

Classical Parameters of *Shadowlands* by Richard Attenborough (On C. S. Lewis's Life and Work)¹

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To N. Palomar, M. Camps, M. Tudela and S. Hampshire

The Sevillian poet Luis Cernuda, almost as if apologizing for some uncontrolled and uncontrollable metaphysical impulses, very much evident, for instance, in certain prose-poems of *Ocnos* such as 'La eternidad' ('Eternity'), 'Escrito en el agua' ('Written on Water'), 'La luz' ('The Light') and 'El piano' ('The Piano'), said:

"It is true that in some verses I have wanted to delude myself with hopeful notions of immortality in some way or another; it is quite difficult to be always loyal to our convictions, however deep they are. The origin of this attitude might be a certain idealism of mine, spontaneous and naïve, which only with the help of time have I succeed in dominating and, after serious reflection, in orientating towards materialism. Coleridge already maintained that human beings are born Platonic or Aristotelian, that is, idealists or materialists"³.

"Es cierto que en determinados versos yo mismo he querido engañarme con nociones halagüeñas de inmortalidad, en una forma u otra; es difícil ser siempre fiel a nuestras convicciones, por hondas que sean. La culpa tal vez pueda achacarla a cierto idealismo mío, espontáneo y cándido, que sólo con ayuda del tiempo puedo dominar y, tras la reflexión, orientar hacia lo materialista. Ya Coleridge decía que los hombres son, por nacimiento, platónicos o aristotélicos, o sea, idealistas o materialistas".

Clive Staples Lewis's personal and intellectual life was quite different, but this does not mean that the opposition created by Coleridge –present in a text by Borges as well⁴– cannot be the

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³ 'Historia de un libro' (*La Realidad y el Deseo*, 1924-1962, Madrid: Alianza Tres, 1991, p. 417). Indeed, according to a *table talk* remembered by Coleridge's nephew, H. N. Coleridge, the English poet divided human beings into these two groups (see, e.g.: R. Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*. Cambridge-Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980, p. 227). In his opinion, the passage from one to the other is impossible, since Aristotle showed an evident incomprehension of Plato's thought. However, in spite of tending towards Plato's philosophy, Coleridge affirms at the same time: "Yet what a mind was Aristotle's -only not the greatest that ever animated the human form!- the parent of science... the master of criticism, and the founder or editor of logic!". Yet, "he confounded science with philosophy... Philosophy is the middle state between science, or knowledge, and *sophia*, or wisdom" (S. T. Coleridge, *Table Talk* in *The Oxford Authors: Coleridge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 595).

⁴ Specifically, 'El ruiseñor de Keats' ('Keats's nightingale') in *Otras Inquisiciones*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1981, p. 118. Borges reproaches those British scholars who study Keats with being incapable of connecting the famous nightingale in his ode with Platonic archetypal reality: "How did Garrod, Lewis and the others not discover in it this meaning?" ("¿Cómo no dieron con esta interpretación evidente Garrod y Leavis y los otros?"). English thought, then, shows a clear incapacity which "prevents them from thinking in abstractions as the Germans do" ("le impide traficar en abstracciones como los

employed as a suitable means of analysing the classical parameters of both the love-story and the philosophical reflections shown by *Shadowlands*.

In fact, it is not I who opts for such a clear opposition lacking of any sort of shade; it is William Nicholson himself, as author both of the script and the play⁵, who prefers to guide the audience from the very beginning. The reference to Aristotle –later on I shall explain its details and meaning- is explicit, while the reference to Plato is veiled although it can also be easily identified or detected.

Indeed, Lewis was a famous fellow at Magdalen College in Oxford, an expert in English Medieval Literature, very well known for, among others things, his study *The Allegory of Love*⁶ which, since it could not do otherwise, devotes a whole chapter to the *Roman de la Rose*. This *roman*, of almost twenty-two thousand verses, has two parts. The first four thousand verses were written by Guillaume de Lorris, who did not finish the project, while the rest were written by Jean de Meun. Guillaume de Lorris is thought to have worked from 1230 to 1240, and his poem is essentially, for those living in Middle Ages, an *ars amandi* which, besides being a complex allegorical poem, is heir to the *Ars Amatoria* by Ovid⁷.

What is, then, that Platonic background that I have just considered easily identifiable? Guillaume de Lorris wrote a love-story in which the poet –and protagonist at the same time- strives to gain the favours of his lady –the rose- to whom the poem is dedicated. Therefore, in accordance with the narrative technique of medieval *romans*, we are the witnesses of a long love-story in the course of which allies and enemies will offer all kinds of help and will introduce all sorts of obstacles, which in their turn must be interpreted as the different facets of women's behaviour. In the last verses, 3975-4028, Guillaume de Lorris presents the poet and lover despairing of his final success, since, after having discovered the garden protected by walls, after having entered it and having been even able to kiss the rose, he is once again very far from his lady and has not little chance of reaching her. Jealousy has taken revenge, then, on the poet and lover!

So far, the unfinished first part of the poem, but Jean de Meun thought of a successful ending involving the taking of the castle by assault and the lover's triumph. Finally, the rose will belong to the one who has wooed her for such a long time (verses 20638-21749).

The contrast of the former part with the latter one is quite obvious and has been unanimously acknowledged. However, I am interested in pointing out, furthermore, that Gilbert Highet, for instance, in his well-known handbook on the Classical Tradition feels the need to underline Guillaume de Lorris's "idealism" and Jean de Meun's "realism"⁸.

alemanes" -p. 119). In any case, this is not the only point of view, and Cornford warns that "Aristotle could never cease to be a Platonist" (F. M. Cornford, quoted by W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, VI, 4). See also: W. Jaeger, *Aristotle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, pages 171-193, and J. Moreau, *Aristóteles y su escuela*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Univ. Buenos Aires, 1972, pp. 17-31. Regarding everything related to this and the previous note, see, however, Patricia Cruzalegui Sotelo. *The Platonic Experience in Nineteenth-Century England*. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Fondo Editorial, 2006, introduction.

⁵ *Shadowlands, a Play*, by William Nicholson. London: Samuel French, 1992. DVD, video: *Shadowlands*, 1993 Spelling Films International.

⁶ *The Allegory of Love*. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

⁷ See, e.g., besides Lewis's *The Allegory of Love*, the introduction by Carlos Alvar to *Le Roman de la Rose. El libro de la Rosa*. Barcelona: El Festín de Esopo, Quaderns Crema, 1985, or to *El libro de la rosa*. Madrid: Siruela, 1986. And see also, for a general introduction, the preface by André Lanly in *Le Roman de la Rose*. Paris: Libraire Honoré Champion, 1973, or the one by Daniel Poirion, *Le Roman de la Rose*. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1974.

⁸ *The Classical Tradition. Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*. Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1951, p.66.

Guillaume de Lorris's idealism, why? Chiefly because the protagonist of the poem does not obtain what he desires, because he desires it without failing in courage and because he aims at attaining it in both an uncertain and remote future. And, obviously, if we speak about desiring what we lack, the reference to Plato and his *Symposium* is inevitable.

Indeed, Diotima defines *éros*⁹ as the son of *Póros* and *Penía*, one who was begotten, besides, at the great feast on the occasion of Aphrodite's birth. And this is precisely the reason why he accompanies and serves the goddess and loves every sort of beauty. As a result of his paternal heritage, he is poor and always lives amid poverty, but as the son of the one who knows how to find a way out of or around anything, that is, as the son of *Póros*, he is virile, resolute, vehement, intriguing, ingenious, a fearsome hunter and passionately fond of wisdom. In short, *Éros*, by birth neither immortal nor mortal but a *daímon* between the ideal and the material worlds, symbolises like no other the desire for moral wisdom and the rest of the virtues, the true desire to reascend, step by step, towards the Supreme Idea: the Good. This time in the words Socrates addresses to Agathon: "Is not *éros* firstly desire (love) for anything and, secondly, for what he might lack?" (the translation is mine following the edition by J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, vol. 2 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901, rpr. 1967: ἔστιν ὁ Ἔρως πρῶτον μὲν τινῶν, ἔπειτα τούτων ὧν ἂν ἔνδεια παρῆ αὐτῷ)¹⁰.

Consequently, Plato tells us that as poor human beings who hardly succeed in following the hints of the Beauty-Good -the palinode of the *Phaedrus* is quite explicit with regard to the difficulty of definitively leaving with new wings the dark cave of the world, the prison of matter- or, in other words, as exiled men and women who live in "shadowlands", we can either sink into the constant and sad reminder of an essential lack or, in spite of being conscious of it and precisely on account of being conscious of it, we can devote ourselves to the exciting experience of an endless desire and enjoy the bite of a delicious sting. Let us listen at any rate to Professor Lewis's own words:

'The perfect rosebud is an image of the courtly love, its one essential quality is its unattainability. The most intense joy lies not in the having but in the desiring. Delight that never fades, Bliss that is eternal, is only yours when what you most desire is just out of reach'.

The risks of this "beautiful madness" -so to speak- are quite evident, but I should like to emphasize the one that, in his turn, Irving Singer underlines in the first of his excellent three volumes dedicated to the nature of love, that is: the beloved whose beauty causes at the very beginning the lover's metaphysical ascent towards the real Beauty becomes in fact only an instrument which is hardly taken into account; on the contrary, the lover acts, in a second phase, as a man who has already fallen in love with a Superior Science which is fully intelligible and can be taught. Thus, it is pedagogy and not *éros* which finally counts, and lovers logically need good and diligent rather than beautiful pupils¹¹.

⁹ 203.

¹⁰ 200e.

