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Grace in Intimate Interpersonal Communication: C.S. Lewis on its Presence and Practice

Celeste Seymour

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GRACE IN INTIMATE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
C.S. LEWIS ON ITS PRESENCE AND PRACTICE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Celeste Grayson Seymour

August 2012

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Celeste Grayson Seymour

2012

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Celeste Grayson Seymour

Approved June 12, 2012

Calvin L. Troup, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Communication &
Rhetorical Studies
(Committee Chair)

Ronald C. Arnett, Ph.D.
Professor of Communication & Rhetorical
Studies
(Committee Member)

Janie Harden Fritz, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Communication &
Rhetorical Studies
(Committee Member)

James Swindal, Ph.D.
Dean, McAnulty College and Graduate
School of Liberal Arts
Professor of Philosophy

Ronald C. Arnett, Ph.D.
Chair and Professor, Department of
Communication & Rhetorical Studies

ABSTRACT

GRACE IN INTIMATE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
C.S. LEWIS ON ITS PRESENCE AND PRACTICE

By

Celeste Grayson Seymour

August 2012

Dissertation supervised by Calvin L. Troup, Ph.D.

This project builds a theory of the presence and practice of grace in intimate interpersonal communication utilizing the writings of C.S. Lewis and his intellectual mentors. Lewis, who wrote extensively on the theory and practice of love, offers a compelling approach to understanding human relationships from a Christian philosophical perspective.

The first chapter begins with major questions and themes in the interpersonal literature concerning human discourse, relation, and action. Lewis frames human relationships in a robustly theoretical and practical manner, characterizing the conditions of our discursive relational selves as difficult yet joyful. He argues that the work of intimate interpersonal relationship building is in need of the presence and practice of grace.

The second chapter expands upon Lewis's response to his historical moment. Lewis's Christian theism lends him a compelling scholarly and pragmatic standpoint amongst the other critics of modernity. He is writing and living within the cusp of historical change. Accordingly, the chapter discusses key texts in which Lewis articulates the problematic trends within modernity concerning presuppositions of human discourse and relation. Together, these texts speak to the presence and practice of grace in intimate interpersonal communication.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five outline the major metaphors which build a theory of grace in intimate relationships: sentiment, will, and responsiveness. Lewis's work suggests that we as scholars and practitioners should consider intimate interpersonal communication as a matter of sentiment understood philosophically, will understood phenomenologically, and responsiveness understood ontologically. These metaphors frame intimacy as *heartfelt choice*, *loving labor*, and *responsiveness to form*. Each of these metaphors build upon the other, and each chapter concludes with specific implications for interpersonal communication theory and practice.

Chapter Six discusses current discursive and practical trends concerning intimacy development. The project argues that adolescents and young adults meet challenging moments of relational development with incongruent beliefs and practices, often rendering them ill-prepared for intimacy. In a culmination of the major metaphors of this project, the concluding sections discuss approaches to teaching young adults about how to feel, will, and respond in intimate contexts in a manner which leads to good and gracious love.

DEDICATION

O God, from whom all good doth come: Grant that by thy inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same.

From a Collect of the Book of Common Prayer of the Anglican Church

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I begin by acknowledging all of the work which my director, Dr. Calvin Troup, has done with me on this project. I am a better teacher, a better scholar, and a better person because of your mentorship.

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I will always be grateful for my family. I could ask for no better people to grow with—a household of grace, laughter, faithfulness, and joy. I especially thank my Mom. You taught me all I know about loving well even before I knew to open a book.

I am thankful for the support of two dear friends—my very own women of St. Anne’s. Lewis held the love of friendship in very high regard, and in knowing you, I understand why. With as little as a phone call, you remind me that friends not only think of one another. We share the same truth.

And finally, I am grateful for the time which I have spent with Lewis. Like MacDonald did for you, you have brought me back to my love of fairy tales, urged me to laugh at my own clumsiness, made me sigh from Joy, and guided me to Glory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	iv
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgement.....	vii
Questions of Human Discourse, Relation, and Action: The Need for Grace.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Human Being and Language.....	3
1.2.1 Symbols, Cognition, and Meaning in IPC Studies.....	3
1.2.2 The Construction and Interpretation of Social Realities in Intimate Interpersonal Communication Contexts.....	6
1.2.3 The Phenomenological Word and the Triadic Nature of Discourse.....	8
1.3 Alterity and the Condition of the Will.....	12
1.3.1 The Relationship of Self and Other in IPC Studies.....	12
1.3.2 Dialogue and the Introduction to the Triadic.....	15
1.3.3 God and Knowledge of the Self.....	16
1.3.4 Intimacy of the Self, God, and the Other.....	18
1.4 Moral Law, Judgment, and Action.....	20
1.4.1 Judgment and Decision-Making in IPC Studies.....	20
1.4.2 The Moral Law and Reason.....	23
1.4.3 Pain and Happiness in Self-Revelation.....	25
1.5 The Willful Choice of Intimacy.....	27
1.6 The Presence and Practice of Grace: A Compelling Alternative.....	30

