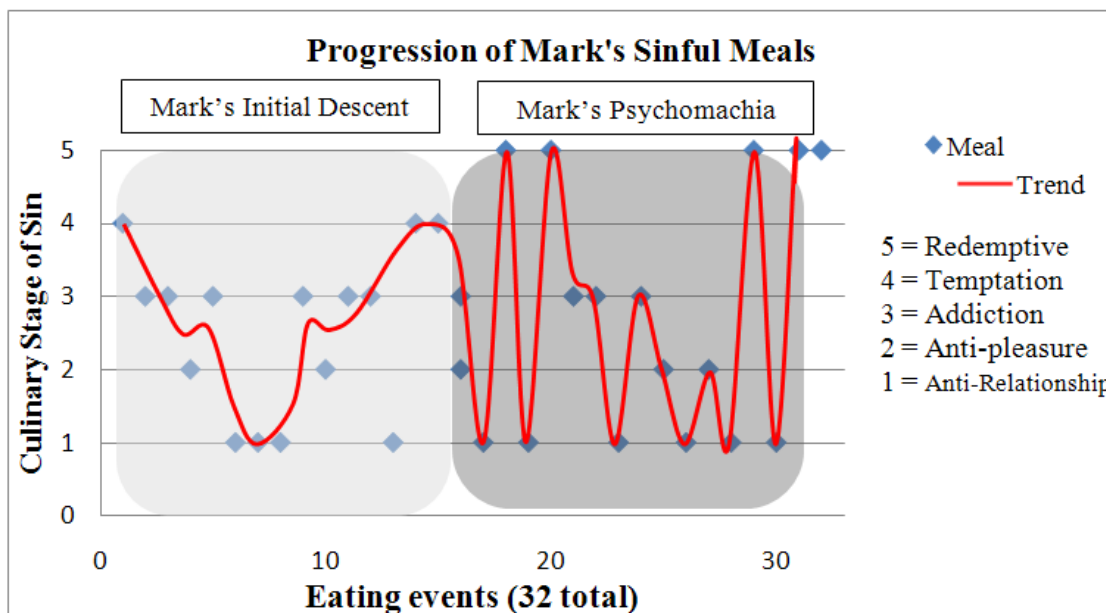


Fig. 4.1: Progression of Mark's sinful meals. Meals 1-15 show Mark's initial descent into sinful eating. Meals 16-32 show Mark's psychomachia between the "crooked" and the "straight" as Mark vacillates between sinful meals and redemptive meals (*THS* 336).

Mark's Temptation: The Inner Ring

When Lewis first introduces his readers to Mark Studdock, he is a fellow of Bracton College and a newly minted member of the college's "Progressive Element," and he is about to treat his associates to drinks at the Bristol Pub. Mark is aglow from his recent ascent, even though it must be maintained with "a good many of these courtesies" (*THS* 19). In fact, Mark has always pursued such ascents, ever struggling to worm his way deeper into whatever society has provoked his fancy (Myers 85). Through Mark, Lewis shows that all humans desire to belong to an "Inner Ring," as he claims specifically in his essay of the same title ("Inner" 144). This desire leads many good people to constantly strive to pierce continuing levels of initiation and intrigue (Gibson 82). However, those who specifically seek the secret confidences of "People in the Know" ultimately remain disappointed:

As long as you are governed by that desire you will never get what you want. You are trying to peel an onion; if you succeed there will be nothing left. Until you conquer the fear of being an outsider, an outsider you will remain. (“Inner” 154)

Reading Lewis’s essay on the idea of the Inner Ring is like reading a character portrait of Mark Studdock (Gibson 70). But Mark’s story reveals information that Lewis’s essay does not: that the process of penetrating Inner Rings often works through a meal-based courtship. We see Mark constantly working his way into successive Inner Rings by attending numerous meals populated with colleagues who turn out to be antagonists seeking to lead him further and further away from truth and friendship (Meilaender 96). Through Mark’s lust for Inner Rings and for the meals which correspond with his efforts, we can understand the Inner Ring to be an ideological sort of Forbidden Fruit, representing a power which Mark tries to appropriate for himself.

Mark’s *entrée* into the “Progressive Element” signifies only the beginning of his journey. Working like Edmund’s Turkish Delight, the temptations of the Inner Ring draw him to Belbury, headquarters of the evil National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.). Visits to pubs with “The Progressive Element” are soon replaced with drinks in the library with “the Circle.” At Belbury, Mark fears above all else to remain an “outsider,” which Lewis dramatizes by Mark’s awkward navigation of mealtime morés (Myers 96). At one meal Mark is baffled as to where he should sit, not knowing his place in the hierarchy (*THS* 55). On another occasion, he speaks to Stone, a fellow outsider, which he knows could damage his reputation, but his “craving for companionship” compels the risk (*THS* 109). While being kept in perpetual confusion about his position,

Mark continually tries to gain the confidences of the odious antagonists who function as an entire team of satanic tempters—Lewis later reveals that they are literally in partnership with demons. Occasionally, events will alert Mark’s conscience to the fact that his controllers are completely evil, but initially, every time Mark receives a warning of trouble, the administrators of the Institute grant him some new confidence and a corresponding meal, and his love of Inner Rings obliterates his objections (127). He quarrels with Lord Feverstone at breakfast one morning and vows to take revenge or at least leave the Institute, but a few pages later, Feverstone invites Mark to “a drink in the library,” and all is forgiven (127). He is asked to write a seditious newspaper article by “Fairy” Hardcastle, chief of the secret police. It is the first clearly illegal act which Mark is asked to perform, but the request comes with a chance to stay up working all night with important people, having “coffee and deviled bones” brought to them at two a.m., and he finds himself ignoring his conscience and “trotting upstairs” (130).⁹¹ The recurring pattern forms the Satan-Apple-Eve component of the plot.

Mark’s Addiction: Alcohol and Devouring Desire

The reader’s first introduction to Mark shows him to be a drinker. He enjoys pubs as Lewis and his fellow Oxonians did, but as Mark pursues the Inner Rings of first the Progressive Element and then Belbury, his drinking picks up rapidly, and he switches from drinking beer with companions to drinking whiskey alone, a sign that his drinking is becoming a problem.⁹² David Downing notes that of the many meals which include Mark, nearly all of them feature some kind of alcohol, several of which indicate excess

⁹¹ Perhaps the pointing of the phrase “devilled bones” is unintentional, but it does help emphasize the fact that Mark has turned a corner by committing a deliberately sinful act (Patterson 33).

⁹² The fact that Lewis personally favored beer over whiskey increases the strength of this moral alignment (“Membership” 161).

(Downing 96). One meal includes “sherry, really good wine, and then brandy” all taken in quick succession (*THS* 35). Mark begins drinking earlier and earlier in the day, until, by the middle of the novel, he keeps a bottle of whiskey in his room and begins the morning with “a stiff one” just to help him shave (*THS* 185). The narrator tracks Mark’s inner guilt regarding his troublesome insobriety. On one of the few occasions Mark sees his wife Jane, she immediately recognizes that “he had been drinking much more than he usually did” (*THS* 89). As his situation at the N.I.C.E. begins to get more dangerous, he excuses his dependence on whiskey by telling himself that there is “no point in catching a cold on top of his other troubles” (*THS* 107). Even when he finally attempts to escape from Belbury, his habit trips him up. While on the run he indulges in two large whiskeys at his favorite pub, the influence of which muddles his thinking when Dr. Dimble, a colleague aligned with Elwin Ransom, offers him his sole chance to escape his tortured bondage (*THS* 217). During the failed interview with Dimble, Mark inwardly and irrationally bemoans the fact that he cannot “have two more large whiskeys and also think everything out very clearly and collectedly” (224).

As Mark sinks deeper into his sins of excess, the antagonists who oppose him begin to reveal their devouring nature with increased clarity and horror. Twice Lewis alludes to this fact by comparing Mark’s situation to the fairy-tale image of Jack “playing in a giant’s kitchen,” implying that Mark may be “gobbled up” by the N.I.C.E. at any moment (*THS* 268, 313). The narrator describes Lord Feverstone, the official who draws Mark into Belbury, as having a “mouth like a shark” (*THS* 245). During a breakfast-time quarrel Mark has with Feverstone, Feverstone toys with a muffin throughout the argument, then, at the end, opens his mouth wide and pops “the muffin into it entire,”

quoting from Hobbes' *Leviathan* by threatening that Mark's career at the N.I.C.E. will be "nasty, poor, brutish, and short" (*THS* 112). The muffin seems to symbolize Mark himself. John Wither, the Deputy Director of the N.I.C.E., speaks of Mark in terms of "unity," but his language reveals that what he has in mind is the kind of devouring Screwtape pursues: "I desire the closest possible bond. I would welcome an interpenetration of personalities so close, so irrevocable, that it almost transcends individuality" (*THS* 243; Meilaender 90).

Mark's own evil desires threaten to join with his antagonists and hurl him to the hell-hounds with which he has become entangled. In the second half of the book, while Mark's moral self is conjuring up the strength to break free, his ravenous self frequently assumes dominance and plunges Mark back into cowering obedience (Schwartz 114). Lewis describes this state in culinary terms. The most memorable of these scenes of psychomachia occurs while Mark sits alone in a holding cell after being framed for murder. He has come to realize that his "colleagues" are really "unalterable enemies," but all at once desire seizes him, "salt, black, ravenous, unanswerable desire" (*THS* 255, 268).⁹³ In its face "everything else that Mark had ever felt—love, ambition, hunger, lust itself—appeared to have been mere milk and water, toys for children, not worth one throb of the nerves. The infinite passion of this dark thing sucked all other passions into itself" (*THS* 268). Later Mark realizes that this sensation actually indicates a literal attack from the demons who control the N.I.C.E. (*THS* 269; Gibson 83). The ravenous state also explains just how Mark has come to reject pleasure in the face of his desires.

⁹³ Lewis uses the word "ravenous" to describe Mark on numerous occasions (*THS* 26, 256, 268). He also uses the word to describe his own lust for the occult that he experienced as a young man (*SBJ* 207).

Anti-pleasure: Mark Chooses Misery

That Mark remains almost constantly miserable throughout the novel takes very little perception to discern. During the first half of the novel, Lewis subtly indicates Mark's anti-pleasure state by simply neglecting to describe the meals Mark eats (*THS* 56, 169-72). Describing a meal would allow the reader to experience pleasure even though the character does not, which would spoil the tone Lewis creates with Mark's singularly unpleasant existence. Aside from the infrequent thrills of penetrating the next Inner Ring, and "The pleasures of conversation" which "have less and less connection with his spontaneous liking or disliking of the people he talked to," Mark moves from one scene of awkward anxiety to the next (*THS* 170). His lust for the shallow confidences of secret societies drives him to socialize with villains of unimaginable evil, trying to convince himself all the while that he does not find their company utterly odious and actively repressing his natural passions for good food and genuine friendship (Downing 56). Belbury has rejected all goodness while Mark acquiesces (Howard, "Triumphant" 140).

Mark's anti-pleasure meals work especially well as a moral barometer for his spiritual condition. Once Mark realizes the seriousness of his plight, and the threat of death takes away his need to ingratiate, he begins to rebel, mentally at first, but eventually quite physically. Lewis specifically indicates this change of moral climate by suddenly beginning to describe Mark's meals. When Mark makes his first real break with the Institute and literally runs away from Belbury, he daydreams on the road of "bacon and eggs, and fried fish, and dark, fragrant streams of coffee" (*THS* 214). His first action is to stop into a pub and order "a pint and some bread and cheese" (*THS* 214). Lewis's sudden descriptions of simple, homely food occur infrequently and only when Mark's

positive moral mood is on him (Myers 103). As long as Mark fights against evil, he can enjoy good food.