¹¹ *The Nature of Love I. Plato to Luther*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 47-88. According to Singer, true love demands certain requirements: "In the love of persons we enjoy another human being regardless of ideals, and our interest is not inherently promiscuous or frustrating. For we are not using the other as a vehicle to moral growth, but simply bestowing value upon that individual himself" (p. 85). Therefore, it is quite clear that there may be another kind of love which generates frustration: "To one who is in love with this ideal, it may seem that nothing else can really be his idea of perfection. Lover that he is, the philosopher then bestows value upon his conception, treating it not only as the object of his desire but also as the Good that everything must desire" (p. 86). On the other hand, it is worth bearing in mind that, with regard to the risk of using the other as a vehicle, Plutarch in his

And, on the other hand, if we have mentioned the ideal of courtly love, it would be unforgivable not to make any reference to Denis de Rougemont and his certainly criticized but suggestive *L'Amour et L'Occident*¹². When approaching the *Roman de Tristan et Iseut*, affirms: “*Tristan et Iseut ne s'aiment pas... ce qu'ils aiment, c'est l'amour, c'est le fait même d'aimer... Ils ont besoin l'un de l'autre pour brûler, mais non de l'autre tel qu'il est; et non de la présence de l'autre, mais bien plutôt de son absence!*” (43).

Needless to say, later on he writes on Plato, *éros*, endless desire, the fact of falling in love with falling in love itself, and finally he presents this attitude as one of the most harmful Western obsessions. In his opinion, the true inflexion arrived thanks to Christianity or, at least, thanks to the one not “contaminated” by Plato’s or Plotinus’s Metaphysics. Then:

“*Tous les rapports humains, dès cet instant, changent de sens. Le nouveau symbole de l'Amour ce n'est plus la passion infinie de l'âme en quête de lumière, mais c'est le mariage du Christ et de l'Église. L'amour humain lui-même s'en trouve transformé. Tandis que les mystiques païennes le sublimaient jusqu'à en faire un dieu, et en même temps le vouaient à la mort, le christianisme le replace dans son ordre, et là, le sanctifie par le mariage. Un tel amour, étant conçu à l'image de l'amour du Christ pour son*

Eroticus, already warned: “... the talented and wise lover (ἐυφροῦς δ' ἐραστοῦ καὶ σώφρονος) shows a different attitude, since from here he refracts his look towards the divine and intelligible Beauty (πρὸς τὸ θεῖον καὶ νοητὸν καλόν). Whenever his eyes see the beauty of a body, he embraces it and welcomes it lovingly, but he takes advantage of it as an instrument (ὀργάνω) whose object is to refresh his memory (τῆς μνήμης)” (766 –the translation into English is mine following the edition by R. Flacelière. *Plutarque. Ouvres Morales*. Tome X. *Dialogue sur l'Amour*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1980). Needless to say, we also have other more positive visions of Platonic love; see, e.g.: D. N. Blakeley: *The Interpersonal Aspect of Eros in Plato's Symposium* –doctoral dissertation. U.M.I. Dissertation Information Service. According to him and against the “ideocentric” conception of Platonic *éros*, Platonic lovers do not use the others as vehicles.

¹² *L'Amour et L'Occident*. Paris: Libraire Plon, 1972. Let us remember that this was first published in 1939. It is quite obvious, then, that W. Nicholson wants to put C. S. Lewis into the orbit of D. de Rougemont. And concerning that “constant desire for what is unattainable” I should also like to quote now Maria Aurèlia Capmany: “Courtly love enthrones women... The troubadour in love... demands desperately the love of the beautiful lady. However, the condition of the play lies in the fact that this lady does not grant her love. The beautiful lady’s supreme virtue is her refusal. I do not know if one has insisted sufficiently on this fact which seems to me to reveal an evident perversion of healthy mental faculties. It seems logical that every tendency to possess anything should be accompanied by the healthy intention to obtain it... Courtly love, on the contrary, lies simply in the request... Who has put, then, this distance between the lover and the goal of his love?... Who has created the practice of a sort of love which is aroused by its impossible attainment?... A human attitude named Christianity which is in fact its hesitant trajectory. Christ’s word, concerning women, wants always to palliate this unfairness” (“*L'amor cortès entronitza la dona... El trobador enamorat... reclama, desesperat, l'amor de la bella dama. La condició del joc, però, consisteix que la dama no li atorgui aquest amor. La bella dama... ha de tenir com a suprema virtut la del refús. No sé si s'ha insistit prou en aquest fet que em sembla revelador d'una perversió evident en les sanes facultats humanes. Sembla que tota tendència a posseir alguna cosa hauria d'anar acompanyada de la sana intenció d'obtenir-la... L'amor cortès, en canvi, consisteix en la requesta per la requesta... Qui ha posat, doncs, aquesta distància entre l'home i l'objecte del seu amor? ... Què ha produït l'exercici d'un amor que s'exalta en el seu impossible assoliment?... Tota una actitud humana que s'ha anomenat cristianisme però que no és sinó la seva vacil·lant trajectòria. La paraula de Crist, referint-se a les dones, és sempre per a pal·liar una injustícia” -*La dona a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Llibres a l'abast, Ed. 62, 1979, pp. 46-7). At any rate and for a summary of the contemporary vision of the phenomenon, which implies a rigorous criticism of D. de Rougemont’s thesis, that is, rejecting the so called catharist contamination of courtly love, see, e.g.: O. Paz, *La llama doble. Amor y erotismo*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, Biblioteca Breve, 1993, pp. 102-131.*

Église (Éph., 5, 25), peut être vraiment réciproque. Car il aime l'autre tel qu'il est au lieu d'aimer l'idée de l'amour ou sa mortelle et délicieuse brûlure ("Il vaut mieux se marier que de brûler", écrit saint Paul aux Corinthiens)" (70).

I should like to point out now –and this by way of digression- that I doubt very much that Christianity, as we know it –even when only as a cultural experience- can remain unpolluted with any Platonic or Platonizing “stain”. The spiritual evolution itself of C. S. Lewis confirms in fact my suspicion or, still better, this latter becomes “certified” by his experience of conversion, as explained for instance in *Surprised by Joy*¹³, which led him from Atheism to Theism and from Theism to Christianity. First, after experiencing the “appearance” of inexplicable moments of “joy”, he read the most religious ancient writers such as Plato, Aeschylus and Virgil:

. “Among ancient authors... The most religious (Plato, Aeschylus, Virgil) were clearly those on whom I could really feed... those writers who did not suffer from religion and with whom in theory my sympathy ought to have been complete –Shaw and Wells and Mill and Gibbon and Voltaire- ... There seemed to be no depth in them” -p. 171.

. “The only non-Christians who seemed to me really to know anything were the Romantics; and a good many of them were dangerously tinged with something like religion, even at times with Christianity” –pp. 171-2.

. “There was no doubt that Joy was a desire... But a desire is turned not to itself but to its object ... It is the object which makes the desire harsh or sweet... ‘high’ or ‘low’... All the value lay in that of which Joy was the desiring. And that object, quite clearly, was no state of my own mind or body at all... I did not yet ask, Who is the desired? Only What is it?... by refusing identify itself with any object of the senses... the naked Other” –pp. 176-7.

. “The third Move... consisted merely in linking up this new *éclaircissement* about Joy with my idealistic philosophy” –p. 177.

. “The way to recover... this universal and objective vision was... to reascend or return into that Spirit which, in so far as we really were at all, we still were... All my acts, desires, and thoughts were to be brought into harmony with universal Spirit... Perhaps, even now, my Absolute Spirit still differed in some way from the God of religion... In the Trinity Term of 1929 I... admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed” –pp. 180-2.

I shall commit neither the error nor the indelicacy of commenting on a personal and untransferable religious experience like this –nobody has the right to do so-, but it does seem quite obvious to me that cultivated Western minds often need to express even their conversion to Christianity with the help of a wide range of images and feelings which are fully Platonic. Very probably, as maintained by Denis de Rougemont, for the most genuine Christianity, desire must be fulfilled and even sets us free from being in tension. Very probably, as maintained in his turn by Lewis, both the incarnation and the fulfilment of the doctrines of an incarnate God prove it. Nevertheless, men and women must desire what they lack, must return and reascend towards a God who might be absent precisely in order to permit them to say “yes” or “no”, and all these thoughts many Christians have only known how to express in the words of another great master: Plato.

Let us avoid, however, more digressions and focus once more on the “personality”. I mentioned before the dangerous experiment consisting of pursuing a goal and preferring not to reach it. Regarding C. S. Lewis, the reverse was the case. As is well-known, he got love at Joy Gresham’s side, he married her and they enjoyed a full happiness for a brief period of time. But

¹³ *Surprised by Joy*. London: Fount, Harper Collins Publishers, 1977, pp. 170-90.

there were in my opinion many Platonic obstacles –and Greek in general- to overcome, and there were also several Platonic or idealistic personal features which put to the test that brief, full happiness just mentioned.

First of all, one should think of the closed masculine world of the college, where cases of prolonged or definitive celibacy –the two brothers Lewis are a good example- were not infrequent¹⁴. Under these circumstances, relations between men and women can be neither easy nor fluid, although Joy Gresham’s strong personality broke down consolidated patterns. She broke them down and so did he, but Lewis might have had to fight against a great deal of both conscious and unconscious reluctance. For instance, in *The Four Loves* (affection, friendship, eros and charity), he defends convincingly the high importance and significance of friendship between men and women, that is, of the joy of sharing interests, activities and even common feelings¹⁵. But on other occasions we see him “contaminated” with an exclusive male pride which betrays him:

“In early communities the cooperation of the males as hunters or fighters was no less necessary than the begetting... Long before history began we men have got together apart from the women and done things... We had to plan the hunt and the battle... We enjoyed one another's society greatly... We Braves, we hunters, all bound together by shared skill, shared dangers and hardships away from the women and children”¹⁶.