Lewis on Questions of Human Relational Being in the Modern Age.....	32
2.1 Introduction.....	32
2.2 Modernity’s Critics and Implications for IPC.....	33
2.2.1 Progress and the Condition of Human Relations.....	33
2.2.2. The Secular Public and Inordinate Private Relationships.....	35
2.2.3. Subjective Decision-Making in Relational Contexts.....	37
2.3 Lewis’s Response to Modernity.....	41
2.3.1 The “Modern Man and Categories of His Thought”.....	41
2.3.2 The “Inner Ring” Versus “Membership”.....	47
2.3.2 “The Poison of Subjectivism”.....	51
2.4 Christ: The Presence and Practice of Grace in Human Relationships.....	56
Sentiments and Training of the Heart.....	63
3.1 Introduction.....	63
3.2 Sentiments and a Defense of Universal Values.....	64
3.2.1 Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine.....	64
3.2.2 The Scottish Enlightenment Philosophers.....	66
3.3 Lewis and the Training of the Heart.....	71
3.3.1 The Body and the “Weight of Glory”.....	75
3.3.2 The Function of Pain and Death.....	80
3.3.3 The Gift of Pleasure.....	83
3.3.4 A Soul <i>Surprised by Joy</i>	86
3.4 Lewis on Living in the Household in the Everyday.....	88
3.4.1 Our Natural Affections.....	88
3.4.2 Affection and Ownership.....	90

3.4.3 Moving With and Beyond Our Affections.....	93
3.5 Implications for IPC: A Common Place to Begin.....	95
3.6 Implications for IPC: “Men Without Chests”.....	99
Will and the Movement of Reflective Souls.....	105
4.1 Introduction.....	105
4.2 An Augustinian Approach to the Will.....	107
4.3 The Functional Importance of Will in IPC.....	110
4.4 Lewis on the Movement of the Will and the Fall.....	115
4.5 “Two Ways with the Self” in Relation.....	118
4.5.1 Pride.....	118
4.5.2 Personhood.....	122
4.6 The Lovability of Human Beings.....	126
4.7 Implications for IPC: The Looking-Glass Self.....	132
4.8 Implications for IPC: Wisdom and Work Through Weak Spots and Blind Spots.....	135
Responsiveness to the Forms of Personhood.....	141
5.1 Introduction.....	141
5.2 Communicative Reciprocity in Intimate IPC Studies.....	143
5.3 The Rhetoric and Philosophy of Human Communicative Action and Responsiveness.....	147
5.4 Responsiveness to Personhood.....	151
5.5 The Femininity of Human Responsiveness: <i>That Hideous Strength</i>	156
5.6 The Communicative Work of Charitable Responsiveness.....	161
5.7 Implications for IPC: “The Trouble with ‘X’ ...”.....	163

5.8 Implications for IPC: A Complementary Form of Intimacy.....	172
Building Intimacy With Grace in Contemporary Discourse and Practice.....	183
6.1 Introduction.....	183
6.2 The Status Quo for Sexual Practices and Intimacy Development in Contemporary Society.....	184
6.2.1 Sexual Practices and Reproductive Technology.....	185
6.2.2 Discourse and the Formation of Intimate Relationships.....	188
6.3 Sexuality and Intimacy in the Public Sphere According to Lewis.....	199
6.4 Promises and Practices.....	203
6.5 Sentiments: Attentiveness to the Intonation of the Heart.....	208
6.6 Will: Participation in a Habitude of Love.....	211
6.7 Responsiveness: Maintaining Relational Roles and Structures.....	216
6.8 Intimacy and Grace: Where Does This Leave Us as Scholars and Practitioners?.....	219
Endnotes.....	226
Works Cited.....	231

CHAPTER ONE

QUESTIONS OF HUMAN DISCOURSE, RELATION, AND ACTION:

THE NEED FOR GRACE

1.1 Introduction

In interpersonal communication studies, questions of human will and action in discourse are central. Chapter One outlines major questions of interpersonal communication: (1) what is the relationship between human being and language?; (2) how do we relate to others?; and (3) how do we decide how to act? Each question will be addressed in terms of the scholarly conversations in the interpersonal communication literature, attentive to theories which are specifically relevant to the formation and maintenance of intimate relationships. The literature review frames interpersonal relationships as complex embodied and symbolic phenomena which are engaged, constructed, maintained, and changed by selves in discourse with one another. At the core of interpersonal communication studies is the search to understand human beings and our relational choice, discourse, and action from theoretical and practical perspectives.

Following the review of major questions and theoretical perspectives in interpersonal studies concerning discourse, relation, and action, the chapter utilizes a philosophical perspective driven by the writings of C.S. Lewis and his Christian intellectual mentors. Lewis, who wrote extensively on the theory and practice of love, offers a compelling approach to understanding human relationships. Major themes in interpersonal communication—such as the nature of the self, the formation of human relationships, and the quality of discursive practices—already intersect with ideas from rhetoric and philosophy of communication. This chapter argues that Lewis's interpretation of the Christian narrative frames human relationships in a robustly

theoretical and practical manner; a manner framed by the presence and practice of love and grace. Lewis characterizes the conditions of our discursive relational selves as difficult yet joyful. Human beings are complex embodied, discursive creatures with complicated needs, desires, and inclinations. Furthermore, we live in a created order—in the presence of our Creator—which continually shapes our understanding and responsiveness. Thus human beings must navigate a multi-dimensional reality, including the temporal and the eternal, choice and necessity, truthfulness and deceit. Put within the vocabulary of this project, interpersonal communication, and especially *intimate* interpersonal communication, is considered a matter of sentiment understood philosophically, will understood phenomenologically, and responsiveness understood ontologically.