Shortly afterward, the Institute incarcerates Mark and imprisons him in a cell deep inside Belbury. There, on the brink of destruction, he has an epiphany of his anti-pleasure existence (Schwartz 119). In a self-pitying mood he asks himself why he had always chosen dreary intrigues over genuine pleasures, “reading rubbishy grown-up novels and drinking beer when he really enjoyed John Buchan and drinking stone ginger. . . . When has he ever done what he wanted? Mixed with the people whom he liked? Or even eaten and drunk what took his fancy?” (*THS* 246-7). Mark’s habitual “concentrated insipidity” of choosing second things over first things has left him utterly miserable and in mortal peril (Myers 105). There in prison, he realizes that he is living in a kind of Hell.

Anti-relationship: Mark’s Hell State

By the time Mark has sunk to his lowest point, the reader discovers that the N.I.C.E.’s real goal for him is to separate him utterly from the human race, to teach him to hate it, to “objectify” deplorable evil in order to prosecute the agenda of the demons—called “Macrobes” in the novel—who really control the Institute’s officials. Their goal is the anti-relationship state, which Doris Myers calls “a commune which is not a community” (96). Their desire is to bring Hell to Earth (Downing 94). Lewis’s uses culinary imagery to describe the N.I.C.E.’s concept of “objectivity,” but it sounds a lot like Satan worship (Downing 53):

. . . objectivity—the process whereby all specifically human reactions were killed in a man so that he might become fit for the fastidious society of the Macrobes. Higher degrees in the asceticism of anti-Nature would

doubtless follow: the eating of abominable food, the dabbling in dirt and blood, the ritual performances of calculated obscenities. They were, in a sense, playing quite fair with him—offering him the very same initiation through which they themselves had passed and which had divided them from humanity. . . . (*THS* 299)

Lewis resolutely demonstrates, however, that the spark of morality remains in Mark, dormant though it may be. This is partly why Mark can never be comfortable eating with members of the N.I.C.E. The moral incompatibility between the two prevents it. One extended example has Mark in the village of Cure Hardy to create a field study with fellow sociologist Cosser. The two enter a pub for lunch. Mark’s thoughts are made plain to the reader and we witness his internal struggle between wanting to fit in with the life-hating N.I.C.E. and his latent desire for the homely beauty of this village he has been sent to help destroy. In the dark pub, surrounded by farmers drinking out of earthenware crocks and “munching very thick sandwiches,” Lewis immerses Mark in the simple pleasures that Lewis himself enjoyed so much (88). The scene is comically awkward because, in spite of the perfection of the setting, fellowship fails to happen. Thomas Howard labels the scene as a competition between Gnosticism and Spiritual Realism (Howard 132). Cosser refuses to drink beer or eat with Mark and shows himself to be a “terrible bore,” unable to sustain an amicable conversation (*THS* 88).⁹⁴ Suddenly, Mark longs for “drinks and talks long ago—of laughter and arguments in the undergraduate days. Somehow one had made friends more easily then” (88). Lewis makes his point by

⁹⁴ The scene is highly reminiscent of Aravis’s meal with Lasaraleen in *The Horse and His Boy*.

comparing his Christian ideal of fellowship to Mark's failed attempt at it. The two men share neither food, nor joy, nor love and can agree upon nothing.

Because of his spark of morality, Mark, like Edmund, remains salvageable. While in captivity, both characters observe a demonstration of extreme cruelty from their antagonists that breaks the spell of addiction and anti-pleasure. Mark's antagonists, on the other hand, are abstemious villains like the White Witch. Wither and Frost, the two highest officials of the N.I.C.E., are never shown to eat, having distanced themselves from humanity so thoroughly that they cannot enjoy any of its pleasures or relationships. The Institute's deepest and most horrible secret, the demon-controlled disembodied Head of Alcasan, cannot eat at all because it has no stomach (Howard, "Triumphant" 140). Once imprisoned by these men, Mark once more resembles Edmund by being forced to fast alongside his captors, but its effect is the opposite of what his captors anticipate (Myers 104). The narrator states that Mark's treatment at the hands of his enemies effects a "complete conversion" of his worldview away from the materialistic and towards the supernatural. The cure is so successful that "all the philosophers and evangelists in the world might not have done the job so neatly" (*THS* 296).

In fact, none of the N.I.C.E.'s plans lead to where its officials expect them to. The novel's closing scenes simultaneously demonstrate the final judgment of those who have chosen Hell and the redemption of those who fervently desire to escape from it. Lewis develops both processes in culinary terms. As Mark gains redemption through a series of homely meals that literally draw him closer to St. Anne's where his wife and Christianity await, the Institute comes to a violent end during an apocalyptic formal banquet in which the powers of Heaven utterly destroy the powers of Hell working at Belbury (Howard,

“Triumphant” 145; Schwartz 134). Just as Mark’s entire character arc demonstrates the culinary stages of degradation as a means of developing Lewis’s plots, the meals at the center of the story’s twin resolutions show how Lewis uses eating as a culmination of doom for his protagonists and an expression of redemption for his protagonists. This redemption in its ultimate expression will be the topic of the concluding chapter. In it we will see how Lewis’s stories, and, by extension, his meals—always turn towards Paradise despite the sinful depths into which his characters plunge.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLEASURES FOR EVERMORE: ESCHATOLOGICAL MEALS AS A CAPSTONE
TO LEWIS'S THEOLOGICAL EATING⁹⁵

Looking back at the previous chapters of this study, we can now see that all of Lewis's theological meals function together as an elaborate theological metaphor for the cycle of desire and pleasure in human souls. Desire serves as a forward-moving pressure, originally intended by God to draw His creatures to Him but, because of the Fall, these easily shift to objects of a lowly or unworthy nature (Kreeft 250). Pleasure, as the fulfillment of desire, offers a joy that was designed to culminate in the person of Christ. Fellowship with Him was meant to be the supreme pleasure—symbolically on earth through the sacraments, but face-to-face in heaven. Lewis insisted that the pleasures of Heaven would be the natural consummation of the holy desire humans experience on earth (*Pain* 158; Payne 163-4). As I have argued throughout this study, Lewis habitually uses food to show how desire and pleasure mingle in theological ways. Fellowship meals highlight the drive humans have and the benefits they gain from being with other spiritual creatures, while Sacramental meals show the joy of fellowshiping with Christ the creator. Transgressive meals, of course, reveal how both desire and pleasure can become sidetracked in a variety of ways. The final type of meals covered in this study are the Eschatological meals, and they demonstrate Lewis's vision of how pleasure becomes perfected in Paradise.

⁹⁵ Ps. 16:11 also *Screwtape* 118.

Eschatology, the theological study of “the last things,” includes the end of days and the afterlife, especially the heavenly afterlife (Erickson 1156; Ford 196).⁹⁶

Eschatology can be studied in two ways: personal eschatology, which focuses on the fate of the individual, and universal eschatology, which focuses on the end of Creation itself and the final state of all humans (Bruce 362). We find Lewis absorbed with both approaches throughout his canon. Lewis often structured his books to conclude logically with a discussion of eschatology, matching the structure of the Bible, which culminates in the apocalyptic Book of Revelation. Both of his most famous works of apologetics, *The Problem of Pain* and *Miracles*, close with chapters on Heaven. The final chapter of *The Four Loves* examines charity, or Godly love, and concludes with a discussion of God’s love perfected in Heaven. Screwtape’s final letter tells how Wormwood’s human subject has died and gone to heaven. *The Great Divorce* constantly hints at an apocalypse that begins just as the character Lewis awakes from his dream vision. *The Pilgrim’s Regress* ends with John passing through the river of death and entering Glory. *The Last Battle* functions as a Narnian apocalypse and finishes with the ecstasies of Narnia reborn in the heavenly Aslan’s Country. From such a weight of evidence, we may confidently conclude that eschatology, and specifically heaven, was never far from Lewis’s mind when he wrote.

It still remains for me to demonstrate how eating and pleasure figure into Lewis’s zeal for Glory. Lewis certainly asserted that heaven would be pleasurable, as have numerous other Christian writers before him. But on several occasions, Lewis also makes claims about the details of heavenly life using a broad variety of illustrative imagery that

⁹⁶ Strictly speaking, the doctrine of Hell should be included in a discussion of eschatology, but since the last chapter covered that topic we will pass over it here.

ranges from dancing to sex, but especially focuses on the gastronomical (Lindvall 102; Guroian 57). During a letter to Canon Quick, he describes pleasures as precursory “tastes” of glory: “I wd. say that every pleasure (even the lowest) is a likeness to, even, in its restricted mode, a foretaste of, the end for wh. we exist, the fruition of God. . . . [Moral value] is never presented in Scripture in terms of service is it? – always in terms suggesting fruition – a supper, a marriage, a drink” (CL 2.461). In *Miracles*, Lewis reminds his readers that Christ’s resurrection body ate and drank, so that it stands to reason that humans will eat and drink in their resurrection bodies as well (*Miracles* 157). In his famous sermon “The Weight of Glory,” he assures his readers that in heaven “we shall, in some sense, be fed, or feasted, or entertained,” a notion that follows the biblical image of the marriage Supper of the Lamb (“Weight” 34; Rev. 22:10). Elsewhere in the same sermon, he uses gastronomic imagery to explain how earthly pleasure relates to heavenly glory:

And in there, in beyond Nature, we shall eat of the tree of life. At present, if we are reborn in Christ, the spirit in us lives directly on God; but the mind and, still more, the body receives life from Him at a thousand removes—through our ancestors, *through our food*, through the elements. The faint, far-off results of those energies which God’s creative rapture implanted in matter when He made the worlds are what we now call physical pleasures. . . . (“Weight” 44; Clark 153, emphasis mine)

So there can be no real doubt that Lewis understood the pleasures of Heaven and the pleasures of the palate to be intertwined to some degree, but the real mother lode of

Lewis's imagery which provides insights on just how they are intertwined comes from his novels.

For Lewis, pleasure is eschatological at its core, a precursor to heaven itself, and the pleasure of eating seems to have particularly captured his imagination for the heavenly. Thus Lewis's meals that portray pleasure at its highest degree are the most eschatological. This concluding chapter will reveal where all Lewis's other culinary theologies lead. Meals in which an individual character experiences superlative pleasure in eating or drinking indicate that the character is already in or near heaven itself and are an expression of individual eschatology. Lewis presents universal eschatology in his concluding celebration feasts, which occur during a novel's denouement, or "end times," echoing the Marriage Supper of the Lamb promised in Revelation. This chapter also concludes the entire study by demonstrating how eschatology meals provide the culmination of all of Lewis's other meals, both in their location within the plot and also within the total theological framework they represent. All of Lewis's other scenes of eating, I argue, ultimately point to these.

Culinary Language of Eschatology

Because we find eschatology expressed in two different types of meals, we must start with two different sets of criteria for Lewis's culinary language. Meals of personal eschatology can be found by analyzing the Language, Diner, Location, Provider, and Menu elements of Lewis's culinary language. For meals of Universal eschatology, we look at the Menu, the Diners, the Language, and the Afterward.