In order not to be accused of detecting in his words a certain –or remarkable- degree of misogyny, I shall restrain myself from quoting word by word the myth of that happy age under Chronos in Plato’s *Statesman* (272a), a happy one during which, needless to say according to this point of view, there were neither women nor children. And I shall also avoid the severe criticism of the pretended benefits of the *kriegskameradschaft* –extensively commented on by Henri

¹⁴ We should bear in mind that until 1884 the celibacy requirement for fellows at colleges was not abolished: “Beginning after the 1854 reforms threw open the competition for college fellowships and expanded the number of non-clerical fellowships... and concluding with the reforms of the 1877 Oxford commission, taking effect in 1884, which, in abolishing the celibacy requirement for fellows, ended the ethos of a wholly male residential society” (L. Dowling. *Hellenism & Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1994, p. 85; see also p. 42). And, regarding the pretended benefits of celibacy, here are for instance two texts: the treatise *De amore* by Andreas Capellanus and the *Catechism of Catholic Church*. In the former, which was reprovved in 1277 by Tempier, bishop of Paris, because of its false vanities and some evident errors, one can read: “*Sed et alia ratio insidiari plurimum videtur amori. Quum enim ex amore mala cuncta sequantur, nullum penitus hominibus inde video procedere bonum, quia delectatio carnis, quae inde multa aviditate suscipitur, non est de genere boni, immo constat esse damnabile crimen, quae etiam in coniugatos ipsis vix cum veniali culpa sine crimine toleratur, propheta testante qui ait: ‘Ecce enim et in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in peccatis concepit me mater mea’*” (III, 33) (*Andreae Capellani regii Francorum De Amore libri tres*, published following the E. Trojel edition by A. Pagès: Castelló de la Plana, Sociedad Castellonense de Cultura, 1929); in the latter, we read in its turn: 2349 “People should cultivate [chastity] in the way that is suited to their state of life. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner (<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/ccc.html>). But, then, the question would be: Do the other states of life mean a betrayal to God on account of having opted for a divided heart and a less “remarkable” manner?

¹⁵ “Where men are educated and women not, where one sex works and the other is idle, or where they do totally different work, they will usually have nothing to be Friends about. But we can easily see that it is this lack, rather than anything in their natures, which excludes Friendship; for where they can be companions they can also become Friends” (*The Four Loves*. London: Fount, Harper Collins publishers 1977, p. 68).

¹⁶ *The Four Loves*, p 60.

Irénée Marrou in his *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité: le monde grec*¹⁷-, but it should be recognized that such restraint is only attainable by being excessively indulgent¹⁸.

Nevertheless, Lewis goes on afterwards to recognize that friendship, and not only sexual attraction, is possible between men and women whenever they share activities and desires and, as a consequence, companionship arises¹⁹. He even admits that it is really regrettable to see a cultivated wife living with a man who is completely devoted to enriching himself when she insists on taking her husband to a concert or any other cultural activity, although in his opinion there is something still more painful: "The middle-aged male", he affirms, "has great powers of passive *résistance*... Something much more painful happens when it is the men who are civilized and the women not"²⁰.

William Nicholson, therefore, knows perfectly well what he is doing when he depicts a misogynist atmosphere or, at least, a reticent one at Oxford University in the fifties in twentieth century. He knows in the end that this picture is as credible as the sequence in which Christopher, a colleague of Jack's, expresses his conviction that soul is 'an essentially feminine accessory: *anima*. Quite different from *animus*, the male variant. This is how I explain the otherwise puzzling difference between the sexes. Where men have intellect, women have soul'²¹. Faced with such a piece of nonsense, we could undoubtedly look for the suitable classical reference –as is well-known, the Greeks were highly misogynist-, but I opt for Pausanias's words in Plato's *Symposium* in accordance with which those who worship the Heavenly Aphrodite tend

¹⁷ Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1981.

¹⁸ Here is a highly significant paragraph: "But the conscious war against Friendship may be fought on a deeper level. There are women who regard it with hatred, envy and fear as the enemy of Eros and, perhaps even more of Affection. A woman of that sort has a hundred arts to break up her husband's Friendships. She will quarrel with his friends herself or, better still, with their wives. She will sneer, obstruct and lie. She does not realise that the husband whom she succeeds in isolating from his own kind will not be very well worth having; she has emasculated him. She will grow to be ashamed of him herself... All these, of course, are silly women. The sensible women who, if they wanted, would certainly be able to qualify themselves for the world of discussion and ideas, are precisely those who, if they are not qualified, never try to enter it or to destroy it. They have other fish to fry. At a mixed party they gravitate to one end of the room and talk women's talk to one another. They don't want us, for this sort of purpose, any more than we want them. It is only the riff-raff of each sex that wants to be incessantly hanging on the other. Live and let live. They laugh at us a good deal" (*The Four Loves*, pp. 71-72).

¹⁹ Although he has a rigorous conception of marriage: "Christian wives promise to obey their husbands. In Christian marriage the man is said to be the head... If there must be a head, why the man... There must be something unnatural about the rule of wives over husbands, because the wives themselves are half ashamed of it and despise the husbands whom they rule. But there is also another reason; and here I speak quite frankly as a bachelor... The relations of the family to the outer world... must depend... upon the man, because he always ought to be... much more just to the outsiders. A woman primarily fighting for her own children and husband against the rest of the world... He has the last word to protect other people from the intense family patriotism of the wife" (pp. 99-101).

²⁰ *The Four Loves*, pp. 69-70.

²¹ Cf. Lucretius. *De rerum natura*, III, 136-160: "Next, I say that mind (*animus*) and spirit (*animam*) are held in conjunction together and compound one nature (*unam naturam*) in common, but that the head so to speak one lord over the whole body is the understanding which we call mind (*animus*) and intelligence (*mentem*). And this has its abiding-place in the middle region of the breast. For in this place throbs terror and fear, hereabouts is melting joy: here therefore is the intelligence and the mind (*mens animusque*). The rest of the spirit, dispersed abroad through the whole body, obeys and is moved according to the will and working of the intelligence" (translated by W. H. D. Rouse. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1982). Concerning the tradition which assigns unstable judgements to women, see, e.g. my article: "... Però la dona ho esguerrà tot. El *De opificio mundi* de Filó d'Alexandria (LIII-LXI), o els fonaments grecs d'una fita en la història de la misogínia occidental". *Anuari de Filologia*, vol. XIII, 1990, D, 1, pp. 68-9 and following.

towards what is masculine, towards “what has a robuster nature and a larger mind” (τὸ φύσει ἐρρωμονέστερον καὶ νοῦν μᾶλλον ἔχον)²².

Indeed, those who want to live –Christopher’s case- in a closed masculine world and do not feel any “lack”, how could they not think of the *anima* as an essentially feminine accessory?²³

On the other side, this atmosphere, which could be considered a Platonic academy *sui generis*, conditions Jack, if I am not mistaken, in more senses. We should bear in mind for instance the difficult personal relationship with all those men or women who dare to present an intellectual challenge to him. The Socrates at the end of the *Symposium* rejects Alcibiades’s body and demands from him a true willingness to learn the science of the Good. The great Athenian philosopher is no longer a lover but a pedagogue who aims at transferring his wisdom to his pupils. In our context, of course, the sexual dimension does not play any role. But how could Jack, Professor Lewis, be in a good relationship with a pupil who prefers to read alone at night and to sleep in his turn while the professor surrenders to his irrepressible metaphysical impulses speaking about the most intense joy of not having but desiring? How could the Professor fight – since he is convinced that he will not be defeated; the only way he knows how to do it- against someone who is no longer a mere pupil? A real dialogue will be possible only when the Professor shows his doubts for the first time before the young student, that is, when they are at the same level and share similar personal experiences, even the most painful such as the death of the student’s father or the imminent one of the Professor’s wife.

In other words, each Plato meets his Aristotle, each Professor meets at some time a rebellious student who shows himself completely disposed to make his master come down from his personal Heaven. Joy Gresham, a woman, the true Aristotle of this story, will obviously be even more implacable than the student when Jack finally invites her to visit him in his private rooms at the college:

‘What do you do here? Think great thoughts’. / ‘Teach, mainly’. / ‘And what do they do? Sit at your feet and gaze up at you in awe?’ / ‘No, not at all’. / ‘I bet they do’. / ‘We have some fine old battles in here, I can tell you that’. / ‘Which you win. Must be quite a boost for you, being older and wiser than all of them. Not to mention your readers. And that gang of friends of yours. All very trained not to play out of bounds. Of course there’s Warnie. Not much competition there... Look. I’ve only now just seen it. How you’ve arranged a life for yourself where no-one can touch you. Everyone that’s close to you is either younger than you, or weaker than you or under your control’. / ‘Why are you getting at me? I thought we were friends’. / ‘I don’t know that we are friends. Not the way that you have friends, anyway’. / ‘I don’t understand’. / ‘I think you do, you just don’t like it. Nor do I’.

To conclude of this section, I should like to present the analysis of one of the other features which most betrays Platonic or idealistic tempers. If professor C. S. Lewis finally discovers, as

²² 179c-181d - translated by W. R. M. Lamb. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd.; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983.