Such conditions of complexity within human being, discourse, and relation provide continual fodder for our theoretical and practical considerations. We as communication scholars are aware that there is still much work to be done in understanding and living within relationships with others, and this project suggests that grace is a compelling metaphor for thinking about the sustainability of human relation. The metaphor of work provides an important entryway from interpersonal communication studies to the Christian philosophical understanding of love as it is framed in this project. C.S. Lewis particularly argues that our loves “work” for us in different ways in body, mind, and heart (*The Four Loves*). Each moment of our loving is made more salient by grace—we need to practice and receive graciousness from one another if our relationships are to truly “work.” As will be further explored in this project, grace frames human love as willful choice, purposeful labor, and responsiveness to form. Especially within the intimate relations of marriages and households, human love needs

the support of grace in our choices, labors, and responses with and toward the Other.

Interpersonal communication scholars perennially engage questions of how our loves and relationships “work” in the everyday. The questions we ask point to the difficulties emergent not only from relating in general but of human love and intimacy in particular. A review of the literature suggests that the spirit of interpersonal inquiry is complementary to major ideas and questions of the Christian philosophical perspective guiding this project, whether or not the majority of scholars rely upon or directly address the metaphor of grace in their works. Interpersonal scholars ask what it means to be relational, discursive beings learning to know, understand, and commune with one another competently, respectfully, and even lovingly—a task shared by the Christian thinkers introduced within this project, particularly C.S. Lewis. These questions are not always easy to address nor to practice, especially when it comes to intimacy and difficult interpersonal situations. In beginning to approach the “how” and “why” of relating and loving, this chapter casts a wide theoretical net by outlining these questions of human-being-in-discourse through three major interrelated metaphors: language, relation, and action. Each section is supplemented by the constructive addition of the ontological, discursive, and relational presuppositions of the Christian intellectual tradition framed by the writings of C.S. Lewis.

1.2 Human Being and Language

1.2.1 Symbols, Cognition, and Meaning in IPC Studies

One of the major presuppositions of interpersonal communication studies is that human beings live in a world of symbols. In the semiotic and semantic traditions, humans are understood as differing from other animals in their capacity to create and discover symbols and communicate those symbols across time. The study of contemporary

semiotics began with Ferdinand de Saussure and the linguistic school of the Formalists in the late 1800s. In *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure places the system of language [*langue*] as paramount to human speech [*langage*] and utterances [*parole*]. By doing so, he and the Formalists challenged the popular understanding of the direct connection between the sign and the referent; instead, he posited an arbitrary relationship between the sign (consisting of the signifier and the signified) and the referent based on the internal components of language systems. Since its modern beginnings, however, the study of semiotics would expand into more complex models of symbol structure. In the mid-1940s, Charles K. Ogden and I. A. Richards articulate a three-fold relationship between the reference, symbol, and referent of any communicative utterance, challenging the dyadic sign-referent relationship in Saussure's work. Even later, postmodern semiotician Julia Kristeva's work questions the Formalists' abstraction of language through its emphasis on *langue*; instead, she points to the inherent tension between the world of conceptual "truth" and that of experienced "reality" in communicative acts.

The study of general semantics approaches the nature and use of language by way of its syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. Pioneered by Alfred Korzybski in the early 20th century, general semantics emphasizes relationships between language and human behavior. Korzybski's work focuses particularly on the problematic processes of perception and interpretation of environments and the linguistic abstraction which necessarily occurs. Humans have the unique ability to "time-bind," or to create and to symbolize. However, both the structure and the function of language makes communicators keenly aware of their symbolic limitations, causing us to construct linguistic "maps" in navigation of the world of perception and interpretation. Humans are cognitively, linguistically, and relationally complex.

These presuppositions of cognitive and symbolic complexity hold important implications for interpersonal communication studies, primarily by way of theories of constructivism, interactive systems, and symbolic constructionism. For example, Jesse Delia, Barbara O'Keefe, and Daniel O'Keefe's work takes a constructivist approach to interpersonal relationships, one that emphasizes the complexity of cognitive constructs and the variety of communicative responses one can have to subtleties in interpersonal exchanges. According to this framework, messages which are the most cognitively complex refer to those which reflect awareness of and adaptations to environmental, relational, subjective, and symbolic aspects of communicative contexts. In the same vein, interactive systems studies presuppose a significant relationship between intrapersonal cognition and interpretation and relational dynamics. Stemming from the work of Jurgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson in the 1950s and later Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin, and Don D. Jackson in the 1960s, interactive systems studies articulate the nature of communicative acts as not only illustrative of message content but also reflective of the relational dynamics of self and other in the interchange. The famous axiom of "one cannot not communicate" (Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson) illustrates how human symbolic creation and acts of communication constitute the very nature of our selves as interpretive and relational beings.

Studies attentive to the complexity of human thought and behavior in relationship with one another address an important theoretical theme in interpersonal communication studies: the construction and maintenance of social realities by way of language. The summative work of this kind is illustrated in the writings of George Herbert Mead (*Mind, Self, and Society* published in 1934) and Harold Blumer (*Symbolic Interactionism* published in 1969). These works presuppose that humans have the unique capacity to

conceptualize the self and take on the role of the other; we think by simultaneous abstraction and relation. The result is a semantic and pragmatic phenomenon creating a social existence which continues to guide interpretations, behaviors, and exchanges. Later scholarship would term this phenomenon as the “coordinated management of meaning,” (Barnett Pearce and Cronen) or the process by which persons-in-conversation reflexively participate in the creation and maintenance of social worlds through communicative acts.