The primary culinary grammar for Lewis's meals of personal eschatology is a rhetorical marker unique to just these meals (see Table 5.1). Several times we find either

character or narrator commenting that a certain meal or drink is the “best” that character has ever had. We might naturally expect a meal hinting at the pleasures of heaven to indicate superlative delight since any measure below perfection would fail to express the paradisiacal, but surprisingly both Lewis’s consistent use of the phrase and its significance remain almost completely undocumented among Lewis critics. By examining Lewis’s culinary idiom we find that this rhetoric only occurs under a rather specific set of circumstances. First of all, only protagonists—Lewis’s True Believers—ever experience a superlative meal. Furthermore, they only experience such meals when they are either near death or already in a literal or metaphorical Paradise. Lastly, the Menus of these meals are always linked to fruit or water, tying the Superlative experience with either the Edenic Paradise or Christ as the Living Water, representative of Heaven’s actual ultimate pleasure (“Weight” 44).

Lewis’s meals that invoke Universal Eschatology utilize a very different culinary language but express nearly identical theological message (see Table 5.1). Lewis frequently closes his stories with some sort of celebratory feast. What follows the feast naturally points to eschatology since it occupies the resolution, or “end times,” of the plot and invokes the rhetorical figure of “happily ever after” common to fairy tales, itself an eschatological expression. The Diners category of Lewis’s culinary language further connects the meals to Universal eschatology, since the meals are always a gathering of the True Believing protagonists of the story celebrating their victory over evil. The Christ figure himself is always present for these feasts as well and is usually their provider, further heightening the heavenly imagery and hinting at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb foretold in Scripture (Rev. 22:19). Finally, as hinted by the word “feast,” the menus for

these meals are typically Lewis's richest, filled with an abundance of many types of delicious food.

Table 5.1: Criteria for Lewis's Personal and Universal eschatology meals.

Culinary Language	Meals of Personal Eschatology
Diners	1. Individual True Believers experience the . . .
Language	2. superlative taste of . . .
Menu	3. fruit or water, indicating they are . . .
Location	4. near Paradise if alive, in Paradise if dead.
Meals of Universal Eschatology	
Menu	1. A Feast. . .
Provider	2. provided by the Novel's Christ figure who . . .
Diners	3. gathers the True Believers together at the novel's . . .
Afterward	4. plot resolution, forming an expression of the...
Language	5. "happily ever after" of the novel.

Superlative Meals

Occurrences of Lewis's superlative meals and drinks are relatively rare, among the least common of all the varieties of theological meals. However, their astonishing consistency in form and function makes them easy to categorize, but, more importantly, each of the most obvious examples provides specific insights which further strengthen my claim that these occasions should be interpreted eschatologically.

The first superlative drink occurs in *Out of the Silent Planet* and communicates what, to readers, may seem to be Lewis's dissonant pairing of pleasure with death. Elwin Ransom has been living with the furry Martian *hrossa* for some months when his friend Hyoi tells of the fierce aquatic beast called *hnakra* which is the only predator that naturally threatens a premature death to individual *hrossa* (*OOSP* 75). Lewis uses the beast as a symbol for death. But the *hrossa* do not fear death, so they do not fear the *hnakra* (Schwartz 38). Hyoi tells Ransom a story of climbing high into the mountains to

drink from a pool where he knows a *hnakra* lurks. He relates the intense ecstasy of that moment in superlative terms:

“There I drank life because death was in the pool. That was the best of drinks save one.”

“What one?” asked Ransom.

“Death itself in the day I drink it and go to Maleldil.” (*OOSP* 75)

The last line resolves what otherwise may be an inexplicably macabre association. The world of the *hrossa* remains unfallen, untainted by sin, so a death means unity with Maleldil—God—and entrance into bliss (Kilby 23; Lindskoog 70). Lewis’s language in the passage further associates a peaceful, sinless death with delight and Heaven. Hyoui says to Ransom that he does “not think the forest would be so bright, nor the water so warm, nor love so sweet, if there were no danger in the lakes” (*OOSP* 75). The sensory adjectives “bright,” “warm,” and “sweet” prepare the reader for Lewis’s unearthly idea of positively associating death with pleasure. As Hyoui describes the journey to the pool, it becomes apparent from Hyoui’s elevated language and the literal elevation of the pool itself that Hyoui stands on the brink of the eternal. The cliff walls “go up forever” and “holy images are cut into them” (75).⁹⁷ Hyoui stands and worships with Maleldil alone, a precursor to heavenly fellowship. Most significantly, the very next day after telling this story, Hyoui meets his actual death, dies peacefully as promised, and meets Maleldil, so the story of the superlative drink from the pool becomes a foreshadowing of Hyoui’s personal eschatology. The scene establishes the drinking of life in the face of death as an

⁹⁷ Lewis uses impossibly high mountains again in *The Chronicles of Narnia* to describe Aslan’s Country, the Narnian analogue to Heaven (*SC* 14-5).

important indicator in Lewis's fiction that he has placed his Protagonist on the threshold of Glory.

An extended version of this device unfolds across the entire plot of *Perelandra*, Ransom's next interplanetary adventure. Ransom has been sent by Maleldil to Venus to thwart a satanic Unman from tempting that world's first woman into sin. Ransom's success avoids a second Fall of Man and ensures that Perelandra remains an untainted Paradise. While the temptation itself does not focus on fruit, superlative Edenic fruits richly populate the landscape, and it is through Ransom's perspective that they are enjoyed.

The scenes of Ransom's enjoyment of the fruit are a prose-poem on pleasure (Downing 111). Repeatedly over the novel's first hundred pages, Ransom experiences a cycle of fruit eating and nectar drinking the delights of which Lewis describes as "orgiastic," "like meeting Pleasure itself," and "memorable among a thousand tastes" (*Per.* 35, 49, 50). He drinks delightedly from Perelandra's ocean of fresh water, munches berries with near sacramental reverence, and consumes clusters of grape-like fruits that "bow themselves unasked into his upstretched hands" (*Per.* 185). Particularly telling is Lewis's description of a bunch of yellow gourds from which Ransom drinks: "It was like the discovery of a totally new *genus* of pleasures, something unheard of among men, out of all reckoning, beyond all covenant. . . . It could not be classified" (*Per.* 42).⁹⁸ These images portray Lewis's doctrine of the transcendence of appetite which Lewis predicted would be a key feature of Heaven (*Malcolm* 122; Clark 153). He asks in his sermon, "The Weight of Glory," "What would it be to taste at the fountainhead that stream of which

⁹⁸ See chapter four for a discussion of how the same scene demonstrates Lewis's morality of temperance.

even these lower reaches [of pleasure] prove so intoxicating?” (44). According to Lewis, the “fullness” of heavenly splendor will “leave no room” for humanity’s limited grasp of the subject, of which earthly pleasures only provide “glimpses” (*Miracles* 164).

This doctrine leads directly to the paradisiacal nature of Perelandra (Downing 112). The connection between the fruit of Venus and of Eden has less to do with the novel’s central temptation scene and more to do with the fact that Ransom has discovered a Paradise which typologically presages Heaven the way Eden was originally intended (Gibson 50). Ransom’s experiences heighten his awareness and intelligence, showing him pleasures beyond pleasure and awakening him beyond mere wakefulness. It seems Ransom’s earthly body has taken on aspects of the resurrection body Lewis speaks of in his apologetic books, and of which St. Paul speaks (*Malcolm* 121; Phil. 3:21; Clark 152). Lewis argues in *Miracles* that the resurrection body given to the Redeemed will transcend all known features of nature so as to make a new sort of creature altogether, “when Nature and Spirit are fully harmonized . . . the two together [will] make rather a *Centaur* than a mounted knight” (*Miracles* 164). This is just what Ransom experiences (Riga 28). He does not feel guilt or anxiety, his vision improves, and “colours about him seemed richer” (*Per.* 37, 47). We discover later that his life has become extended. He is told by Tor, the king of Perelandra, that anyone of the human race who has “breathed the air that he has breathed and drunk the waters he has drunk . . . will not find it easy to die” (*Per* 221). In *That Hideous Strength*, Ransom admits that he is, indeed, immortal, and that to achieve rest he will have to be translated back to Perelandra (*THS* 367; Gibson 89). His story ends just like the biblical Enoch’s: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his

translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Heb. 11:5).⁹⁹ Ultimately for Ransom, the typological paradise he momentarily experiences becomes a literal Heaven.

At this point it becomes apparent that Lewis has built a version of heaven in which to set his story and that Ransom’s eating plays a central role in establishing the transcendent pleasures available in that paradise. The narrator is quite explicit regarding this fact, at one point suggesting that Ransom’s sensual experiences “created a new kind of hunger and thirst, a longing that seemed to flow over from the body into the soul and which was *heaven* to feel” (*Per.* 41, emphasis mine). Just before his final battle with Unman, Ransom admits to himself, “I have lived in Paradise” (151). Certainly much critical attention has been paid to these features of the novel, particularly since they are so dominant. But many critics fail to assemble the eschatological portrait Lewis paints. Most Christian critics frequently note Ransom’s pleasurable eating, but only in the context of Lewis’s doctrine of temperance (Downing 89; Kilby 31; Meilaender 16-17; Schwartz 68-9). Nancy Lou Patterson identifies the paradisiacal motifs of Ransom’s fruit eating but does not connect them with Lewis’s own eschatological teaching about pleasure, attaching them to the Eucharist instead, whereas Susan Navarette mistakenly interprets the many scenes of culinary pleasure as erotic desire (Patterson 32; Navarette 108). But this fails to correspond with the strictly nonsexual relationship Ransom has with the Green Lady—both characters are completely nude throughout the book—and Lewis’s own understanding of how sexual and culinary pleasures are to be superseded in heaven by pleasures much greater than either (*Miracles* 164). Mervyn Nicholson sees Ransom’s eating as liberation from compulsion, the force that drives Edmund’s eating disorder (58-

⁹⁹ According to the lore of the novel, King Arthur was similarly translated (*THS* 368).

9). While this observation is insightful in that it highlights the antithetical relationship between Ransom's eating and Edmund's, Nicholson's narrow focus on the characters in a naturalistic struggle for life ignores Lewis's pervasive statement of Divine providence and Divine fellowship as culminations of both life and eating.

One final point regarding Ransom's time on Perelandra is worth noting. Near the end of the novel, once almost all the ecstatic fruit eating has concluded, Ransom rides a fish through the ocean mid-way through his physical battle with the satanic Unman. Ransom bleeds from many wounds, particularly from his shredded back, and becomes stiff, sore, and terribly thirsty. Lewis has begun gradually to establish a Christological mimesis in which Ransom's suffering parallels Christ's time on the cross, with his thirst paralleling Christ's own thirst (Downing 52). From the fish, Ransom scoops the drinkable ocean water and, over the course of half an hour, gives himself a drink mingled with "sharp pains and insane pleasures," after which he thinks to himself that "Nothing had ever tasted so good" (*Per.* 159).¹⁰⁰ Here, as with Hyoui's drink from the *hnakra*-haunted pool, Lewis returns to the blending of pleasure and pain. Ransom drinks life in the face of death, just as Christ's tragically joyful sacrifice on the cross brought life to a death-ridden world. With the Christological parallels, we may begin to see that Lewis is creating an association with superlative drinking and the Water of Life, to which we now turn.