²³ In any case, W. Nicholson makes Jack support Joy before Christopher’s impertinence. Indeed, Lewis changes his mind thanks to the fact of living with a woman, so that we cannot be surprised by these other reflections in *A Grief Observed*. London: faber and faber, 1966, pp. 41-2 (all the quotations of this text will correspond to this edition): “For a good wife contains so many persons in herself. What was H. not to me? She was my daughter and my mother, my pupil and my teacher, my subject and my sovereign; and always, holding all these in solution, my trusty comrade, friend, shipmate, fellow-soldier. My mistress; but at the same time all that any man friend... has ever been to me... That’s what I meant when I once praised her for ‘masculine virtues’. But she soon put a stop to that by asking how I’d like to be praised for my feminine ones. It was a good riposte, dear”.

seen before, that it is far more important that Heaven exists than the uncertain possibility of reaching it, it is quite clear that he already believes in a firm basis, unchanging and everlasting – or, at least, free from all worldly and human contingencies- which permits men and women to hold on a safe handle. Consequently, either they are souls who fell from an eternal Heaven after having lost their wings –once again the whole palinode in the *Phaedrus*²⁴ should be borne in mind- and, as a result, they have become prisoners in a material body, in a cavern, in “shadowlands”, or they are human beings who long ago knew the happiness of paradise until Adam left a heavy burden to them. Whatever the case may be, they still retain the memory of a glorious past, the Platonic unconsciousness, the *anamnesis* which will save them and the hope to return, to reascend again, as seen in the narration of his conversion. Men like these do cultivate the memory of golden valleys, of lost paradises or, on other occasions, they patiently create personal ideal paradises²⁵, from which, well protected, they can contemplate the others’ world, while they live amid a safe world of fiction.

In C. S. Lewis’s case, “fiction” is certainly a key-word. Indeed, he was also really admired as a writer of children’s literature. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*²⁶ is one of his best-known tales. The protagonists, two little boys and two little girls, after going through the back of a magical wardrobe, can enter a world which is also magical, full of light and brightness, where good and evil are both powerful, and where Asland, the kind-hearted lion killed by the witch returns to life miraculously in order to accomplish his mission. Lewis creates a narration which can be read both literally and allegorically, thus alluding in a veiled way to Christ’s death and resurrection²⁷. Notwithstanding, I am particularly interested in underlining the fact that a grown-up man like Professor Lewis feels the need to create an ideal or unreal world where what is unexpected becomes finally possible, and I should also throw into relief his tears at the end, shared with Douglas, precisely in front of a wardrobe which is not magical enough to give Joy back to them. It deals then with an assumed pain, of course, and he is a man transformed by experience, but in his case the effort to abandon the benefits of the marvellous world of fiction has been great, since Joy, in spite of having conscientiously read his books, must finally recognize that: “I can’t decide whether you’d rather be the child caught in the spell or the magician casting it”.

It is certainly Professor Lewis who prefers to live in solitude, in his particular and ideal peace, although he is greatly admired because of his talks and many people would like to make his acquaintance. It is also Professor Lewis who has never wanted to get up early in the morning, on the first of May, in order to take part in the Oxonian feast in honour of the Sun; a well-limited world beyond the multitude is always safer. It is undoubtedly Professor Lewis who is convinced that Joy should not be worried about having written a poem whose name, ‘Snow in Madrid’, is precisely that of a town she has never visited²⁸; life only read in books does not upset him. It is

²⁴ 244-257 b.

²⁵ Nevertheless, this attitude also disappears after Joy’s death, thus showing a great courage against the temptation to idealize both her and his pain: “We are taken out of ourselves by the loved one while she is here. Then comes the tragic figure of the dance in which we must learn to be still taken out of ourselves though the bodily presence is withdrawn, to love the very Her, and not fall back to loving our past, or our memory, or our sorrow, or our relief from sorrow, or our own love” (*A Grief Observed*, pp. 43-4). What a distance now from that Professor Lewis who explained to his pupils his ideas about love extracted from the *Roman de la Rose*.

²⁶ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1950.

²⁷ *Brian Sibley Shadowlands, The Love Story of C.S. Lewis and Joy Gresham*. London: Harper Collins Audio Books, 1994.

²⁸ ‘Snow in Madrid’: “Softly, so casual, / Lovely, so light, so light, / The cruel sky lets fall / Something one does not fight./ How tenderly to crown / The brutal year / The Clouds send something down / That one need not fear./ Men before perishing / See with unwounded eye / For once a gentle thing / Fall from

Professor Lewis, of course, who has preserved since he was a child the picture of the golden valley, as a *memento* of the lost paradise and, who knows?, as the image of the promised land. It is, as suggested before, Professor Lewis who feels protected in the kind and non-threatening world of *philia* and not in that of *eros*²⁹ he will know later on. And, finally, it is Professor Lewis who, this time accompanied by his wife, once again in the golden valley, in his beloved *locus amoenus* or personal Eden, neither wants to visit other places nor expects anything else to happen. He feels that his personal journey has ended here and he is immensely happy. But Joy, a woman, his wife, wants and knows how to remind him that reality is quite different, that the price to pay for this immense happiness is the pain to come, is change and transformation, since here and now, nothing remains the same³⁰.

So far the analysis of one of the opposite poles according to Coleridge. The contrast should now become very clear. However, let us go ahead step by step, that is to say, the time has arrived to speak about Aristotle.

Aristotle was a predominantly empiricist thinker, above all at the end of his “career”. What does *empeiria* or experience mean? Chiefly that information is obtained through the senses or, using far more academic terms, it is an epistemological doctrine according to which all knowledge derives from experience and, specifically, from the senses. By gathering emotions, feelings and affections in our memory, we get experience. Needless to say, experience was also valued by Plato, at least in considering it as the necessary intellectual practice for formulating concepts and attaining the realm of the ideas. Experience, however, has not that precise and intelligible character of the ideas. Aristotle, on the contrary, integrates much more experience into the structure of knowledge. Every human being has and needs experience, though it is surpassed by reason³¹. Without the aid of experience we would not be able to attain those

the sky” (Davidman, Joy. *Letter to a Comrade*. New Haven: Yale University Press “The Yale Series of Younger Poets”, 1938.

²⁹ The following reflections could be a partial explanation: “There may be those who have first felt mere sexual appetite for a woman and then gone on at a later stage to ‘fall in love with her’. But I doubt if this is at all common. Very often what comes first is simply a delighted preoccupation with the Beloved... A man in this state really hasn’t leisure to think of sex. He is too busy thinking of a person. The fact that she is a woman is far less important than the fact that she is herself. He is full of desire, but the desire may not be sexually toned. If you asked him what he wanted, the true reply would often be, ‘To go on thinking of her’. He is love’s contemplative. And when at a later stage the explicitly sexual element awakes, he will not feel (unless scientific theories are influencing him) that this had all along been the root of the whole matter. He is more likely to feel that the incoming tide of Eros, having demolished many sand-castles and made islands of many rocks, has now at last with a triumphant seventh wave flooded this part of his nature also... Eros enters him like an invader, taking over and reorganising, one by one, the institutions of a conquered country” (*The Four Loves*, pp. 86-7).

³⁰ See, e.g.: Plato’s *Timaeus* 27d-28, 3: Ἔστιν οὖν δὴ κατ’ ἐμὴν δόξαν πρῶτον διαιρετέον τάδε· τί τὸ ὄν αἰεὶ, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον, καὶ τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν αἰεὶ, ὄν δὲ οὐδέποτε; τὸ μὲν δὴ νοήσει μετὰ λόγου περιληπτόν, αἰεὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ὄν, τὸ δ’ αὖ δόξη μετ’ αἰσθήσεως ἀλόγου δοξαστόν, γιγνόμενον καὶ ἀπολλύμενον, ὄντως δὲ οὐδέποτε ὄν (“Now first of all we must, in my judgement, make the following distinction. What is that which is Existent always and has no Becoming? And what is that which is Becoming always and never is Existent? Now the one of these is apprehensible by thought with the aid of reasoning, since it is ever uniformly existent; whereas the other is an object of opinion with the aid of unreasoning sensation, since it becomes and perishes and is never really existent” –translated by R. G. Bury, Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966).

³¹ *Metaphysics* A 1, 981 b 27.

universals which are created by our intellects after the apprehension of what is particular, although science is always the science of what is universal³². And a further significant remark: In Aristotle's mind, personal abilities and experience are extremely important in everything related to the direction and administration of the State. In fact, statesmen act relying on experience rather than on thought³³.

It was necessary to speak about experience and it is also necessary to speak about love. Aristotle's thought was original in this realm, too. His *Nicomachean Ethics* explains quite clearly that the object of our estimation is always useful, pleasant and / or good. Friendships based on one's own benefit or pleasure have to do, logically, with personal interest. But there is a third kind of friendship, perfect friendship, which implies that the individuals love each other for what they themselves are and not because they can become instruments. These friends, of course, may also contribute benefit and pleasure but always accidentally. What really counts is companionship between two persons who enjoy each other and act freely for their respective benefit. Plato, as a result of having defined love, *éros*, as the desire for possessing the Good eternally -thus subordinating any human relationship to a metaphysical goal-, caused irreversibly that any friend was an instrument. Aristotle, on the contrary, prefers to speak about friendship, *philia*, and, in any case, idealized it as a relationship between two perfect persons, but between two individuals, in the end, who count because of themselves³⁴.