1.2.2 The Construction and Interpretation of Social Realities in Intimate Interpersonal Contexts

The nature of human beings as symbol-users leads many interpersonal communication scholars to conclude that one’s perception and interpretation of reality is symbolically and socially created and managed. Some scholars, such as John Gottman in *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail* and Mark L. Knapp and Anita Vangelisti in *Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships*, argue that relational conditions are created and sustained through self-disclosure and interpersonal expectations. The quality of communication patterns and exchanges within intimate relationships lead either to relational health and growth or stagnation and decline. Relationships involve continual and careful symbolic repositioning of individuals in relation to their perceptions, expectations, and messages. Family systems studies, such as is illustrated in Laurie Heatherington and Myrna L. Friedlander’s work on Family Relational Communication Control Coding System (FRCCCS) (see for example “Complementarity and Symmetry in Family Therapy Communication”), expand the dyadic relationships of marriage and courtship into the larger family system, arguing for the expansion of intimate interpersonal environments to include multiple discursive perspectives and exchanges.

The construction of social realities through symbolic and relational means holds

significant implications for gender and expectations of intimacy in particular. For example, gender communication scholar Julia Wood suggests that “the social groups within which we are located powerfully shape what we experience and know as well as how we understand and communicate with ourselves, others, and the world” (*Communication Theories in Action* 250). She advocates for interpersonal theories attentive to the complexity inherent in the shaping of gender roles: “gender is a system of meanings that sculpts individuals’ standpoint by positioning most males and females in disparate material, social and symbolic circumstances” (“Feminist Scholarship” 111). In a similar vein as feminist epistemologist Sandra Harding, Wood posits for the standpoint theory of relational communication, arguing that knowledge is situated within historical, linguistic, and cultural enactments of the world. At the same time that scholars such as Wood and Harding are working through issues of feminist epistemology, gender communication scholar Deborah Tannen likewise assumed gender to be influenced by symbolic constructs. Masculine and feminine communication styles essentially constitute different cultural and social worlds framed by distinct “genderlects.” Gender communication theorists suggest that while perceptual and communicative inclinations of men and women may differ, persons in relationships still can work toward the shared interpretation of goals and the subsequent coordination of messages and behaviors.[1]

Understanding human interpretive power in intimate relationships holds significant implications for this project. Within the majority of the literature on intimate interpersonal and gender communication, the emphasis is upon how relationships are created, maintained, and changed through linguistic and interpretive means which are influenced by historical, social, and cultural narratives. This project supports and recognizes both the validity and importance of theoretical frameworks such as general

semantics and social constructionism. However, it works from the assumption that a phenomenological rendering of the Word and discourse lends even greater complexity to human interpretive power. The Christian intellectual tradition framing this project adds depth to theories of symbol and language use by way of its emphasis on the triadic nature of human discourse.

From the perspective of Lewis and other thinkers introduced in these chapters, language is tethered to both ontological significance *and* existential weight. Human beings engage in responsiveness to intentions, alterity, and existence. Symbols and discourse function relationally; yet the relation is a triadic phenomenon of the self, others, and the Other Himself in the mystery of oneness. The interplay of communion and alterity attends not just to the self or the other but to that which is *within* and *beyond* both. Thus, the *interpretive* component of human symbolicity is expanded exponentially, as interlocutors attend to meanings and forms beyond the present discursive moment but which nonetheless addresses them both partners intimately. Consequently, the entry point which Lewis affords us into understanding human discursive nature provides rich theoretical ground from which we can begin to address issues of grace and love in intimate relationships. Without the Word as ontological weight to our words, we have little freedom of interpretive grace in communication and consequently limit our relational experiences.

1.2.3 The Phenomenological Word and the Triadic Nature of Discourse

Many thinkers of the Christian intellectual tradition understand the Word as phenomenologically distinct from any other type of human action. From the moment that symbol use is introduced into our existence, our personhood as human beings is defined relationally. As Jacques Ellul writes, the spoken word “ushers us into another dimension:

relationship with other living beings, with persons,” making us “qualitatively different from everything else” (14). We *speak to* and at the same time are *being spoken to* by God and by others. As derivative of the Incarnate Deity, the Word is a phenomenon in which humans have freedom of participatory creation. According to G. K. Chesterton, the beginning of human history points to the unique role which humankind holds in its capacity for symbolic creation and articulation. In *The Everlasting Man*, he writes “every sane sort of history must begin with man as man, a thing standing absolute and alone...this creature was truly different from all other creatures; because he was a creator as well as a creature” (29). The capacity for speech and symbolicity allows humans to relate to creation phenomenologically and to their Creator existentially.

However, linguistic acts are both the problem and the temporal solution to relating to the world and others. In *On the Trinity* and *Confessions*, Augustine articulates the role of discourse as constituting our epistemological and relational existence; it is how we know and act in temporality. Yet Augustine also believes that the distance between everyday discourse and the language of God has become incommensurable due to the fallen condition of the world. God’s eternal Word, unlike human language, produces without division of images or signs. Our corporeal condition, however, necessitates that human knowledge remain divided in a succession of utterances. These acts of speech, reflecting images in our memory, function to connect the verbal sign and the image of that object as it is perceived in the world. Yet since the Fall in the Garden, all of humanity is embedded in history and, consequently, our symbolic creations can be only partially and opaquely understood as well as enacted. George MacDonald, in his *Unspoken Sermons*, writes:

Whatever belonging to the region of thought and feeling is uttered in

words, is of necessity uttered imperfectly. For thought and feeling are infinite, and human speech, although far-reaching in scope, and marvellous in delicacy, can embody them after all but approximately and suggestively...Our Lord had no design of constructing a system of truth in intellectual forms. The truth of the moment in its relation to him, The Truth, was what he spoke. He spoke out of a region of realities which he knew could only be suggested—not represented—in the forms of intellect and speech. (31)

There is a perpetual *lack* in human symbolic creation and discourse, a lack which reflects the deficiencies inherent in human life in temporality. Our understanding is rudimentary to begin with because we are creatures and not the Creator. Further still, we inherit corrupted minds, hearts, and souls within an imperfect world. Our utterances inherently are deficient in relation to the wholeness of Truth.