The remainder of Lewis's significant superlative meals are all found in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and once in that realm we discover water imagery frequently paired with superlative pleasure. This pairing probably occurs because the rich imagery

¹⁰⁰ The mingled drink may arguably parallel the "wine mingled with myrrh" Jesus is offered on the cross (Mark 15:23). But Ransom's story is not an allegory of Christ's, so while Christ refuses the drink, Ransom accepts.

of Narnia's Christ-figure, Aslan, inspired Lewis to explore personal eschatology through Aslan as the Water of Life, a quality St. John attributes to Jesus (John 4:14; Rev. 21:6; 22:17). Lewis most closely aligns this metaphor with Aslan during the scene of Jill Pole's conversion at the beginning of *The Silver Chair* (Patterson 39; Schakel 66). Jill has just left her own world and come, not into Narnia, but to Aslan's Country, which we know because she finds herself perched at the precarious top of an impossibly high mountain. There she meets Aslan face to face but is terrified by his presence. Immediately she is struck with a supernaturally severe thirst and wants desperately to drink from a stream, but Aslan's body blocks the way. The lion gives her permission to drink, but does not move. Jill does not move for fear the lion will kill her, but feels as well that she will die of thirst. Resolved, she risks all and drinks, another example of a character drinking life in the face of death. The superlative water is "the coldest, most refreshing water she had ever tasted" (*SC* 21). It quenches her thirst immediately, and Jill at once places herself under the obedience of Aslan.

Lewis's scenes of conversion follow a similar pattern throughout the Chronicles: a sinful child from earth must surrender self-control and submit to Aslan for some life-saving service, be it un-dragoning, rescuing from a deadly witch, or quenching a supernatural thirst (Kilby 57). Most critics agree that Lewis's use of water as the medium for salvation undeniably connects Jill to the woman at the Samaritan well in John 4, to whom Jesus says, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14; Ford 76; Martindale, and Welch 109). The water shows how much Jill will need to trust in Aslan during her adventures, and implies her first

Communion, since Aslan is physically present. According to my argument the superlative nature of the drink also suggests personal eschatologically for Jill.

My claim may not seem to fit this scene since it is clearly Jill's conversion experience and not her death. But in addition to the superlative water, a number of factors here make an eschatological point (Patterson 39). There is no doubt as to the eschatological setting of the scene: Jill is in Aslan's Country, the Narnian analogue for Heaven. But that her conversion experience should occur here, of all places, may be equally puzzling. It is important to remember, however, that Lewis has already written a novel in which non-converts, who are mere ghosts compared to their surroundings, visit a mountainous Heaven, and in that novel he asserts precisely that one's conversion experience is actually God's introduction of the soul to Heaven. In *The Great Divorce*, George MacDonald explains that those who submit to God's authority in life will retrospectively come to realize that "all their earthly past will have been Heaven to those who are saved," but their submission means the death of their selfish self (*Divorce* 69; Clark 142-3). Herein lies the meaning of Lewis's metaphor of drinking life in the face of death. MacDonald states, "Nothing, not even what is lowest and most bestial, will not be raised again if it submits to death. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. Flesh and blood cannot come to the Mountains. Not because they are too rank, but because they are too weak" (*Great Divorce* 114). Jill is in Aslan's Country at her conversion because spiritually she has come to stay, even though her story soon takes her physical body elsewhere (Ward 134). As further evidence of this, Lewis concludes *The Silver Chair* with one more brief episode in Aslan's Country. This time, King Caspian joins Jill and Eustace, but Caspian, we already know, has really just died back in Narnia.

Eustace fears Caspian may be a ghost, but Caspian answers, “. . . one can’t be a ghost in one’s own country” (*PC* 254; *Riga* 28). If we consider Lewis’s use of “ghost” in *The Great Divorce*, we understand that it is Jill—and Eustace—who are the ghosts here, not fully come into full possession of Heaven, but left with the promise of it nevertheless.

Lewis also shows how Living Water imagery functions in both salvific and eschatological senses in the closing chapters of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, which depicts two separate superlative meals, both linked closely to the idea of Aslan as Christ (*Gibson* 181). *The Dawn Treader* has been taken into an eastward current, heading swiftly towards the edge of the Narnian world, moving closer and closer to Aslan’s Country. Lucy has been gazing with rapture into the water, watching the fierce race of mer-people cavort beneath the water’s surface when suddenly Reepicheep, the talking mouse, plunges into the water after perceiving a threat from one of the mer-people. Upon his rescue, the Sea People vanish from thought as Reepicheep squeaks out that the water is “Sweet! Sweet!” instead of salty (*VDT* 247). The crew passes around the water; Lucy’s drink causes her to gasp, and she delivers the superlative formula: “It’s the loveliest thing I’ve ever tasted” (249).

Two important parallels between this scene and the glorified pleasures of Perelandra connect both novels to biblical eschatology: both oceans have fresh, astonishingly pleasurable water, and as the crew continues to drink, their bodies change as Ransom’s does (*Brown, Voyage* 215). The figure of fresh water where salty water is expected derives from the prophet Ezekiel, who portrays the New Temple surrounded on its east side with a broad river that flows from the Temple to the Dead Sea, transforming its potently salty waters into fresh water, creating an Edenic oasis filled with fish and

miraculous fruit trees (Eze. 47:8-9; Ryken, and Kaufmann 338). Lewis has, of course, already paired fruit trees with the transformative Water of Life in *Perelandra*, and we will see him do so again in *The Last Battle*, but here the sweet water alone relates the scene to biblical prophecies of Heaven. As for the sailor's changing bodies, their eyes begin to easily bear the brilliant nearness of the eastern sun, details and colors become enriched, and their own bodies emit light (249; Myers 147). Eventually, the water causes age reversal and the older sailors begin to look "younger every day" (255). Just as Ransom experienced on *Perelandra*, the crew of *The Dawn Treader* gain something akin to resurrection bodies as they near Aslan's Country. Both have begun to be "raised incorruptible" as St. Paul promises (1 Cor. 15:42-54). This is most significant for Reepicheep, for very soon after this moment, he departs from the story completely by crossing over by boat into Aslan's country, never to be seen in Narnia again (*VDT* 266; Gibson 181). He too shares a similarity with Ransom, who also is translated from life without directly experiencing death (Heb. 11:5).

Yet the children are not yet in Paradise itself, only sailing through the waters infused with the sun, a sun which Michael Ward asserts symbolizes Aslan himself (119-20). The combination of water and light imagery allude to Johannine metaphors for Christ as eternal king, since St. John uses both metaphors in the book of Revelation (Ward 120). We first see Christ Himself declaring, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely"; next John states that the city of New Jerusalem has "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21: 6, 23). Lewis continues to use Johannine eschatological imagery

in the novel's final scene when he shows Lucy, Edmund, and Eustace sitting down for a breakfast of roasted fish on the shores of the Last Sea with Aslan, who at first assumes the shape of a Lamb. This meal is superlative as well; the narrator comments that the meal, the first they have eaten in some time because of the sweet water, "was the most delicious food they had ever tasted" (*VDT* 268).¹⁰¹

Lewis's superlative eating and drinking combined with these biblical metaphors signal a rush of Christological imagery upon which Lewis builds the novel's conclusion. Devin Brown suggests that Lewis uses explicit allusions here because the novel was meant to be the final Narnian story, which further explains the strong presence of regenerative Christology (Brown, *Voyage* 236).¹⁰² Lewis himself acknowledged this fact in a letter to a young reader: "At the *v. edge* of the Narnian world Aslan begins to appear more like Christ as He is known in *this* world. Hence, the Lamb. Hence, the breakfast—like at the end of St. John's Gospel" (*CL* 3.1158, emphasis original; John 21:12). The general mysteries of the Last Sea and the indirect Johannine metaphors of water and light condense during the breakfast with Aslan to form a much more direct expression of personal eschatology for Edmund and Lucy (Ford 70-1). Aslan tells them that they must get to know him as Jesus Christ in their world and announces that they will never return to Narnia (*VDT* 270). For them the scene is one of mourning since this permanent departure from Narnia represents a kind of death.

¹⁰¹ Chapter three discusses the nature of this scene as a Sacramental meal eaten in the Real Presence of the Christ figure. Later in this chapter, we will examine how Eschatological meals are the perfection of Fellowship and Sacramental meals.

¹⁰² The last three chapter titles themselves clearly proclaim the eschatological theme: "The Beginning of the End of the World," "The Wonders of the Last Sea," and "The Very End of the World."

But what of Eustace? As I suggested in the introduction, the final superlative meals serve as a capstone to all other eating in the novel. All of Eustace's other meals have been building to this point. His culinary arc is significantly theological. He begins the novel eating transgressive meals during his "sulky" phase, then rediscovers holy pleasure by eating raw, messy food as a dragon, which enables him to enjoy fellowship meals with the crew once the spell is broken. Next he enjoys a liturgical, Eucharistic meal at Ramandu's table, and ends with Edmund and Lucy, having been transformed by the drinkable light, now able to commune directly with Aslan in a final superlative meal that is both Corporal and eschatological. As this progression shows, Lewis has been leading Eustace to the transcendent pleasures of Paradise all along.

Eustace plays a role in the last two superlative meals of the Narnian Chronicles, because he does return to Narnia one last time and, in fact, dies there, providing perhaps the strongest evidence of all that meals of superlative pleasure point to Lewis's doctrine of personal eschatology. The second half of *The Last Battle* represents a proper Narnian eschatological study. It deals with all the requisite subtopics: the end of the world, judgment, and the final state of the damned and of the redeemed (Bruce 362; Ford 196, 198). In its pages we see the apocalypse of Narnia, its enemies sifted and consigned to their appropriate punishments, and its friends rewarded with a Platonic "Narnia within Narnia" that gets richer and better the more deeply one penetrates it (Johnson and Houtman 85). In this narrative environment, no real argument need be made about eschatology in general, but two significant superlative meals remain to be examined.

Understanding the imagery of the first of these is now a simple matter in light of our previous discussions concerning superlative water. Tirian, the last king of Narnia, is

fighting his final battle in front of the “accursed” stable whose door serves as the novel’s central image of death. Eustace has already been thrown into the stable by a Calormen soldier, an event which the characters understand to mean that he has died. The rest of the King’s little army, consisting of Jill, the dwarf Poggin, the unicorn Jewel, and a few other talking animals, pause to rally beside a white rock. As they prepare a final fight for their lives, they discover a trickle of water running from the rock, and all enjoy a drink. Very purposefully, the narrator halts the action to deliver the superlative formula: “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 and could not think of anything else” (*TLB* 160).

Immediately after drinking, several of the characters make observations concerning the stable door that aptly apply to death. Poggin observes of the stable, “I feel in my bones that we shall all pass through that dark door before morning” (*TLB* 161). Tirian calls the door “grim,” “like a mouth” that seeks to devour them (*TLB* 161).¹⁰³ Just before the battle resumes, Jewel the unicorn offers the most optimistic interpretation of the situation, “It may be for us the door to Aslan’s country and we shall sup at his table tonight” (*TLB* 161). Poggin and Jewel’s words prove true. By the end of the chapter, Jill, Tirian, and all the remaining loyal Narnians have been thrust into the stable, joining Eustace in death. At the moment of their drink, they were on death’s precipice, and as we have now seen on numerous occasions, they drank life in the face of death. The narrator’s pause at the white rock shows how the little army is mercifully granted a brief glimpse of perfect joy, but instead of representing them “focusing on the present moment,” as Doris

¹⁰³ The weightiness of Tirian’s simile is more apparent in light of chapter four’s discussion of devouring evil.