Well then, I should dare to say that Joy Gresham plays the Aristotelian role of that mankind divided by Coleridge into two opposite tempers. Being American, she assumes both precisely and paradoxically the "preaching" of the values of experience in a country like England where Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and others gave birth to what is called "English Empiricism" and which is opposite to the "Continental Rationalism" of such important figures as Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz, Wolf, etc. -leaving aside, of course, mixed cases like Locke or Leibniz, or the Kantian reaction, which attributes to experience the psychological origin of knowledge, though it cannot be validated by it.

Joy Gresham, an empiricist in the empiric England? Well, in fact, an empiricist -and American, as said before- in Oxford, in that Oxford which not long ago had such illustrious Platonists as Benjamin Jowett, Walter Pater, John Addington Symonds³⁵, etc., and being herself connected with an expert in Medieval Literature who writes for children and is a converted Christian coming from Atheism and Theism and having been inspired by the most religious ancient philosophers. I wonder if a greater contrast might ever exist?³⁶.

William Nicholson, then, knows perfectly well how to present it. Joy Gresham does not care for any sort of rules or customs when they lead indefectibly to nonsense. If the waiter does not know how to solve the problem, she will ask loudly -as common sense demands- who C. S. Lewis is. She will not feel ashamed on any occasion of her spontaneity. She will take up the intellectual challenge Professor Lewis represents and will not be frightened of the fact that she sits now before a national figure who might want to turn her into an instrument in order to emphasize even more his wisdom. She will speak to Lewis frankly, simply because she feels ridiculous playing the role of a subordinate who addresses the "star". She does not understand

³² *Metaphysics* A 1, 981 a 6.

³³ *Nicomachean Ethics* X, 9, 1191 a 1 and following.

³⁴ See, e.g.: Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love*, chapter 5: "Friendship in Aristotle", pp. 88-110; and Jean-Claude Fraise, *Philia, la notion d'amitié dans la philosophie antique*. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1974, chapter II, section II: "L'amitié parfaite et son contenu psychologique", pp. 227-245.

³⁵ Once again, consult, e.g. the dissertation by Patricia Cruzalegui Sotelo.

³⁶ At any rate, for brief notes on Aristotelianism in Oxford -before and after Lewis- see, e.g.: F. M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*. Yale: Yale University Press, 1981, and M. Pattison, "Philosophy at Oxford", *Mind, A Quarterly Review* 1 (1876).

why Lewis has not more connections than he has. It is unconceivable to her that there could be anyone who has never been a communist in order to save mankind. She wonders if Professor Lewis goes through the world with closed eyes –which practically means rejecting the aid of the senses-, since he has never wanted to attend the feast in honour of the sun on the first of May in Oxford. She does know, in spite of not being a fellow at the Magdalen College who explains it to pupils- that we must judge characters through their actions, that the character, as Aristotle said, is the plot. She does lament having never been in Madrid during the Spanish Civil War, because she is convinced that experience means everything, while books do no harm. Joy Gresham, an American poetess who has been invited to a Christmas reception at a college in Oxford shows herself completely disposed to reply unmercifully to Jack’s colleague who incarnates on that night the male’s centuries-old *stultitia*: ‘Are you trying to be offensive or just merely stupid?’. She is not frightened of passing from *philia* to *éros*; she thinks it is a logical step, that is, it has to do with following the logical course of events, although at first, very politely, she will not be cross with the protected man, as protected as the rose of the *Roman de la Rose* surrounded by high walls. She will do it later on, as seen before, when she decides to denounce the lack of a real friendship between them, and between him and his pupils. She will not be an instrument in his hands and, above all, she does understand that, with regard to the complicated balance in both the world and human beings’ lives, happiness now means pain afterwards, and pain afterwards means happiness later on, and so on successively.

Are men Platonic and women Aristotelian? I should want neither to be stupid nor to be offensive. I rise this rhetorical question since, unfortunately, there are many texts belonging to the Western world in which women are assigned to the realm of the senses while men are assigned to that of the intellect. As emotional and sentimental beings, victims of every sort of passion, women are, according to this ill-fated thesis, incapable of cultivating their spirit and, still worse, they mutilate both the spirit and the intellect of those men who fall into their “clutches”. To be married means a true intellectual abdication to the extent of becoming slave to ignoble desires. And, if somebody thinks that I have exaggerated, let him / her attentively read some chapters, from 151 to 170 of *De Opificio mundi* by Philo of Alexandria, a Platonizing Jew, in order to understand the most unfortunate traits of metaphysical barbarity.

It is quite obvious that Aristotelianism in *Shadowlands* has nothing to do with what I have just mentioned. On the contrary, it aims at calling men and women to a prudent and wise use of reason, which permits them to establish a fruitful cooperation with all sorts of people and with life itself. Nor has it anything to do with the medieval sclerosis of Aristotelianism, which caused the Renaissance men to decide often to free themselves in some measure from the Aristotelian “burden” and to be reborn to a great extent with the aid of the enigmatic, not strictly logical and always suggestive Plato³⁷.

There is a last subject which coordinates, if I am not mistaken, the different parts of the previous *lógos*. Indeed, the influence of the strong personality of the American poetess on C. S. Lewis was crucial in order to change clearly both his personal trajectory and intellectual temper. But this Professor in Oxford also changed on account of an experience shared by all men and women: disease and death. Frankly speaking, I do not think that I ought to abandon now the classical parameters that I have been depicting so far. On the contrary, they will continue to be necessary if one wants to “rationalize” –so to speak- the final balance. However, I must approach first the meaning of pain in one of C. S. Lewis’s principal books: *The Problem of Pain*³⁸. Let us start, then:

In his opinion, not even The Divine Omnipotence was able to create free souls without permitting them to be independent. The self-consciousness of the creature demands a contrast,

³⁷ See, e.g.: James Hankins. *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*. Leiden - New York: E. J. Brill, 1991.

³⁸ *The Problem of Pain*. London: Fount, Harper Collins Publishers, 1977; all the quotations will correspond to this edition and the numbers in brackets refer to it.

that is, an Other. Freedom must mean freedom to choose, and every free choice implies the existence of different things to choose between. This cannot happen but in an external world. Indeed, if others' thoughts were directly present to us without an external world, how could they be distinguished from ours? We can talk to others, for instance, because there are sound-waves in the common air between us. Matter is the external world. "But if matter is to serve as a neutral field it must have a fixed nature of its own" (25) in order not to be in human beings' control and, therefore, not to be manipulated by them. And if matter has a fixed nature of its own and obeys fixed laws, not all its states will be agreeable and beneficial to the independent human beings. Fire comforts at a certain distance, but it destroys when the distance is reduced. Furthermore, human beings can use matter to hurt each other. In these circumstances, God could undoubtedly correct the excesses of his creatures' free choice but at the cost of suppressing free will itself.

In Lewis's opinion, men and women are a Divine work of art, and God will not be satisfied until it has a certain character. "The father uses his authority to make the son into the sort of human being he, rightly, and in his superior wisdom, wants him to be" (36) and, consequently, "demands the perfection of the beloved" (37). "God is not a senile benevolence that drowsily wishes you to be happy in your own way (38)... God is consuming fire (38)... Man is not the centre. God does not exist for the sake of man. Man does not exist for his own sake... We were made not primarily that we may love God... but that God may love us (38-39)... God has no needs. Human love, as Plato teaches us, is the child of Poverty –of a want or lack" (40). On the contrary, "God is Goodness. He can give good, but cannot need or get it... has everything to give and nothing to receive" (40). How, then, could divine creation be explained? One must suppose that "God of mere miracle has made Himself able so to hunger and created in Himself that which we can satisfy... Our highest activity must be response, not initiative (41)... He demands our worship, our obedience, our prostration" (42).

Needless to say, Lewis is for recovering the notions of sin and repentance. Human beings, in the end, are punished for Adam's sin. It was an act of disobedience, the result of pride, "of the movement whereby a creature (that is, an essentially dependent being whose principle of existence lies not in itself but in another) tries to set up on its own, to exist for itself (59)... Up to that moment (the Fall) the human spirit had been in full control of the human organism... But its authority over the organism was a delegated authority which it lost when it ceased to be God's delegate... I doubt whether it would have been intrinsically possible for God to continue to rule the organism through the human spirit when the human spirit was in revolt against Him... Thus the organs... fell under the control of ordinary biochemical laws and suffered... pain, senility and death" (65). "God might have arrested this process by miracle: but this would have been to decline the problem which God had set Himself when He created the world, the problem of expressing His goodness through the total drama of a world containing free agents, in spite of their rebellion against Him" (66-67).

Lewis recognizes in the end that human beings themselves are responsible for a great part of human pain, although there is another great part of human pain which is not imputable to them. Therefore, as fallen beings, imperfect and selfish, men and women must correct themselves by dying a little every day, that is, by MORTification. "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (74).

And the final thesis: Christ at Calvary. There the degree of acceptance of pain went beyond what could ever be imagined: "In fact, God saw the crucifixion in the act of creating the first nebula. The world is a dance in which good, descending from God, is disturbed by evil arising from the creatures, and the resulting conflict is resolved by God's own assumption of the suffering nature which evil produces" (67)³⁹.

³⁹ Cf. *The Four Loves*: "God, who needs nothing, loves into existence wholly superfluous creatures in order that He may love and perfect them. He creates the universe, already foreseeing... the buzzing cloud of flies about the cross, the flayed back pressed against the uneven stake, the nails driven through the

But the doctrine of death is not only peculiar to Christianity. Nature itself has written the reiterated “tragedy” –so to speak- of the buried seed which dies and germinates again. Very probably, the most ancient agricultural communities learnt this lesson from Nature and, by means of the sacrifice of animals or even human beings, they proved over centuries that there is no remission of sins without bloodshed. Plato tells us that wisdom is “training for death” (*meléte thanátou*)⁴⁰. The peculiarity of Christianity would be, then, not only teaching this doctrine but also surrendering to it.