Nonetheless, the discursive Word is humankind's most significant avenue of meaningful relation with others and the world. Ellul articulates the complexity inherent in Christianity's understanding of the Word in temporality. Language, as an existential phenomenon, involves connotations, intonations, paradoxes, and ambiguity. Yet "speech fills the infinite gap which separates us," allowing for the freedom of a "rich and blessed redundancy" where the self may encounter Truth and meaningful relationships anew with each communicative act (17). Encounters with meaning, however, rely upon the condition of the heart. Herein lies the richness of *speaking* and *being spoken to* from a phenomenological perspective. As Edmund Husserl claims, one's perceptions of the world are a product of one's intentions. A person attends to the world based on a "wakeful-world consciousness" which lends coherence and validity to communicative action (Husserl 108). From the perspective of this project, a "wakeful-world consciousness" involves attending to and listening for God's Word, or to the Word which is speaking out from creation to us in our existence. Humans attend to symbols and

discourse not because they *ought* to, but because they *have* to do so. One can speak only because one was first spoken to by God. Truth is spoken into the heart of every creature of God by the Word Himself who is within and beyond temporality (see *New American Standard Bible*, John 1.1).

One of the central tenets of this Christian philosophical perspective, then, is the uniqueness of humankind in their derivation of the Word. Communication refers not only to the spoken word but also to the communal embodiment of the Word in discourse and action. In order to engage in successful communicative acts one must be attentive to the relational aspect inherent in the semantic. By grace, we are spoken to first by and are able to understand the Word—in this regard, all human beings are discursively unified. It is our task to extend our experience of interpretive grace toward others. In order to do this, Lewis offers the simple axiom: “We must be wholly empirical. We must listen, and note, and memorise. And of course we must set aside every trace of snobbery or pedantry about ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ usages” (“Before We Can Communicate” 241). Lewis is aware of the “problem” of communication; alterity of persons lead to varying interpretive relations. Yet is it a “problem”? Lewis would argue not necessarily so. His call to be “empirical” and to “listen” “before we can communicate” encourages individuals to practice a measure of attentive grace in communicating meaning. There is great power in human interpretation of messages and if we are not purposefully attentive, we cannot listen to the manifestation of the Word through the mouth of the other. When the other speaks a true word, we know it in our hearts ourselves. Thus, the measure of good communication is in the unification of individual interpretive power of the Word: “If, given patience and ordinary skill, you cannot explain a thing to any sensible person whatever (provided he will listen), then you don’t really understand it yourself” (242). Understanding truly is a

gift of grace, one which we receive as well as exercise in the presence of the other.

1.3 Alterity and the Condition of the Will

1.3.1 The Relationship of Self and the Other in IPC Studies

Consequently, another central question of interpersonal communication studies concerns how persons-in-conversation find the ability not only to understand but to form lasting relationships with one another in the midst of both similarity and difference. Interpersonal communication theorists articulate the goals of communicative interactions ranging from mutual understanding of meanings, messages, or motives, to the coordination of individual behaviors within relational contexts, to emergent identity and meaning from the discursive meeting itself. One of the cornerstones of early interpersonal communication studies, John W. Thibault and Harold H. Kelley's *The Social Psychology of Groups*, grounds the study of relational decision-making in the context of "objective interdependence" (4). The authors claim that individuals in relationship work to find solutions to the "problems created by interdependency," or consequences of reciprocal control within the relationship itself (5). Each individual simultaneously is dependent upon and independent from the other with whom their behaviors and decisions are intimately tied. It is this dialectical interplay of the self and the other in the context of a relationship that frames the ground of interpersonal communication studies.

Early interpersonal communication studies advocated the recognition of difference and its role in shaping relational identity as the key to addressing issues of alterity. From as early as Mead's claim in 1934 that the self in relationship is constituted by the interaction of the "I" (or the self viewed as subject) and the "me" (or the self viewed as object), most interpersonal theories assume that in any given communicative

interaction a person both *acts* based upon one's own interpretations of a given context and *reacts* on the basis of his or her perception of the other's interpretation as well. The self relates not only to the *particular* other in relationship but also has its identity shaped by the expectations and interpretations of the "generalized other" of community. The very notion of the self as self is dependent upon the recognition of alterity in relation.