Myers argues, the scene looks forward to eternity (Myers 179). The image's proximity to the actual Narnian Heaven permits a close comparison to the Water of Life which flows from the throne of God (Rev. 22:1; Ryken and Kaufmann 338). Lewis has this same passage in mind while writing "The Weight of Glory" when he promises that in Heaven, "the whole man is to drink from the fountain of joy" ("Weight" 44; Lindvall 106). It is safe to assume that the water from the white rock constitutes an allusion to the same passage in Revelation.

A full study of all the eschatological features and allusions surrounding the conclusion of *The Last Battle* strays outside the boundaries of this discussion, but one final superlative meal occurs before Lewis turns to other sources of imagery to communicate his vision of the Narnian Heaven. As soon as Tirian enters the stable door, he meets the full company of the Friends of Narnia: the seven Earthly men and women who have visited Narnia throughout the seven novels. Once introductions are made, King Peter notes that "Here are lovely fruit trees. Let us taste them" (*TLB* 169). Tirian then notices the garden-like setting of the country that seems to be inside the stable, and we easily recognize Lewis's favored image of Paradise. The fruit trees produce multiple fruits of various colors, and at first the friends feel bashfully unsure as to whether it would be right to pick them (Ford 95). This constitutes yet another biblical allusion to Revelation, this time to the Tree of Life, which originally grew in Eden, but now stands near the throne of God bearing "twelve manner of fruits" (Rev. 22:2). The narrator describes the taste of the fruit as *beyond* superlative: "All I can say is that, compared with those fruits, the freshest grapefruit you've ever eaten was dull, and the juiciest orange was dry, and the most melting pear was hard and woody, and the sweetest wild

strawberry was sour” (*TLB* 172; *Miracles* 164). Hyper-superlative taste would be a nonsensical concept if taken literally because nothing can be better than the best. The language only makes sense if understood through Lewis’s doctrine of transcendent pleasures, which Lewis now reveals to have been partially borrowed from Plato. Earthly fruits are merely shadowy—or “sensible”—imitations of these real fruits—or “forms” (Johnson and Houtman 85; Myers 180). This explains the apparent nonsense, for, obviously, the narrator cannot describe a taste that surpasses the limitations of the physical palate. Lewis puts it plainly elsewhere, “The heavenly fruit is instantly redolent of the orchard where it grew” (*Malcolm* 90; Lindvall 102).

With the biblical allusions and the indication that even superlative earthly pleasures have been surpassed, Lewis offers both characters and readers the first in a long series of clues to what country Tirian and the Friends of Narnia have really gotten into. The clues do not offer a very challenging riddle, perhaps, but Lewis never explicitly says the word “Heaven” and does not reveal that all the characters have actually died until the novel’s final page. In one of these final sentences Lewis closes his lengthy collection of fairy tales by appropriating one of the most commonly quote taglines from the fairy tale genre: “. . . we can most truly say that they all lived *happily ever after*” (*TLB* 228, emphasis mine). The fact that Lewis casts this phrase in its eschatological sense demonstrates a key feature of Lewis’s second type of eschatological meal, the celebration feast.

Celebration Feasts: Lewis’s “Happily Ever After” Meal

The feast of fruit at the end of *The Last Battle* certainly fits the criteria of the superlative meal and therefore conclusively depicts the personal eschatology of Tirian

and the Seven Friends of Narnia. However, we must also admit that it functions within the universal eschatology of that novel as well. While we have come to know each character personally and share the joy of each, the temporal Narnia we love has passed away, so the event also functions as a “gathering together” of all believers foretold by Paul as a function of the returning Christ (1 Thess. 2:1). The position of the meal in the novel’s denouement offers further support (*TLB* 228). This position warrants some examination, for its eschatological role may not be immediately apparent.

For his understanding of fairy tales, Lewis drew much inspiration from J.R.R. Tolkien’s landmark essay, “On Fairy Stories” (Lewis, “Sometimes” 47).¹⁰⁴ Tolkien makes much of the importance of the fairy tale’s ending, using what he calls “the Consolation of the Happy Ending” as the preface for his theory of *eucatastrophe*, or the surprisingly good turn of events that occurs in nearly all fairy tales (Tolkien 68). For Tolkien, this turning has an eschatological overtone. He says that the *eucatastrophe* “denies . . . universal final defeat and in so far is *evangelium*, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief” (68).¹⁰⁵ This notion of Joy is similar to Lewis’s eschatological Joy which looks beyond this life into the eternal. In *The Last Battle*, Lewis chooses the actual death of the characters as the *eucatastrophic* event. It both turns the plot from sadness to joy and emphasizes the afterlife.

However, Tolkien says little about the celebration that so often follows the turning. Usually marked by a wedding, a dance, a feast, or some other merriment, the

¹⁰⁴ Lewis called the essay “indispensable” (*CL* 3. 789).

¹⁰⁵ That “Joy beyond the walls of the world” refers to heaven is plain, but the word “*evangelium*” refers to the quality in fairy stories which echoes the Gospel story and upon which, Tolkien argues, story itself is indebted (Tolkien 71-2). The salvific nature of the *evangelium* further connects *eucatastrophe* to eschatology.

celebration fits between the *eucatastrophe* and the rhetorical declaration of the happy ending. For instance, “Briar Rose” ends: “the wedding of the Prince and Briar Rose was celebrated with splendor, and they lived happily till they died” (Grimm 106). Similarly, “The Elves and the Shoemaker” closes with a dance from the goblins just before the happy-ending phrase: “. . . the cobbler remained well-off, and everything he undertook prospered” (Grimm 180). In “The White Snake,” three ravens bring a youth a golden apple from the tree of life, which the youth eats with his princess, and they live “happily to a great age” (Grimm 85).¹⁰⁶ The celebration, paired with what Tolkien calls “the verbal ending,” indicate to the reader that conflict has passed or evil has been defeated and that the protagonists have entered into blissful—and sometimes permanent—stasis (Tolkien 83). Lewis seems to have noted the value of the celebration as a tool for stressing the perfection and the joy of the afterlife. We can see this easily in *The Last Battle* with the feast of fruit which comes immediately after the eucatastrophic death of the protagonists. Such endings, Tolkien notes, “suit fairy-stories, because [they] have a greater sense and grasp of the endlessness of the World of Story than most modern ‘realistic’ stories . . . “ (Tolkien 83).

Lewis consistently chooses the feast for his mode of celebration because of its resonance with eschatological eating in the Bible. Lewis’s celebration feasts draw upon two key biblical images to imbue his feasts with additional eschatological meaning. The first of these is the Agape—or Love—feast mentioned by St. Peter and St. Jude regarding communal meals shared by the early church surrounding a celebration of the Eucharist

¹⁰⁶ Lewis read *Kinder und Hausmärchen* in its original German—although which edition is uncertain (*CL* 2.595). For this reason, the English edition cited here was chosen for its faithful translation of the original German.

(Joncas 357-8; Jude 1:12; 2 Pet. 2:13). Lewis's celebration meals resonate with the biblical Agape meal by including the presence of the novel's Christ figure and by gathering the protagonists together to share food and expressions of loving affirmation of inter-relationship. It is important to note here the similarities Agape meals share with Fellowship meals and Sacramental Meals, two other theological meal categories I have already explored. The apparent overlap does not constitute a redundancy but a perfection of these two prior forms.

The second biblical image demonstrates this very principle. The book of Revelation inaugurates the heavenly experience via an ultimate Agape meal which St. John calls "the Marriage Supper of the Lamb" (Johnson 140; Rev. 19:9). This meal differs from an earthly agape meal in that Christ Himself has provided the food and no conflict or imperfection mars the feast, as the New Testament writers confirm frequently happened. Not only does the meal prefigure the joys of eternal fellowship with Christ, but it also inaugurates the believers' time in heaven (Cochrane 102). Lewis appropriates the image in identical senses and therefore generates perfected versions of both his Fellowship and Sacramental meals. The food is often magically provided by the Christ-figure, and the protagonists feast only after all plot conflict has passed, so neither negativity nor evil can detract from the joy. In *The Last Battle*, the feast of fruit is one of the first activities enjoyed in the New Narnia, and Aslan appears to guide them "further up and further in" almost immediately afterward (*TLB* 197). Now, with an understanding of the criteria of the celebration feast and the principles behind those criteria, we may examine other similar feasts and their eschatological function.

Lewis's only non-Narnian celebration feast occurs at the close *That Hideous Strength*, and its primary strength is to highlight the meal as an Agape feast. As Lewis's "modern fairy tale for grown-ups" resolves, the company of St. Anne's gathers around the Christ-figure Elwin Ransom for a final meal together before Ransom is bodily translated to the planet Venus.¹⁰⁷ The evils of the N.I.C.E. have been apocalyptically scrubbed from the face of the earth, and the great goddess of Venus herself draws near to serve as Ransom's chariot.¹⁰⁸ In this rarified setting, the company dresses in festive costumes, and from their conversation we learn that they have dined on roasted goose, plum pudding, oysters, ham, and gooseberry jam (*THS* 364). The Dickensian menu and the frosty air outdoors hint that the time of the year is late December, possibly Christmas Eve itself, which adds to the festive atmosphere. As the friends continue to discuss the particulars of the proto-Paradise to which Ransom soon departs, they notice that a variety of animals have begun to appear in pairs. First a bear shows up and pairs off with Ransom's pet bear, Mr. Bultitude. They are followed by jackdaws, bats, hedgehogs, and finally two elephants, all performing mating rituals. Lest prudish readers be offended, Ransom consoles those present that "They will be as private as human lovers" (*THS* 379). "Love" is literally in the air. Venus has arrived. The scene—and the novel—closes with Mark and Jane reunited at last in a small cottage on the St. Anne's estate, and the event plays much like a wedding night: two bashful lovers hesitant and eager at the same time. Jane has fallen in love with Christ through her love for Ransom, which she now gives away to Mark, "descending the ladder of humility" (382). There they have another,

¹⁰⁷ The subtitle for *That Hideous Strength* is "A modern fairy tale for grown-ups."

¹⁰⁸ Lewis frequently invokes pagan gods but always unites them under the one God. In his apology for this habit, he declares, "Only in His name can they with beauty and security 'wield their little tridents'" (*Four Loves* 119).

smaller feast prepared of sacramental “food and wine.” This final meal between Jane and Mark is a full circle . . . the novel begins and ends with the two of them just before or just after a meal.

In a most literal fashion, Lewis presents this final feast of the novel as a “Love” feast. The approach of Venus, the food—especially the aphrodisiacal oysters—the departure of Ransom to “heaven,” the courtship of the beasts, and the reunion of Mark and Jane’s marriage all build to this inescapable conclusion (Schwartz 137). The characters—and the supporting machinery—participate in a celebration of loving that would have to be labeled an orgy were it not so resplendently monogamous. Ransom’s Latin quote, “*Sine Cerere et Baccho,*” indicates this reality in the situation and shows the central role food plays in the scene: “Without Bacchus and Ceres, Venus grows cold” (*THS* 375).¹⁰⁹ In other words, love is more pleasant with food and drink (Ward 295).¹¹⁰ This feast is, in fact, a minor Bacchanal, similar to that seen in *Prince Caspian*, but a grown-up version, Christianized so as not to be transgressive, but with all of its passionate blend of eating, drinking, worshipping, and love-making intact (Ward 174).