I have always thought that it is practically impossible to know what Ancient Christianity was in fact. Lewis and many others would be the irrefutable evidence of it. Like any other “convert”, he hastens to point out that Christianity is the final stop of his spiritual journey, that all the rest were previous steps, that Christianity is radically different. He offers as a proof the incarnation, redemption and resurrection, etc. However, the only Christianity we have known, besides Christ, the apostles, martyrs and saints, is the theoretical system which was built with patience and intelligence upon a Greek philosophical base.

Why do I mention it now? Because in my opinion it is easy to discover in Lewis first the need to define God in Plotinian terms –and as the perfect God of Scholasticism as well. God, like the One in Plotinian philosophy, has no needs. He is the inexhaustible source from which everything emanates without his being diminished at all⁴¹. He is so self-sufficient that men and women must surrender to Him. He is the only thing worthy of being loved⁴². No other ancient philosophical system emphasized as much as Neoplatonism the urge for self-annihilation before a Power which surpasses everything. Lewis knows perfectly well that Neoplatonists, aiming to express by means of images their sophisticated mystical experience, excelled in the development of both the

mesial nerves, the repeated incipient suffocation as the body droops, the repeated torture of back and arms as it is time after time, for breath's sake, hitched up” (p. 116).

⁴⁰ *Phd* 81 a, cf. 64 a following the edition by J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, vol. 1 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

⁴¹ Singer’s words are an excellent summary of this theme: “The emotional tone can be matched by Plato’s descriptions of the divine madness in the *Phaedrus*. But then Plotinus says other things. Not only does he speaks of higher emanations caring for the lower (the downward path), but also he describes God as himself being love: ‘He is worthy to be loved, and is Himself love, namely, love of Himself, as He is beautiful only from Himself and in Himself’. Now a Platonist may surely say that God, or the Divine One, as Plotinus often calls him, is worthy to be loved. But what can he mean if he says that God is love? Plato consistently maintained that the love merely mediates between man and the gods. It could not itself be divine because it involved desire, which results from deficiency. For similar reasons the divine, being perfect in itself, could never love anything whatsoever” (*The Nature of Love*, pp. 116-7). I attach the Greek text (VI, 8, 15) of Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer’s edition, *Plotini Opera, Tomus III, Enneas VI*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) p. 294: Καὶ ἐράσιμιον καὶ ἔρωσ ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ αὐτοῦ ἔρωσ, ἄτε οὐκ ἄλλως καλὸς ἢ παρ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ (“Lovable, very love, the Supreme is also self-love in that He is lovely no otherwise than from Himself and in Himself” –translated by Stephen MacKenna. *Plotinus. The Enneads*. London: Penguin Books, 1991, p. 528).

⁴² Let us pay attention to what Lewis writes in *The Four Loves* with regard to the fourth love, charity: “God is love... We must not begin with mysticism, with the creature's love for God... We begin at the real beginning, with love as the Divine energy. This primal love is Gift-love. In God there is no hunger that needs to be filled, only plenteousness that desires to give. The doctrine that God was under no necessity to create is not a piece of dry scholastic speculation. It is essential” (p. 116). Cf. *The Problem of Pain*: “God has no needs. Human love, as Plato teaches us, is the child of Poverty –of a want or lack; it is caused by a real supposed good in its beloved which the lover needs and desires. But God’s love, far from being caused by goodness in the object, causes all the goodness which the object has, loving it first into existence and then into real, though derivative, lovability. God is Goodness. He can give good, but cannot need or get it. In that sense all His love is, as it were, bottomlessly selfless by very definition; it has everything to give and nothing to receive” (p. 40). But, as seen before, “God of mere miracle has made Himself able to hunger”.

classical allegory and allegorical interpretation. The Renaissance, for instance, also took advantage of this ancient instrument in order to speak about the new spirit and the new age which then began⁴³. Lewis studies and is himself a master of allegory; he uses it even when he writes for children, and he is the author of *Till We Have Faces*⁴⁴, where he remakes for instance the myth of *Eros and Psyche* –so often used by Neoplatonism- to give a Christian message.

Notwithstanding, his thesis said much more. How can human beings be related to an Absolute God, or how can an Absolute God be related to Himself? It would be impossible to elucidate it, but Reality imposes itself, which must mean that “God of mere miracle has made Himself able to hunger”, that is to say, God has needs like any man or woman⁴⁵. Only a few pages have been enough to pass from a God who was self-sufficient to a God who is the son of Poverty (*Penía*), from his being Plotinian to being Platonic. And that is not all. His God might be Heraclitean, since, besides having told us indirectly that He is satiety and hunger (let us remember the fragment B 67 *Diels-Kranz*: “god: day / night, summer / winter, war / peace, satiety / hunger” (ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός⁴⁶), he also points out that Nature shows an excellent contrast of opposites wisely harmonized: a buried seed germinating again, alive and resuscitated; agricultural communities who learn from Nature; bloodshed and remission by means not only of the sacrifice of animals but also of human beings⁴⁷.

And if one opts to present plausible conjectures, it is quite evident that, with regard to what we are analyzing now –and bearing in mind Lewis’s thesis on pain-, the reference to fragment B111 of Heraclitus is inevitable: “It is thanks to disease that health is pleasant, thanks to hunger satiety, thanks to weariness rest” (νοῦσος ὑγιείην ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθόν, λιμὸς κόρον, κάματος ἀνάπαυσιν). Charles H. Kahn, in his commentary on Heraclitus’s extant fragments⁴⁸, proposes to read together fragments B 110 and 111 of *Diels-Kranz* edition. The result would be the following: “It is not better for human beings to get everything they want. It is thanks to disease that health is pleasant, thanks to hunger satiety, thanks to weariness rest” (ἀνθρώποις γίνεσθαι ὀκόσα θέλουσιν οὐκ ἄμεινον. νοῦσος ὑγιείην ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθόν, λιμὸς κόρον, κάματος ἀνάπαυσιν). According to Kahn, Heraclitus fights consciously against that well-known inscription at Delos which Aristotle quotes in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, and in accordance with which “most just is what is fairest and the best of all is health. But the sweetest thing is to get

⁴³ As a general introduction to this theme, see, e.g.: E. Panofsky, *Essais d’iconologie*. Paris: Gallimard, 1967; E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*. London: Phaidon, 1978; Chastel, *Arte y humanismo en Florencia en la época de Lorenzo el Magnífico*. Madrid: Càtedra, 1982; E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*. London: faber & faber, 1968.

⁴⁴ London: Fount, Harper Collins Publishers, 1978.

⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the paradox-miracle has to do not only with God but also with human beings: “But Divine Gift-love in the man enables him to love what is not naturally lovable; lepers, criminals, enemies, morons, the sulky, the superior and the sneering. Finally, by a high paradox God enables men to have a Gift-love towards Himself” (*The Four Loves*, p. 1 17).

⁴⁶ The translations of Heraclitus’s fragments are mine following the edition by H. Diels- W. Kranz. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vol. 1, 6th edn. Berlin: Weidmann, 1951, rpr. Dublin / Zurich, 1966.

⁴⁷ It might be worth remembering now the first sequences of *Medea* by Pasolini. The centaur in his lacustrine house, explains to Jason when he was a child: (“What man, after discovering agriculture, learnt from this relationship, what he understood from the example of seeds under the earth but germinating later on, all this meant the definitive lesson: resurrection, my dear” (“*Lo que el hombre, descubriendo la agricultura, vio en los cereales, lo que aprendió de esta relación, lo que comprendió del ejemplo de las semillas que pierden su forma bajo tierra para luego renacer, todo eso significó la lección definitiva: la resurrección, mi querido*” -Pier Paolo Pasolini. *Medea*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Alfa Argentina, 1972), p. 103. And, on the other side, in *Medea*’s country, human sacrifice takes place, thus showing the consciousness of the succession death-fertilization (pp. 17-18).

⁴⁸ *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus. An edition of the fragments with translation and commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 182-3.

what one desires” (κάλλιστον τὸ δικαιοτάτον, λῶστον δ’ ὑγιαίνειν· ἥδιστον δὲ πέφυχ’ οὐ τις ἐρᾷ τὸ τυχεῖν)⁴⁹. In my opinion, and I do agree with other commentators such as Marcel Conche, Marcovich and T. M. Robinson⁵⁰, I think one should not opt to read both fragments together –but I am not going to approach the question now. However, Kahn’s words seem to me absolutely profitable, if we value the effort to understand the true sense of disease and the consequent need to accept it as another proof of a total *Lógos* which expresses itself by means of the identification of opposites. He says:

“The structure of desire is irrational in that it is potentially self-destructive; if we got everything we desired, nothing would be desirable. Just as the wish for an end to strife would, if fulfilled, destroy the cosmic order that depends upon opposition, so the wish that all human desires be satisfied would, if fulfilled, destroy the order of human life by eliminating desire and depriving us of our conception of what is good and precious... From this irrationality there is no escape except through wisdom: dominating what is unreasonable by comprehending it in a larger unity. And the first step is to recognize the positive contribution made by the negative term in the link that unites them. For then these oppositions can be seen for what they are, as a mirror of the universal pattern manifest in the alternate kindling and quenching of cosmic fire”.