What constitutes an interpersonal relationship between the self and the other, then? The answer to this question takes on a variety of forms within the interpersonal communication literature. Stemming from the work of Mead and the idea of relational role playing, some interpersonal communication theories presuppose that relationships are constituted by the coordination of interdependent behaviors between the self and the other. Roderick P. Hart and Don M. Burks's 1972 article "Rhetorical Sensitivity and Social Interaction" advocates for an understanding of human beings as inherently complex with a multitude of rhetorical roles available in any given communicative context. Consequently, what the authors call "flexible discretion" is a necessary frame of mind as each individual approaches an interaction: "every verbal exchange is a fleeting, *ad hoc* affair in which the guiding principle is flexible discretion, so buttressed by a concern for the complexity of the Other that no inviolable verbal promise should be brought to bear" (Hart and Burks 82). Since ideas can be rendered in many ways and misunderstanding easily occurs, meaningful relationships can be found more readily when communicators remain rhetorically sensitive to the demands of a particular interactional context, adapting their roles, expectations, and messages accordingly. Later, Barnett Pearce and Cronen's theory on the Coordinated Management of Meaning, a foundational approach to interpersonal studies, posits that successful relationships rely less on mutual understanding than on the coordination and management of meaningful

relational behaviors. These models share significant spatial metaphors to boundaries of relationships; the way in which the self and the other position themselves and behave toward the other makes all the difference in terms of relational identity.

Other frameworks of interpersonal communication—while they do not deny the significance of the coordination of interdependent behaviors between the self and the other—take a more symbolic approach to defining interpersonal relationships.

Relationships are seen as the product of cognitive and cultural construction. In his book, *Dyadic Communication*, William Wilmot suggests that relationships begin with mutual awareness, or “the perception of being perceived” (19). Relationships are constituted by intrapersonal perception as well as shared understandings among others, creating worlds which are defined by permeable boundaries of the roles and identities of the self and the other in culture, history, and community (see Kenneth Gergen, *Realities and Relationships: Surroundings in Social Construction* and W. Barnett Pearce, *Interpersonal Communication: Making Social Worlds* for two significant examples of this framework). As relationships develop, they begin to constitute “mini-cultures” themselves with distinct rituals, shared languages, and common expectations (Wilmot). It all begins, though, with the recognition of being perceived by the other, and, consequently, being called into a relational world.

The relational world of shared understanding and coordinated behaviors is primarily a *dyadic* world: a world of the self and the other. The literature in interpersonal communication studies works primarily from these dyadic presuppositions. What this project suggests, however, is the additive component of *triadic* considerations in interpersonal relations: a world of the self, the other, and God. Some areas of study in interpersonal communication begin to point to the existence of this triadic relation in

their emphasis on human being and identity as emergent from discursive meetings.

Dialogic studies in interpersonal communication act a bridge between traditional dyadic approaches to human intimate relationships in the literature and the trinitarian relational phenomenon of intimacy as it is articulated in the Christian intellectual tradition framing this project.

1.3.2 Dialogue and the Introduction to the Triadic

Dialogic theory suggests that relationships are constituted by the self, the other, and the relational phenomenon of “the between” (Buber). Meaning in discourse does not belong to either communicative partner; it is emergent of the relationship itself. An *a priori* relational phenomenon—that which exists existentially prior to the relationship—provides the ground for the meeting between the self and the other to occur. Within this meeting, the self and the other are derived as communicatively and relationally significant. Therefore, the relationship cannot be demanded, constructed, or coordinated; one can only remain open to its emergence (see Arnett, Grayson, and McDowell). The phenomenon of human relation itself provides the third element of interpersonal encounters, in addition to the self and the other.

The introduction of the dialogic framework specifically into interpersonal communication theory began in the 1970s with the publication of such texts as John Stewart’s *Bridges, Not Walls: A Book about Interpersonal Communication* and Charles Brown and Paul Keller’s *Monologue to Dialogue*. The dialogic framework shifts the focus of interpersonal communication from the ideas of communicative self-competency and progression of relational development to the importance of openness to emergent understanding between the self and other. More notable for the purposes of this project, though, the basic metaphors of dialogic studies have been applied specifically to intimate

relationships by foundational works such as Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery's *Relating: Dialogue and Dialectics*. Baxter and Montgomery situate intimate interpersonal communication within the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, articulating a model of dialogue attentive to the dialectical tensions both inherent within relations between the self and other as well as external to the relationship itself. Dialectical tensions point to human relation *itself* as an "other," and openness to this otherness is the primary manner in which the relationship can emerge within the meeting of two willing individuals.

With this relational phenomenon acting as the third element to interpersonal communication, dialogic studies offers a rich philosophical and phenomenological alternative to dyadic theories of intimacy. In intimate interpersonal communication studies, however, the presence of alterity and dialectical tensions between the self and other in interdependency call for a model of relating which advocates for more than the impersonality of the relationship as an existential phenomenon. What Lewis and his intellectual mentors offer beyond dialogic studies is the notion of a *personhood* at the crux of this relational phenomenon: the personhood of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Intimacy, then, does not emerge discursively but is ontologically tethered in the personhood of God and human participation in this relation.

1.3.3 God and Knowledge of the Self

From the perspective of the Christian thinkers introduced in this project, the self is understood as being ontologically derived from and tethered to the Other. The story of creation points to how human consciousness is marked by the revelation of divine derivation: the first moment of awareness is of who one *is* (i.e., a creature) and also of who one *is not* (the Creator). This consciousness constitutes in essence a moral, and hence relational, existence. Lewis tells how, in the beginning of creation, God caused "a

new kind of consciousness which could say 'I' and 'me', which could look upon itself as an object, which knew God, which could make judgements of truth, beauty, and goodness, and which was so far above time that it could perceive time flowing past" to descend upon humankind (*The Problem of Pain* 72). This consciousness is both epistemological and communicative, as it is a participatory act in creation. In a moment of paradox, once one understands what it means to be "self" and to be "other," it is revealed that the self cannot know how to be. Augustine writes that to confess what he knows about himself is "to confess also what I do not know about myself, since that too which I know about myself I know because you [God] enlighten me" (*Confessions* 233). Only God can know and be Himself wholly and absolutely, for He is the only true "I am." God speaks to the human self, and the self, by relation, *is*. As beings free by God's grace to engage in acts of knowing, humans can stand within the world yet remain transcendent in relation to it, sharing God's capacity for naming. With naming lies boundaries and, with boundaries, relational order.