Once we establish that the scene functions as a Love feast, the next task is to examine how such a feast can be understood as an expression of Universal eschatology. As Venus nears the earth, Ransom explains that Venus “is all about us and man is no longer isolated. We are now as we ought to be—between the angels who are our elder brothers and the beasts who are our jesters, servants and playfellows” (378). This returning of the human estate to its original condition subtly invokes humanity’s original

¹⁰⁹ Lewis paraphrases a quotation from *Eunuchus* by the Roman playwright Terence. The full quote is “*Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus*” (Ward 295).

¹¹⁰ “Love” = Venus; “food” = Ceres; “drink” = Bacchus.

Edenic station, a station to which Lewis expected the redeemed to return once in heaven. All of the gathered protagonists experience this renaissance, so the eschatological statement is universal rather than personal and represents the perfection of fellowship because all conflict has vanished and the company can enjoy each other perfectly. Lewis further expresses the eternal in both Ransom's translation to "Heaven" and Mark and Jane's tender reunification (Kilby 123).

The dancing, feasting, and love-making are both common to the fairy tale genre and used by Scripture to prefigure the delights of Heaven (*CL* 3.247). But they also fit perfectly with the notion of perfected Sacrament, in this case, both the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of Communion. Sanford Schwartz underscores the fact that two couples—Mark and Jane, and Ivy and Tom—reunite at the end of the book under the authority of Ransom, the novel's Christ figure, creating a sacramental "(re)marriage" theme that echoes both earthly union and the eschatological Marriage Supper of Revelation (Schwartz 136). As the Latin quote regarding Bacchus and Venus mandates, food punctuates both reunions; Ivy and Tom enjoy "cold pie and pickles" while a more sacramental "food and wine" await Mark and Jane (Patterson 35; *THS* 377, 382). This final meal appears literally on the novel's last page, and serves Lewis's iteration of the "verbal ending" to fairy tales Tolkien describes. Jane stands on the doorstep outside the cottage where Mark awaits with her minor feast when the narrator comments "it was high time she went in," and the novel ends (*THS* 382).

The celebration feast at the close of *That Hideous Strength* easily serves as Lewis's first—and most complete—expression of the eschatological celebration feast. But as Doris Myers observes, *The Chronicles of Narnia* express many of Lewis's same

core ideas, only in a more concise mythical language (Myers 111). This is true for the celebration feasts found in the Narnian Chronicles. Six of the seven novels close with shorter, yet similar, versions.¹¹¹ I have already discussed the final meal of *The Last Battle*, but for the remaining books, instead of examining each feast in depth, we will look at specific features of each which demonstrate how the meals collectively embody the core criteria for the celebration feasts and present the perfected versions of prior theological themes.

Menu: Pleasures Perfected

Our first observation is that the Narnian celebration feasts portray a perfected pleasure. Devin Brown criticizes Lewis's final feast for being "neither as memorable nor as moving as his more humble ones" (Brown, *Prince* 233). He contends that their menus are so extravagantly abundant that they simply do not stick in the reader's heads the way Lewis's more private and homely meals do. However, this extravagance serves the eschatological function of highlighting the transcendent reality Lewis claimed Heaven would be (Guroian 57). This abundance forms an analogue with the superlative tastes found in Lewis's meals of personal eschatology. The contrast centers on perfect *amounts* instead of perfect *taste*. *Prince Caspian* closes with an enormous menu of roasted meat, "wheaten cakes and oaten cakes, honey," colored sugars, thick cream, "peaches, nectarines, pomegranates, pears, grapes, strawberries, [and] raspberries" (*PC* 225). Lewis stresses the abundance by describing "pyramids and cataracts" of fruit and unlimited amounts and varieties of wine, all of which Aslan—working through Bacchus—calls into

¹¹¹ Only *The Magician's Nephew* has no celebration feast, arguably because its expression of Paradise is a component of the novel's theme of Creation with which an eschatological conclusion might seem both antithetical and redundant.

existence with a “magic dance of plenty” (225). If viewed from an earthly perspective, we might concede Brown’s criticism, but Nancy Lou Patterson counters that it is just these sorts of dishes, with their elements of comfort and joy, which would have framed “Lewis’s picture of Paradise” (Patterson 40). In its theological context, a victory celebration with ecstatic dancing and culinary abundance in the presence of a Christ-figure who is attended by spiritual servants is precisely what one would expect in a heavenly feast, especially from Lewis (Patterson 37).¹¹²

Diners: Fellowship Perfected

As Terry Lindvall states, any gathering of friends under the pretext of unstained joy naturally echoes Heaven (Lindvall 104). Without exception, every instance of Lewis’s celebration feasts includes a gathering of all protagonists and even all available protagonist sympathizers. This large-scale gathering harmonizes with the concept of the final harvest expressed by Christ in the eschatological parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24-30). The separation of good and evil alluded to in the parable also occurs in Narnia. In order for Fellowship to be perfected, all conflict must first be purged so that Joy can attain its eternal quality. In *The Chronicles*, Aslan supervises this expurgation personally. Aslan helps defeat the White Witch’s army before feasting with his own victorious army; he has the wicked Telmarines incarcerated and fed “beef and beer” before Lucy and the True Narnians can feast in “divine comfort;” he pronounces judgment on Rabadash just before King Lune’s feast for Shasta; and at the stable door, he quite literally separates the good Narnian “sheep” from the bad Narnian “goats” before

¹¹² It is also worth noting that once again Lewis involves Bacchus in a final feast, subtly reinforcing his former claim of “*Sine Cerere et Baccho*” from *That Hideous Strength* and making an even subtler connection with Venus and the Agape feast.

inviting his followers to move “further up and further in” where the garden paradise awaits (*PC* 224; *LWW* 195; *HHB* 224; *TLB* 191; Matt. 25:32-3). By observing the Christ figure’s deliberate exclusion of all antagonists from the feast, we see more vividly the careful gathering of protagonists also taking place. Lewis was conscious that a minor version of this gathering seemed to occur whenever Christian friends assembled:

But, for a Christian, there are, strictly speaking, no chances. A secret Master of Ceremonies has been at work. Christ, who said to the disciples “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” can truly say to every group of Christian friends “You have not chosen one another but I have chosen you for one another.” . . . At this feast it is He who has spread the board and it is He who has chosen the guests. It is He, we may dare to hope, who sometimes does, and always should, preside. Let us not reckon without our Host. (*Four Loves* 89-90)

In his nonfiction study, Lewis overtly states what he only hints at in his novels. The Christ figure actively, but surreptitiously, works to physically gather the novel’s protagonists together by the end of the story. It is because of the Christ figure that they become friends, and it is through him that they defeat the antagonist, so it follows that their final gathering should be his doing and that he should be present for it.

Provider: Sacrament Perfected

We would be remiss to conclude this section without noting how the presence of Aslan demarcates the perfected sacrament through the Real Presence of the Christ figure and the worshipful nature of the celebration feast. As mentioned, biblical Agape feasts were occasions of worship and included the observation of the Eucharist, while the

Marriage Supper of the Lamb represents a perfected Agape offered to the gathered host by Christ Himself. The final Narnian feasts function in much the same way. Aslan produces the food for the feast himself in *The Lion* and in *Prince Caspian* authorizes the feast's creation through Bacchus. On these occasions he is literally the host (*LWW* 198-9; *PC* 227). While he does not offer the food in *The Horse and His Boy* or the *Silver Chair*, his presence either just before or just after the feasts ratifies the festivities under his name.¹¹³ And with *The Last Battle* the fruits from the Tree of Life are understood to have been placed there by Aslan, since the scene is set in Aslan's Country. A second notable aspect of Aslan's presence in these feasts is the intimacy he permits, especially in *The Silver Chair*. Before taking the children back to his country at the story's end, he says warmly to Jill, "You have done the work for which I sent you," echoing Christ's "Well done, good and faithful servant" (*SC* 250; Matt. 25:23). This perfecting of Aslan's Real Presence may best be understood by Paul's statement that in life, "we see through a glass, darkly," but in the heavenly realm, we will see Christ "face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). As each story closes, the obscuring confusions and hard lessons disappear. What remains is Aslan himself and pure Joy.

Conclusion – The Big Picture: Using the Meals as Spiritual Character Analysis

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, a circumspect review of the entire study places the point of all this eating in relief: the relationship between desire and pleasure. Desire creates a drive, pleasure its fulfillment. All humans participate in the system, but left alone, the system corrupts by fixating on pleasures that are too low

¹¹³ Technically, Aslan is never physically present for the feast in *Voyager of the Dawn Treader* at Aslan's Table on Ramandu's island, but this is because he is presiding over the superlative meal with Edmund, Lucy, and Eustace described above. I also argue in chapter three that the Sun serves as Aslan's stand-in.

(“Weight” 26). All of Lewis’s eating demonstrates the function of holy desire leading to superlative pleasure. While both may become corrupted along the way, following the path leads inexorably to paradise.

Lewis’s Platonic understanding of reality required that desire be fulfilled by the highest pleasure imaginable; his Christian theology describes the highest pleasure as the Beatific vision itself. Lewis’s culinary language illustrates this system of desire/pleasure in simple universal human terms. All humans have hunger (desire); all humans must eat (salvation); and nearly all humans enjoy eating (pleasure). Again, examining all of Lewis’s fiction, we see that desire can be arranged Platonically, from lowest to highest, therefore, all of Lewis’s scenes of eating can be arranged on a Platonic scale.

Towards the end of *The Last Battle* the Lord Digory affirms this latent Platonism when he explains that the country they have all gotten into is the Real Narnia, and where they had been “was only a shadow or a copy” (*TLB* 211). He finishes by blustering under his breath, “It’s all in Plato, all in Plato!” (*TLB* 212). As we see Lewis structuring his imaginative worlds in Platonic layers, we may apply the same schema to his characters and to the meals these characters eat. The following chart demonstrates how the meal progressions of this study can be aligned Platonically, from lowest to highest, and serve as a means of analyzing individual characters based on what sort of meal a given character eats.

Table 5.2: Platonic arrangement of meal categories.

The Great Chain of Eating: Lewis's Moral/Platonic Culinary Scale		
Meal	Spiritual Condition	Character Type
Eschatological	Paradise – either personal or universal	Protagonist
Corporal	Real Presence – in the presence of the Divine	Protagonist
Eucharistic	Communicant – in fellowship with the Divine	Protagonist
Fellowship	A “True Believer” – aligned with Christ figure	Protagonist
Hospitality	Initiate – coming to know True Believers	Protagonist
Edenic	Courted by both sides – moment of decision	Protagonist/Antagonist
Gluttonous	Sliding into sin – in opposition to the Divine	Protagonist/Antagonist
Anti-pleasure	Serious sin – Trapped in misery	Protagonist/Antagonist
Anti-relation	In a hellish state	Protagonist/Antagonist

Dynamic characters move along this progression in multiple directions, almost always turning downward before turning up, forming an arc that follows the character's moral development. Edmund starts with the Edenic Turkish Delight and moves down to Anti-relational bread and water before moving all the way up to the Eschatological coronation feast at the book's close. Likewise, Mark Studdock moves downward and then up, as shown by the chart in chapter four (see chart 4.1). When the book ends, he is just about to participate in the Eschatological Love Feast. Eustace does not follow quite the standard arc, starting, as he does, at the bottom of the progression in Anti-Relationship, but then moving steadily up towards his superlative meal with Aslan.