As is well-known, the transition from Heraclitus to the Stoics does not need to be justified. As usual, Stoic philosophers have no doubts: “one must not avoid disease, nor is it harmful” (φευκτὰ καὶ βλαβερά)⁵¹. One must also fight against pain with an “obstinate spirit” (*obstinationem animi*)⁵². And Seneca, for his part, maintains in his *Epistles* that cowards should be informed that whatever they may be scared of, either death or pain, it is not fearsome at all. Indeed, the former, after having appeared –and it will appear to us all necessarily-, will never appear again, and, concerning pain: “the one which lasts cannot be severe, and the severe one does not last” (*optimam doloris esse naturam, quod non potest nec qui extenditur magnus esse nec qui est magnus extendi*)⁵³. These last reflections would lead us indefectibly to the ideal of *ataraxía*, *apátheia* or *imperturbabilitas* and take us far from our present analysis, although they show again the conviction that disease and pain are logical within a total cosmic order.

To conclude this review of the classical parameters upon which Lewis might have based his attempt to understand both pain and disease, I should like to mention Plato. Why? Because he should be expected in principle not to resist the temptation –an irrational one according to Heraclitus- to escaping and surpass the limits of the physical world. But he never abandons common sense in his dialogues. Thus, Socrates says for instance in the *Phaedo*:

“Dear friends, what a strange thing seems to be what men call pleasure! In what an admirable way it appears connected with its opposite: pain... Indeed, if someone pursues the former and attains it, he is almost always forced to know the latter”.

⁴⁹ I 8, 1009 a 25, the translation is mine following the edition by I. Baywater. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

⁵⁰ M. Conche. *Héraclite. Fragments*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, pp. 394-5; M. Marcovich. *Heraclitus. Greek text with a short commentary*. Mérida, Venezuela: Editio Maior, the Los Andes University Press, Mérida, 1967, p. 226; T. M. Robinson. *Heraclitus. Fragments. A text and translation with a commentary*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991, p. 153.

⁵¹ *SVF* III, 146, *SVF* III, 146, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* –the translation is mine following the edition of Hans von Arnim. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1964.

⁵² *SVF* III, 368.

⁵³ XCIV, 7-8, following the edition by Otto Hense. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1914.

(Ὡς ἄτοπον, ἔφη, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἔοικε τι εἶναι τοῦτο ὃ καλοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἡδὺν ὡς θαυμασίως πέφυκε πρὸς τὸ δοκοῦν ἐναντίον εἶναι, τὸ λυπηρὸν... ἐὰν δὲ τις διώκη τὸ ἔτερον καὶ λαμβάνη, σχεδὸν τι ἀναγκάζεται ἀεὶ λαμβάνειν καὶ τὸ ἔτερον⁵⁴).

And once more Socrates, when speaking in general about evil in the *Theaetetus* (176 a), warns:

“Evil cannot die since something opposed to the good is always necessary. It does not live among the gods but goes around mortal nature and this place. Consequently, it is necessary to intend to escape from here as soon as possible”.

(Ἀλλ’ οὐτ’ ἀπολέσθαι τὰ κακὰ δυνατὸν... -ὕπεναντίον γὰρ τι τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἀεὶ εἶναι ἀνάγκη -οὐτ’ ἐν θεοῖς αὐτὰ ἰδοῦσθαι, τὴν δὲ θνητὴν φύσιν καὶ τόνδε τὸν τόπον περὶ πολεῖ ἔξ ἀναγκῆς. διὸ καὶ περιᾶσθαι χρὴ ἐνθένδε ἐκείσε φεύγειν ὅτι τάχιστα⁵⁵).

How could Platonic personalities not aim at escaping?! It is precisely the escape towards an ideal realm which defines them. But the Lewis transformed by love and pain had to face that experience about which he had written several years earlier in *The Problem of Pain* and which is perfectly summarized by W. Nicholson:

‘Where was God on that December night? Why didn't he stop it? Isn't He supposed to love us?⁵⁶. And does God want us to suffer?⁵⁷. What if the answer to that question is yes? I'm not sure that God particularly wants us to be happy. I think He wants us to be able to love and be loved. He wants us to grow up. I suggest to you that it is because God loves us that he makes us the gift of suffering. Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world. We are like blocks of stone out of which the sculptor carves the forms of men. The blows of his chisel, which hurts us so much, are what make us perfect⁵⁸... We think our childish toys brings us all the happiness there is and our nursery is the whole wide world. But something must drive us out of the nursery to the world of others. And that something is suffering... If you love someone, you don't want them to suffer. You can't bear it’.

⁵⁴ 60 b, the translation is mine following the edition by J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, vol. 2 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

⁵⁵ 176a, the translation is mine following the edition by J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, vol. 2 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

⁵⁶ Cf.: “Sooner or later I must face the question in plain language. What reason have we, except our own desperate wishes, to believe that God is, by any standard we can conceive, ‘good’? Doesn't all the *prima facie* evidence suggest exactly the opposite? What have we to set against it? We set Christ against it. But how if He were mistaken? His last words may have a perfectly clear meaning” (*A Grief Observed*, p. 26).

⁵⁷ Cf.: “We are perplexed to see misfortune falling upon decent, inoffensive people, worthy people ... How can I say with sufficient tenderness what here needs to be said?... let me implore the reader to try to believe... that God... may really be right when He thinks that their modest prosperity and the happiness of their children are not enough to make them blessed: that all this must fall from them, warning them in advance of an insufficiency that one day they will have to discover” (*The Problem of Pain*, p. 77).

⁵⁸ Cf.: “The terrible thing is that a perfectly good God is in this matter hardly less formidable than a Cosmic sadist. The more we believe that God hurts only to heal, the less we can believe that there is any use in begging for tenderness... But suppose that what you are up against is a surgeon whose intentions are wholly good. The kinder and more conscientious he is, the more inexorably he will go on cutting. If he yielded to your entreaties, if he stopped before the operation was complete, all the pain up to that point would have been useless... Well, take your choice. The tortures occur. If they are unnecessary, then there is no God or a bad one. If there is a God, then these tortures are necessary. For no even moderately good Being could possibly inflict or permit them if they weren't” (*A Grief Observed*, 37-8).

Let us notice that Lewis has many resources to take up the challenge: classical resources and Christian resources, which are also classical. First of all, contrary to what could be thought at first sight, he never leaves aside Platonic *éros*, son of Poverty, that is, we desire what we lack. Whenever pain appears, above all when the beloved is involved, happiness may not be complete and we experience the lack intensely, our own and not an alien one; we discover then our lost happiness, and the contrast with better times opens our eyes⁵⁹. On the other hand, God Himself was not able to assume his absolute happiness. It was necessary for Him to become the son of Poverty, to desire, to have independent children, men and women, who were capable of telling Him “No” and of yearning for Him at the same time. If he became the son of Poverty, he would be responsible for it and, as a consequence, both the incarnation and Calvary would be inevitable. All this may certainly seem to be an immense madness but, in the end, it is another attempt to explain the naked Reality, which presents itself in the form of tension or conflict.

We would think immediately of fragments B 53 or B 80 *Diels-Kranz* of Heraclitus: “War is the father of everything...”; “it is necessary to know that war is common, justice is discord and everything happens according to discord and necessity” (πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστὶ... εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ’ ἔριν καὶ χρεῶν). Undoubtedly a too-violent image for Lewis, although he must not be foreign to the spirit of fragment B 51, that is, to the image of the tension in the strings of a bow or a lyre: “They do not understand how, in spite of diverging, is in accord with itself: harmony which is peculiar to the fact of tending to opposite directions such as the bow and the lyre” (οὐ ξυνιᾶσιν ὅπως διαφερόμενον ἐωυτῶι ὁμολογέει παλίντροπος ἀρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης), and still less alien to the spirit of fragment B 50, since he shows himself so seduced by the image of deaf human beings who need a megaphone to be roused: “Not by listening to me but to Reason is it wise to recognize that everything is one” (οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφὸν ἐν πάντα εἶναι ὁ Ἡ. φησι). Therefore, I should dare to say that Heraclitus’s wisdom underlies Lewis’s intellectual richness. I feel induced to believe it by the fact that he speaks about “hunger and satiety” in God -in spite of doing it in different texts-; that he adduces the example of the balance in Nature and the customs of the ancient agricultural communities and, above all, that he examines pain by turning it into the protagonist of a plausible dialectic relationship⁶⁰.

The protagonist of *Shadowlands*, C. S. Lewis, lets himself be transformed by love, pain and death. He becomes a different man when he feels the need for the “other” or, still better, when he feels the future lack of the woman he loves: ‘Do you know something, Jack?’, she says to him in hospital, ‘You seem different. You look at me properly now’.

He shows himself transformed to his colleague, the dean, when this latter suggests that, because Joy is not his wife, he is not obliged to take care of Douglas, Joy’s son:

‘It's impossible, it's unthinkable. How could Joy be my wife? I'd have to love her, wouldn't I? I'd have to care more for her than for anyone else in this world. I'd have to be suffering the torments of the damned at the prospect of losing her’. / ‘I'm sorry, Jack. I didn't know’. / ‘Nor did I, Harry’.

⁵⁹ His conviction reaches the extent of affirming: “If, as I can’t help suspecting, the dead also feel the pains of separation (and this may be one of their purgatorial sufferings), then for both lovers, and for all pairs of lovers without exception, bereavement is a universal and integral part of our experience of love” (*A Grief Observed*, 43).

⁶⁰ Indeed, the God in the following text would be worthy in my opinion, of Heraclitus: “A merciful man aims at his neighbour's good and so does ‘God's will’, consciously co-operating with ‘the simple good’. A cruel man oppresses his neighbour, and so does simple evil. But in doing such evil, he is used by God, without his own knowledge or consent, to produce the complex good -so that the first man serves God as a son, and the second as a tool” (*The Problem of Pain*, p. 89).