Knowledge of the self is tied intimately to the presence and exercise of the will. Once the self as self is revealed, Lewis claims that one has a choice to regard oneself in two ways. One can regard oneself as a creature of God and, although an object of deficiency and in need of healing, is one to be loved in its proper essence *as* creature. Alternatively, one can regard the self as an object of preference ("Two Ways With the Self" 120). To know oneself in the former manner is true knowledge, and it can only come about when humanity's individualism is abandoned—even crucified—for the sake of the eternal possession of their true personhood in God. For "we shall then first be true persons when we have suffered ourselves to be fitted into our places" (Lewis, "Membership" 173). To regard oneself in the latter manner is to base one's personhood

on a lie. It is the willful preference of the self that is the ground of all sin, and it is a danger which human consciousness is born into because of the Fall. In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis writes:

from the moment a creature becomes aware of God as God and of itself as a self, the terrible alternative of choosing God or the self for the centre is opened to it...it is the fall in every individual life, and in each day of each individual life, the basic sin behind all particular sins: at this very moment you and I are either committing it, or about to commit it, or repenting it.
(70)

Each act of the will is relation, for what one chooses is a person. It is only through choosing the Person that one discovers the self. Consequently, Lewis calls for “the conscious direction of all will and desire to a transcendental Person in whom I believe all values to reside, and the reference to Him in every thought and act” (“Christianity and Culture” 35).

Knowledge of the self through relation and attention of the will can only occur with the aid of grace due to the fallen nature of humanity. Only God’s will is complete; human will is deficient. Consequently, only human minds have a need for deliberation in choice. As Augustine writes “when a man deliberates, a single soul wavers between different wills” (*Confessions* 8.10.23). One can choose how to regard a person—either as a self or an object—but one cannot and does not choose rightly again and again. The beginning of the pursuit of wisdom in decision-making is “not to will what I willed and to will what you [God] willed” (Augustine, *Confessions* 9.1.1). Yet the self cannot choose this alone. God creates a relational order of intimate personhood for His creatures within which we can practice selfhood by grace.

1.3.4 Intimacy of the Self, God, and the Other

The very nature of humankind reflects the centrality of intimacy in human

relations. In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis argues that because of our role as creatures, we are granted with a unique relationship to our Creator, for “God is both further from us, and nearer to us, than any other being” (33). Our power of will, thought, and indeed even of selfhood is dependent upon God, and because of this, “the intimacy between God and even the meanest creatures is closer than any that creatures can attain with one another” (33). This dependence is not impersonal, however. God calls His creatures into an intimate relationship with Him. MacDonald writes that if we are able to see God as Father, then we should advance “to understand he is far more than father—that his nearness to us is beyond the embodiment of the highest ideal of father; that that fatherhood of God is but a step towards the Godhood for them that can receive it” (*Unspoken Sermons* 27). We are called to participate in the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and, consequently, to carry this triadic relation into all interactions with others. The trinity is the shape of relationship. For example, Chesterton speaks specifically of the basic human relation of father, mother, and child as the crux of human history. He writes “if we are not of those who begin by invoking a divine Trinity, we must none the less invoke a human Trinity: and see that triangle repeated everywhere in the pattern of the world” (49). The human family, the basis of human temporal life of selves and others, finds its roots in a trinity of relation.

In the beginning of creation, however, there was only one man and one woman. Yet there is God. From the perspective of this project, then, even the most uniquely “dyadic” relationships—namely, *eros* relationships—must be triadic in form. *Eros* holds a unique position in human relations, for it constitutes one of the first human experiences of truly placing the other in the space of the heart where the self once occupied. When we reflect upon ourselves in romantic love, we realize that it “has made appetite itself

altruistic, tossed personal happiness aside as a triviality and planted the interests of another in the centre of our being. Spontaneously and without effort we have fulfilled the law (towards one person) by loving our neighbors as ourselves” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 114). In *Eros*, the self chooses the other, and, consequently, takes the first step in choosing the Person and Relation underlying all relationships and the very identity of the self. “It is an image, a foretaste, of what we must become to all if Love Himself rules in us without a rival” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 114). Accordingly, the unity of a man and a woman is philosophically and phenomenologically significant. Ephesians 5:22-33 articulates the sacred relation between man and wife as a reflection of the relation between Christ and His church. At the core of this relationship, then, is order, self-sacrifice, and, most importantly, grace. By grace, *Eros* begets Charity, an even higher order of love.

These relational dynamics emerge based on the movement of individual wills. While humans cannot choose the form of relating in general (for this form is written into the nature of creation), a person *must* choose how to relate each day to the other. Due to the phenomenon of alterity and selfhood, decision-making in relationships becomes a significant aspect of interpersonal communication theory and practice.