Static characters stay on the same culinary level or only move in one direction, never moving past the boundary between sinful and righteous eating. The White Witch only eats the Edenic/Anti-pleasure apple and then remains in an Anti-Relational fast across two novels. Lucy's first meal is her Hospitality high tea with Tumnus, after which

she eats exclusively Fellowship and Sacramental meals concluding with the Eschatological feast of fruit in Aslan's Country at the end of TLB.

Some novels focus extra attention on certain meals, indicating that the particular moral state represented by the meal is a special theme of the novel. The focus on hospitality found in *Pilgrim's Regress* indicates the courtship of John by a multitude of worldviews that is the central framework of the story. *Perelandra* makes its specialty the transcendence of pleasure through the superlative fruit of Venus' garden paradise. *That Hideous Strength* is a focused study of Mark Studdock's sinful eating and its many consequences. As I have already argued, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* functions as a survey of ecclesiology, and, correspondingly, its meals represent a microcosm of church life. *The Magician's Nephew*, with its scenes of creation and temptation, particularly surrounding Aslan's Garden and the golden apples, constitutes an Edenic theme. *The Last Battle*, with its latent emphasis on the end times, features a large number of eschatological meals as well as meals of final judgment, such as when Tash eats Shift or when the Dwarves eat within their self-imposed Hell. Finally, *Till We Have Faces* offers the complex ambiguity of pagan sacramental meals, blending holiness and sinfulness to demonstrate the imperfections of natural revelation.

We cannot say for certain to what degree Lewis was the master of his culinary language, but its features and criteria are startlingly consistent. Almost never do we find a meal that simply malfunctions in its theological context; that is, it is practically unheard of for one of Lewis's meals to suggest a theme not supported by Lewis's theology or the character's moral journey. Antagonists *always* eat sinful meals; protagonists eat sinful meals only when they are in opposition to the novel's Christ figure and its latent salvific

criteria. Without exception, the eating of each book becomes progressively elevated, always achieving at least the Corporal level and usually the Eschatological level by story's end.

What makes a study of Lewis's meals so useful are the observations they provide in the study of his theology and in his character development. But what makes these observations so remarkable is the deep ideological consistency they demonstrate. One of the most gratifying—and edifying—pleasures of studying Lewis is the continual discovery of the complete interlocking of his ideas: within each other, within each text, and across his other texts. Lewis's meals demonstrate that consistency with shocking frequency. The doctrines of Hell he proposes in books like *Preface to Paradise Lost* and *Screwtape Letters* can be found exemplified completely in meals eaten by his villains and other sinful characters. His doctrine of desire and Joy representing the natural human longing for God forms the basis of meals eaten by characters on the brink of discovering the Divine. When Lewis's protagonists eat together in the unity of shared beliefs, they provide an excellent model of Lewis's understanding of membership and Christian fellowship. Bread and wine are never merely menu items due to Lewis's doctrine of Real Presence and his understanding of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And capping off all of these expressions of theology expressed through food are the peak moments, the truly pleasurable instances of eating which profoundly resonate with Lewis's doctrine of the transcendent pleasures of Heaven. Taken together, Lewis's meals are much more than simply examples of realism or vicarious delight. They intricately uphold values which Lewis worked all of his life to communicate to his readers.

WORKS CITED

- Augustine, Aurelius. *The City of God. Basic Writings of Saint Augustine*, vol. 2. Ed. Whitney J. Oates. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980. Print.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. 1947. *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*. 13 July 2005. Web. 25 July 2012.
- Bacon, Francis. "Of Fortune." *Essayes or Covnsels, Civill and Morall*. Orig. pub. 1625. London: Oxford U P, 1975. 166-168. Print.
- Beeton, Isabella Mary. *The Book of Household Management*. London: S. O. Beeton, 1863. *Google Books*. 2009. Web. 18 May 2009.
- Bolle, K. W. "Priest and Priesthood." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Washington, DC: Catholic U of America, 1981. 766-768. Print.
- The Book of Common Prayer*. New York: The Church Pension Fund, 1945. Print.
- Brown, Devin. *Inside Narnia: A Guide to Exploring The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005. Print
- . *Inside Prince Caspian*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008. Print.
- . *Inside The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010. Print.
- . "Work, Vocation, and the Good Life in Narnia." *The Chronicles of Narnia and Philosophy*. Ed. Gregory Bassahm and Jerry L. Walls. Chicago: Open Court, 2005. 79-93. Print.

- Bruce, F. F. "Eschatology." *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Ed. Walter A. Elwell. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996. 362-365. Print.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. "Fast, Feast, and Flesh." *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. New York: Routledge, 1997, 138-158. Print.
- . *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987. Print.
- Carpenter, Humphrey. *The Inklings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979. Print.
- Cashdan, Sheldon. "Gluttony: Where Bread Crumbs Lead." *The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape Our Lives*. New York, Basic Books, 1999. Print.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales. The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987. Print.
- Chesterton, G. K. *The Ball and the Cross*. London: Joseph Darton, 1909. *Google Books*. Web. 9 April 2012.
- Clark, David. "Food in The Pilgrim's Regress." *Lamp-Post of the Southern California C. S. Lewis Society* 20.1 (1996): 4-11. *MS Word file*.
- . *C. S. Lewis: A Guide to His Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. Print.
- Cochrane, Arthur C. *Eating and Drinking with Jesus: An Ethical and Biblical Inquiry*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974. Print.
- Dalby, Andrew. *Food in the Ancient World From A to Z*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Daniel, Carolyn. *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children's Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

- Davis, Christopher A. *The College Press NIV Commentary: Revelation*. Joplin: College Press, 2000. Print.
- Daniel, Carolyn. *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children's Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Douglas, Mary. "Deciphering a Meal." *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. New York: Routledge, 1997. 36-53. Print.
- Downing, David C. *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C. S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy*. Amherst: U Mass Press, 1992. Print.
- . "Rehabilitating H. G. Wells: C. S. Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet*." *C. S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy*. Ed. Bruce L. Edwards. Westport: Praeger, 2007. 13-34. Print.
- Duriez, Colin. *A Field Guide to Narnia*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004. Print.
- Easton, Burton Scott. "Hospitality." *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Ed. James Orr. Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, 1939. 1432-1433. Print.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. Print.
- Fiero, Gloria. *The Humanistic Tradition, vol I*. Sixth ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2011. Print.
- Fink, Larry Earl. "'By Temperance Taught': Food and Eating Imagery in the Bible and in Milton's *Paradise Lost*." Diss. Texas A and M, 1987. *ProQuest*. Web. 30 May 2008.
- Fisher, M. F. K. *The Gastronomical Me*. New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1943. Print.

- Ford, Paul F. *Companion to Narnia*. 5th ed. San Francisco Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality." *The Freud Reader*. Ed. Peter Gay. New York: Norton and Co., 1989. 239-392. Print.
- Gibson, Evan K. *C. S. Lewis: Spinner of Tales*. Washington DC: Christian U P, 1980. Print.
- Glyer, Diana Pavlac. *The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community*. Kent: Kent State UP, 2007. Print.
- Gregory I. *The Book of Morals*. Ed. John Henry Parker. London: J. G. F. and J. Rivington, 1844. *Lectionary Central*. N.d. Web. 25 July 2012.
- Griffiths, Alan Bede. "The Adventure of Faith." *C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*. Ed. James T. Como. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979. 11-24. Print.
- Grimm, Jakob, and Wilhelm Grimm. *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. Trans. E. V. Lucas, Lucy Crane, and Marian Edwards. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1945. Print.
- Guroian, Vigen. "Faith and the Journey to Aslan's Kingdom." *Modern Age* 37.01 (Fall 1994): 54-62. Print.
- Gresham, Douglas H. *The Narnia Cookbook: Foods From C. S. Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia*. New York: HarperCollins, 1998. Print.
- . Personal interview. 14 Aug. 2009. Spoken word.
- Hardy, Elizabeth Baird. *Milton, Spenser and the Chronicles of Narnia: Literary Sources for the C. S. Lewis Novels*. Jefferson: McFarland and Co., 2007. Print.

- Harmon, Kendall. "Nothingness and Human Destiny: Hell in the Thought of C. S. Lewis." *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*. Ed. David Mills. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 236-254. Print.
- Harmon, William and Hugh Holman. *A Handbook to Literature*. 9th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall: 2003. Print.
- Hein, Rolland. *The Harmony Within: The Spiritual Vision of George MacDonald*. Grand Rapids: Christian U P, 1982. Print.
- Henisch, Bridget Ann. *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society*. London: Pennsylvania State U P, 1976. Print.
- Hinten, Marvin D. *The Keys to the Chronicles: Unlocking the Symbols of C. S. Lewis's Narnia*. Nashville, Broadman & Holman, 2005. Print.
- Hooper, Walter. *C. S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996. Print.
- Howard, Thomas. *The Achievement of C. S. Lewis: A Reading of His Fiction*. Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1980. Print.
- . "The Triumphant Vindication of the Body: The End of Gnosticism in *That Hideous Strength*." *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*. Ed. David Mills. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 133-144. Print.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998. Print.
- Johnson, William G. and Marcia K. Houtman. "Platonic Shadows in C. S. Lewis' Narnia Chronicles." *Modern Fiction Studies* 32.1 (1986): 75-87. Print.

- Joncas, Jan Michael. "Tasting the Kingdom of God: The Meal Ministry of Jesus and Its Implications For Contemporary Worship and Life." *Worship* 74.4 (2000): 329-365. PDF file.
- Jung, L. Shannon *Food for Life: The Spirituality and Ethics of Eating*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004. Print.
- Katz, Wendy R. "Some Uses of Food in Children's Literature." *Children's Literature in Education* (December, 1980): 192-199. Print.
- Kilby, Clyde S. *The Christian World of C. S. Lewis*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1964. Print.
- . *Images of Salvation in the Fiction of C. S. Lewis*. Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1978. Print.
- King, Don. W. "Topical Poems: C. S. Lewis's Postconversion Poetry." *C. S. Lewis Life, Works, and Legacy, Vol. 2*. Ed. Bruce L. Edwards. Westport: Praeger, 2007. Print.
- Kitts, Margo. "Why Homeric Heroes Don't Eat Quiche Or The Perils Of Kukeōn." *Literature and Theology* (2001): 307-325. Print.
- Kreeft, Peter J. "C. S. Lewis's Argument from Desire." *G. K. Chesterton and C. S. Lewis: The Riddle of Joy*. Ed. Michael H. Macdonald and Andrew A. Tadie. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989. 249-272. Print.
- Labbe, Jacqueline M. "To Eat and Be Eaten in Nineteenth-Century Children's Literature." *Food in Children's Literature*. Ed. Kara Keeling and Scott Pollard. New York: Routledge, 2009. 94-103. Print.
- Lamb, Charles. "The Three Friends." *The Complete Works and Letters of Charles Lamb*. New York: The Modern Library, 1935. 513-517. Print.

Landrum, David W. "Three Bridge-Builders: Priest-Craft in *Till We Have Faces*."

Mythlore 22.4 (2002): 59-68. Print.

Langford, Jonathan. "Sitting Down to the Sacramental Feast: Food and Cultural Diversity

in *The Lord of the Rings*." *Food of the Gods: Eating and the Eaten in Fantasy and*

Science Fiction. Ed. G. Westfahl, G. Slusser, and E. S. Rabkin. Athens: U of

Georgia P, 1996. 117-141. Print.