In short, he becomes a different man by not protecting himself, by living and accepting all sorts of experiences such as attending the Oxonian pagan feast in honour of the sun on the first of May and, above all, because of Joy's influence on him. It must be also recognized that, after Joy's death, he will abominate for a certain period of time that vivisectioning God who seems to experiment with rats in the laboratory, that is, with human beings⁶¹. But experience imposes itself: 'I know that now I've just come up against a bit of experience, Warnie. Experience is a brutal teacher, but you learn. My God you learn'. 'You can't hold onto things, Douglas. You have to let them go', he explains to Douglas –almost like that river of Heraclitus's whose waters flowing around you will never be the same⁶². And, finally, as a result of long and painful reflections:

'Twice in my life I've been given the choice: as a boy and as a man. The boy chose safety, the man chooses suffering. The pain now is part of the happiness then. That's the deal'.

By the way! Given that Lewis is a man who learns to accept the blows of an unmerciful sculptor, it is worth remembering those surgeons of fragment B 58 *Diels-Kranz* of Heraclitus, who demand to be paid although they cure only by incising and cauterizing⁶³.

After Joy Gresham's death, Lewis wrote *A Grief Observed*, a sort of cathartic reflection through which he reviews and assumes the whole vital, intellectual and spiritual process that I have tried to explain. I am not going to repeat what I have already written in the footnotes. However, I should like to underline that W. Nicholson, once more, catches very well its sense. One of the protagonists of the film, the rebellious university student, tells Professor Lewis that he received from his father, a mere schoolteacher, a very good lesson: 'we read in order to know that we are not alone'. So, too, does Jack believe. And, quite paradoxically if one takes into account that he is truly Christian, Lewis's reflections on the anger that men and women feel in certain circumstances remind me of those by E. Cioran in *The mauvais demiurge*⁶⁴. Cioran, a true nihilist, confessed on several occasions that his reason for not committing suicide was to be able to continue to write and, therefore, we should infer, with the hope of being read, that is, of connecting with others who might share his anxieties. Lewis gives us to understand something similar: "Aren't all these notes the senseless writings of a man who won't accept the fact that

⁶¹ Cf.: "No, my real fear is not of materialism. If it were true, we –or what we mistake for 'we'- could get out, get from under the harrow. An overdose of sleeping pills would do it. I am more afraid that we are really rats in a trap. Or, worse still, rats in a laboratory. Someone said, I believe, 'God always geometrizes'. Supposing the truth were 'God always vivisects?'" (*A Grief Observed*, 26).

⁶² A 6 Diels-Kranz: λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῆι ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς δὲ εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης ("Heraclitus says somewhere that everything moves forward and nothing remains and, comparing what exists with the stream of a river, says that one would not be able to enter twice the same river").

⁶³ Οἱ γοῦν ἰατροί, φησὶν ὁ Ἡράκλειτος, τέμνοντες, καίοντες, πάντη βασανίζοντες κακῶς τοὺς ἀρρωστούοντας, ἐπαιτέονται μηδὲν ἄξιοι μισθὸν λαμβάνειν παρὰ τῶν ἀρρωστούοντων, ταῦτα ἐργαζόμενοι, τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰς νόσους ("Doctors who cut and burn and torture their patients in every way complain that they do not receive the reward they deserve" –translated in this case by Kahn, *op. cit.*, p. 63).

⁶⁴ Paris: Gallimard, 1969.

there is nothing we can do with suffering except to suffer it?”⁶⁵. Nevertheless, later on, his “tone” is quite different: “At present I am learning to get about on crutches. Perhaps I shall presently be given a wooden leg. But I shall never be a biped again”⁶⁶. Maybe, but Literature is a good way for him to explain what seems to be the capital concern of his life. Brian Sibley⁶⁷ tells us that this Lewis, transformed by experience, depicted himself as a man who walks through a garden whose centre is protected by high walls. He has already overcome some of them, so that, he focuses increasingly on the Gardener and not on the garden, on the one who creates Beauty and not on worldly beauty. And he also depicted himself as a sailor accompanied by his wife. She has already come through safely, while he still remains in “shadowlands”⁶⁸.

Lewis, taking advantage of his excellent knowledge of Medieval Literature, allegorized by making an implicit reference to the *Roman de la Rose* and Nicholson introduced it into the script. And with regard to “shadowlands”, it is quite clear that this is one of these classical images which have become a true intellectual treasure of Western sensibility. The Platonic image of the cave in the seventh book of Plato’s *Republic*, with its prisoners, shadows and, after having been applied to Plato’s metaphysics, with its invitation to reascend towards the brightness of the Good, continues to be for many people the suitable image in order to visualize whole lives full of joy and pain, light and shadows. The couple Lewis-Gresham had enough time before Joy’s death to travel to Wales and Greece. Both were completely fascinated by the light of Greece –we all have been-, so that the use of such a significant simile, that is “shadowlands”, is absolutely logical bearing in mind, furthermore, that with clear Platonic connotations, it was introduced by Lewis himself into the last book of his *Chronicles of Narnia*:

‘The Eagle is right’, said the Lord Digory. Listen Peter. When Asland said you could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of. But that was not the real Narnia. That had a beginning and an end. It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia which has always been here and always will be here: just as our world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in Asland’s real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been passed drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream ... It’s all in Plato, all in Plato⁶⁹: bless me, what do they teach them at these schools!”⁷⁰.

⁶⁵ P. 29.

⁶⁶ P. 46.

⁶⁷ *Shadowlands. The Love Story of C. S. Lewis and Joy Gresham* (London: Harper Collins Audio Books, 1994).

⁶⁸ I should like to insist, however, on the fact that he already avoids any idealization: “All reality is iconoclastic. The earthly beloved, even in this life, incessantly triumphs over you mere idea of her. And you want her to; you want her with all her resistances, all her faults, all her unexpectedness. That is, in her foursquare and independent reality. And this, not any image or memory, is what we are to love still, after she is dead” (*A Grief Observed*, 56). Cf. *The Four Loves* (p. 127): “We were made for God. Only by being in some respect like Him, only by being a manifestation of His beauty, loving kindness, wisdom or goodness, has any earthly Beloved excited our love. It is not that we have loved them too much, but that we did not quite understand what we were loving”.

⁶⁹ Cf. Pl. R. 514a-517d: ‘Next’, said I, ‘compare (ἀπέικασον) our nature in respect of education and its lack to such an experience as this. Picture (ἰδέ) men dwelling in a sort of subterranean cavern with a long entrance open to the light on its entire width. Conceive them (ᾄρα) as having their legs and necks fettered from childhood, so that they remain in the same spot, able to look forward only, and prevented by the fetters from turning their heads. Picture (ἰδέ) further the light from a fire burning higher up and at a distance behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners and above them a road along which a low wall has been built, as the exhibitors of puppet-shows have partitions before the men themselves, above which they show the puppets’. ‘All that I see’, he said. ‘See also, then, men carrying past the wall

implements of all kinds that rise above the wall, and human images and shapes of animals as well, wrought in stone and wood and every material, some of these bearers presumably speaking and others silent'. 'A strange image you speak of', he said, 'and strange prisoners'. 'Like to us', I said; for, to begin with, tell me do you think that these men would have seen anything of themselves or of one another except the shadows (τὰς σκιάς) cast from the fire on the wall (προσπιπτούσας) of the cave that fronted them?'. 'How could they', he said, 'if they were compelled to hold their heads unmoved through life?'... 'And if their prison had an echo from the wall opposite them, when one of the passers-by uttered a sound, do you think that they would suppose anything else than the passing shadow (τὴν παριούσαν σκίαν) to be the speaker?... such prisoners would deem reality to be nothing else than the passing shadows (τὰς σκιάς) of the artificial objects... When one was freed from his fetters and compelled to stand up suddenly and turn his head around and walk and to lift up his eyes to the light, and in doing all this felt pain and, because of the dazzle and glitter of the light, was unable to discern the objects whose shadows (τὰς σκιάς) he formerly saw... do you not think that he would be at loss and that he would regard what he formerly saw as more real than the things now pointed out to him?... And so, finally, I suppose, he would be able to look upon the sun itself and see its true nature, not by reflections in water or phantasms of it in an alien setting, but in and by itself in its own place... 'Well then, if he recalled to mind his first habitation and what passed for wisdom there, and his fellow-bondsmen, do you not think that he would count himself happy in the change and pity them?'. 'He would indeed'... 'This image (εἰκόνα) then, dear Glaucon, we must apply as a whole to all that has been said, likening the region revealed through sight to the habitation of the prison, and the light of the fire in it to the power of the sun. And if you assume that the ascent and the contemplation of the things above is the soul's ascension to the intelligible region, you will miss my surmise, since that is what you desire to hear. But God knows whether it is true. But, at any rate, my dream as it appears to me is that in the region of the known the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good, and that when seen it must needs point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and the author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason, and that anyone who is to act wisely in private or public must have caught sight of this'. 'I concur', he said, 'so far as I am able'. 'Come then,' I said, 'and join me in this further thought, and do not be surprised that those who have attained to this height are not willing to occupy themselves with the affairs of men, but their souls ever feel the upward urge and the yearning for that sojourn above. For this, I take it, is likely if in this point too the likeness of our image (εἰκόνα) holds' (translated by Pul Shorey, Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann Ltd. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁷⁰ C. S. Lewis. *The Chronicles of Narnia, VII, The Last Battle*. London: Harper Collins Publishers, pp. 159-60.