Lawyer, John E. "Three Celtic Voyages: Brendan, Lewis, and Buechner." *Anglican*

Theological Review 84.2 (2002), 319+. *Gale, Cengage Learning*. Web. 8 Aug.

2011.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "The Culinary Triangle." 1966. *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Ed.

Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. New York: Routledge, 1997. 28-35.

Print.

Lewis, C. S. *Boxen: The Imaginary World of the Young C. S. Lewis*. Ed. Walter Hooper.

New York: Harvest/HBJ, 1985. Print.

---. *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, 3 vols. Ed. Walter Hooper. San Francisco:

Harper San Francisco, 2004-7. Print.

---. *The Discarded Image: an Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*.

Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1964. Print.

---. *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt, 1960. Print.

---. *God in the Dock; Essays on Theology and Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.

Print.

---. *The Great Divorce*. Orig. pub. 1946. San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 2001. Print

---. *A Grief Observed*. New York: Bantam Books, 1963. Print.

- . *The Horse and His Boy*. New York: Macmillan, 1954. Print.
- . "The Inner Ring." *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949. 141-157. Print.
- . *The Last Battle*. New York: Macmillan, 1956. Print.
- . *Letters of C. S. Lewis*. Ed. Warren H. Lewis. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966. Print.
- . *Letters to Malcolm*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc. 1964. Print.
- . *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. New York: Macmillan, 1950. Print.
- . *The Magician's Nephew*. New York: Macmillan, 1955. Print.
- . "Membership." *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. Orig. pub. 1949. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001. 158-176. Print.
- . *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillan, 1952. Print.
- . *Miracles*. New York: Macmillan, 1947. Print.
- . "On Three Ways of Writing for Children." *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature*. Ed. Walter Hooper. San Diego: Harvest, 1982. 31-43. Print.
- . *Out of the Silent Planet*. New York: Macmillan, 1938. Print.
- . *Perelandra: A Novel*. New York: Macmillan, 1968. Print.
- . *The Pilgrim's Regress*. New York: Macmillan, 1933. Print.
- . *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford U P, 1961. Print.
- . *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Macmillan, 1947. Print.
- . *Prince Caspian, the Return to Narnia*. New York: Macmillan, 1951. Print.
- . *The Screwtape Letters [and] Screwtape Proposes a Toast*. New York: Macmillan, 1961. Print.

- . *The Silver Chair*. New York: Macmillan, 1953. Print.
- . "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to Be Said." *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature*. San Diego: Harvest, 1982. 45-48. Print.
- . *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*. New York: Harvest, 1955.
- . *That Hideous Strength*. New York: Macmillan, 1946. Print.
- . "Psycho-analysis and Literary Criticism." *They Asked for a Paper*. London: Geoffrey Bless, 1962. 120-138. Print.
- . *Till We Have Faces*. London: Geoffrey Bless, 1956. Print.
- . "Transposition." *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949. 91-115. Print.
- . *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. New York: Macmillan, 1952. Print.
- . "The Weight of Glory." *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949. 25-46. Print.
- Lindskoog, Kathryn. *C. S. Lewis: Mere Christian*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981. Print.
- . *Finding the Landlord: A Guide to C. S. Lewis' Pilgrim's Regress*. Chicago: Cornerstone, 1997. Print.
- Lindvall, Terry. *Surprised by Laughter: the Comic World of C. S. Lewis*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996. Print.
- McCray, J. R. "Fellowship." *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Ed. Walter A. Elwell. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996. 414. Print.
- MacDonald, George. *The Princess and Curdie*. 1883. West Valley City: The Editorium, 2006. Print.

- McGowan, Andrew. *Ascetic Eucharists*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. Print.
- McKinlay, Judith E. "To Eat or Not to Eat: Where is Wisdom in This Choice?" *Semeia* (1999): 75-86. Print.
- Manlove, Colin. *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Patterning of a Fantastic World*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993. Print.
- Markos, Louis. *Lewis Agonistes*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003. Print.
- Martindale, Wayne. "Romantics." *Reading the Classics with C. S. Lewis*. Ed. Thomas L. Martin. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000. 203-226. Print.
- Martindale, Wayne and Kathryn Welch. "Food for the Soul: Eating in Narnia." *Narnia Beckons: C. S. Lewis's The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe and Beyond*. Ed. Ted Baehr and James Baehr. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005. 103-111. Print.
- Matthews, Gareth. "Plato in Narnia." *The Chronicles of Narnia and Philosophy*. Ed. Gregory Bassham and Jerry L. Walls. Chicago: La Salle, 2005. 169-179. Print.
- Meilaender, Gilbert. "The Everyday C. S. Lewis." *First Things* 85 (1998): 27-33. *Microsoft Word file*.
- . *The Taste for the Other: The Social and Ethical Thought of C. S. Lewis*, 1978. Print.
- Mennell, Stephen. *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985. Print.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. New York: Signet Classic, 1968. Print.

- Mitchell, Christopher W. "The Weight of Glory: The Cost of C. S. Lewis's Witness." *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*. Ed. David Mills. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 3-14. Print.
- Montanari, Massimo. *Food is Culture*. Trans. Albert Sonnenfeld. New York: Columbia UP, 2006. Print.
- Montgomery, P. Andrew. "Classical Literature." *Reading the Classics with C. S. Lewis*. Ed. Thomas L. Martin. Grand Rapids; Baker, 2000. 52-71. Print.
- Myers, Doris. *C. S. Lewis in Context*. Kent: Kent State UP, 1994. Print.
- . "The Compleat Anglican" *Companion to Narnia*. 5th ed. By Paul F. Ford. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005. 473-488. Print.
- Navarette, Susan J. "The Fine Reality of Hunger Satisfied: Food and Desire in C. S. Lewis's *Perelandra*." *Food of the Gods: Eating and the Eaten in Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Ed. G. Westfahl, G. Slusser, and E. S. Rabkin. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. 97-114. Print.
- Nichols, Robert E., Jr. "The Pardoner's Ale and Cake." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (Dec. 1967): 498-504. Print.
- Nicholson, Mervyn. "Magic Food, Compulsive Eating, and Power Poetics." *Disorderly Eaters: Texts in Self-Empowerment*. Ed. Lilian R. Furst and Peter Graham Furst. University Park: Pennsylvania S U Press, 1992. 43-60. Print.
- Nightingale, Florence. *Notes on Nursing*. New York: D. Appleton, 1902. *Google Books*. Web. 11 July 2012.
- Nikolajeva, Maria. *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2000. Print.

OED: The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, 2011. Web. 25 June 2012.

Patterson, Nancy-Lou. "‘Miraculous Bread . . . Miraculous Wine:’ Eucharistic Motifs in the Fantasies of C. S. Lewis." *Mythlore* 84 (Summer 1998): 28-46. Print.

Payne, Leanne. *Real Presence: The Christian Worldview of C. S. Lewis as Incarnational Reality*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988. Print.

Peters, Thomas C. "The War of the Worldviews: H. G. Wells and Scientism Versus C. S. Lewis and Christianity." *The Pilgrim's Guide: C. S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*. Ed. David Mills. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 203-220. Print.

Phillips, Justin. *C. S. Lewis in a Time of War*. San Francisco: Harper, 2002. Print.

Plato. *The Republic. Classical Literary Criticism*. Trans. Penelope Murray and T. S. Dorsch. New York: Penguin, 2000. Print.

Poe, Harry Lee. *The Inklings of Oxford*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. Print.

Propp, William Henry. "Milk and Honey: Biblical Comfort Food." *Bible Review* 15.3 (1999): 16, 54. Print.

Reece, Steve. *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993. Print.

Reed, Gerard. "Gluttony." *C.S. Lewis Explores Vice and Virtue*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2001. 62-71. Print.

Riga, Frank P. "Mortals Call Their History Fable: Narnia and the Use of Fairy Tale." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 14.1 (Spring 1989): 26-30. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 21 Mar. 2006.

- Ryken, Leland, and U. Milo Kaufmann. "Heaven." *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Ed. David Lyle Jeffrey. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992. 337-339. Print.
- Sammons, Martha C. *A Guide Through Narnia*. Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1979. Print.
- Sayer, George S. *Jack: A Life of C. S. Lewis*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1988. Print.
- Schakel, Peter J. *Reading With the Heart: The Way Into Narnia*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980. Print.
- Schell, Richard. "Lilith." *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Ed. David Lyle Jeffrey. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992. 454-455. Print.
- Schwartz, Sanford. *C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 2009. Print.
- Sennett, James F. "Worthy of a Better God: Religious Diversity and Salvation in *The Chronicles of Narnia*." *The Chronicles of Narnia and Philosophy*. Ed. Gregory Bassham and Jerry L. Walls. Chicago: La Salle, 2005. 231-244. Print.
- Sill, Gertrude Grace. *A Handbook of Symbols in Christian Art*. New York: Touchstone, 1973. *Google Books*. Web. 6 Jan. 2012.
- Stabb, Sally. "Most Right and Proper, I'm Sure." *Revisiting Narnia: Fantasy, Myth and Religion in C. S. Lewis' Chronicles*. Ed. by Shanna Caughey. Dallas: Benbella, 2005. 281-296. Print.
- Strong, Roy. *Feast: A History of Grand Eating*. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2002. Print.
- Tatar, Maria. "Table Matters: Cannibalism and Oral Greed." *Off With Their Heads! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1992. 190-211. Print.

- Thayer, Joseph Henry. *Thayer's and Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Orig. pub. 1889. *E-Sword*.
Vers. 9.9.3. 2011. Software.
- The Thompson Chain Reference Bible: New International Version*. 2nd ed. Indianapolis:
B. B. Kirkbride, 1990. Print.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. "On Fairy Stories." *The Tolkien Reader*. New York: Ballantine, 1966. 3-
84. Print.
- . *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Orig. pub. 1955. New York: Ballantine, 1982. Print.
- . *The Hobbit*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1937. Print.
- Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne. *A History of Food*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
Google Books. Web. 6 Jan. 2012.
- Vallone, Lynne, "'What Is the Meaning of All This Gluttony?': Edgeworth, the
Victorians, C. S. Lewis and a Taste for Fantasy." *Papers: Explorations into
Children's Literature* 12.1 (2002): 47-54. Print.
- Visser, Margaret. *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and
Meaning of Table Manners*. New York: Grove Press, 1991. Print.
- Ward, Michael. *Planet Narnia*. Oxford, Oxford U P, 2008. Print.
- Weber, T. P. "Evangelism." *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Ed. Walter A. Elwell.
Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996. 382-384. Print.
- Werner, Mary. "Forbidden Foods and Guilty Pleasures in Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch,
and the Wardrobe* and Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market'." *Mythlore* 22.2
(1998): 18-21. Print.
- White, R. E. O. "Sanctification." *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Ed. Walter A.
Elwell. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996. 969-971. Print.

- Wicher, Andrzej. "Medieval Echoes in C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*." *Global Perspectives on Medieval English Literature, Language, and Culture*. Ed. Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr and Richard Scott Nokes. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007. 3-20. Print.
- Wiltenburg, Robert. "Tree of Knowledge." *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Ed. David Lyle Jeffrey. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992. Print.
- Wood, Ralph C. "Conflict and Convergence on Fundamental Matters in C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien." *Renascence* (Summer 2003): 314-338. Print.
- Zweieniger-Bargielowska, Ina. *Austerity in Britain*. London: Oxford U P, 2000. Print.