1.4. Moral Law, Judgment, and Action

1.4.1 Judgment and Decision-making in IPC Studies

The interpersonal communication literature treats the capacity for choice, the methods of decision-making, and the consequences of relational decisions in a variety of ways. The varieties in these approaches aim to answer questions of how a person makes relational judgments as well as chooses to act or not act upon their interpretations. Due to the social scientific foundation of much of the literature, many interpersonal theories

maintain strong connections to presuppositions of learning theory. This framework generally views interpersonal interactions as consisting of complex interplays of cognitive behavior and communicative contexts which guide personal decision-making and collective problem-solving. Behaviorism and cognitivism are two approaches to learning theory which focus on the decision-making and behaviors of the self within the learning environment (Smith). While these approaches differ concerning their focus on either the role of the environment or the autonomy of the individual learner, both assume that relational behaviors are shaped by the anticipation of consequences. Communicative interchanges constitute complex stimulus-response contexts in which individual behavior is conditioned by environmental reinforcement. Reinforcement helps the self to build relational memory for further perception, interpretation, and decision-making.[2] Whether the choice is to pursue or end relational encounters based on perceived mutual pleasure, satisfaction, and gratification (Thibault and Kelly) or to avoid dissonant communicative exchanges (Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*), these theories presuppose that human beings are rational individuals who pursue consistency between thought and action in relationships.

Other theorists take a social constructivist approach to learning theory, presupposing that knowledge and, consequently, judgment are based on individual relationships with others. Albert Bandura's work articulates the role which modeling others and imitation of behaviors plays in the formation of individual personalities and value system. Other people exercise significant influence on individual values, co-constructing relational environments consisting of particular expectations, behaviors, and rules for intimacy. Rules for reciprocation, commitment, and authority are just some of the ways in which relational decision-making is shaped by one's interactions with the

other (Cialdini). Essentially, one is socialized into relationships, a term which also holds significant theoretical import for small group and organizational communication theories. Consequently, many interpersonal theories advocate for mindfulness, or an awareness of the extent to which perceptions and behaviors are shaped socially (see Langer, “Minding Matters: The Consequences of Mindlessness-Mindfulness” for an earlier example of this work). Becoming mindful in interpersonal situations involves an awareness of those social expectations and contextual rules which trigger interpersonal behavior and the ability to align these with interpersonal goals, roles, and messages.

Arguably, interpersonal decision-making from learning theory perspectives situate the self at the crux of the communicative model of interchange. Self-competence, self-validation, consistency between thought and action, and authenticity in behavior play key roles in the complexity of relationships with others. Walter J. Carl and Steve Duck write that “everyday talk is a matter of continuously seeking confirmation of the self in relation to others” and that every interpersonal exchange allows the self to “take a position, to espouse beliefs, and to promulgate attitudes and opinions” (3). Those individuals who are able to utilize their full capacity for interpretation, knowledge, and judgment in interpersonal situations are most able to submit to social influences and expectations of communicative environments without compromising their personal goals and values. Thus, in a significant way, the culmination of learning theory models in concepts such as mindfulness, self-competence, and self-actualization points to the centrality of human agency. As Carl Rogers claims, learning how to live as a whole person in a world of others must be self-initiated. While the self is shaped and sustained through relationships with others, a person ultimately has a choice.

From the Christian philosophical perspective guiding this project, the question of

human choice is a foundational one. Lewis shares similar inquiries and interpretations regarding self-concept and competency in interpersonal relationships with many major theorists of the interpersonal communication literature. From his perspective, the self *absolutely* is important. In fact, how the self is regarded in relation the Other is the pivot upon which one's eternal soul turns. Paradoxically, however, the self is significant only in relation and derivation. Consequently, Lewis's framework lends complexity to the question of choice in interpersonal relationships in two ways: (1) it presupposes the existence of a relational law *a priori* to discursive exchanges themselves and thus *a priori* to the self; and (2) it frames human agency and capacity for judgment in the context of love. This shifts the concepts of self-actualization and self-competency to the metaphors of self-revelation and ordinate will.

1.4.2 The Moral Law and Reason

Lewis and his predecessors presuppose the existence of a relational, moral law which has been in existence since the creation of the world. Generally speaking, concepts of "right" or "wrong," and "good" or "bad" guide relational behavior and expectation. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis writes "the Moral Law is not any one instinct or any set of instincts: it is something which makes a kind of tune (the tune we call goodness or right conduct) by directing the instincts" (24). From a phenomenological standpoint, when we encounter otherness, we become aware of boundaries. These boundaries point to an inherent need for relational law. While contemporary interpersonal literature may posit these relational laws as constructed and maintained through discourse, Lewis assumes that this law is already there—not constructed. Lewis argues that this law, or this "something above and beyond the ordinary facts of men's behaviour," is "quite definitely real—a real law, which none of us made, but which we find pressing on us" (30). This

law is revealed to human beings at the very core of their relational selves and ultimately points them to truth in judgment and action.

The quality of human relational experiences is dependent upon our recognition and participation in the moral law of creation. The world is not constructed simply by human experience; individual beings must claim a discursive space within a created world. In the process, we are guided by glimpses of how things ought to be and really are. Lewis argues that this belief once shaped daily interpersonal life and relational judgment. He writes that until modern philosophical movements, most people believed and taught “that certain emotional reactions on our part could be either congruous or incongruous” to the universe and that phenomena “did not merely receive, but could merit, our approval or disapproval, our reverence or our contempt” (*The Abolition of Man* 15). A person feels pleasure or pain in a relational experience because one *ought* to do so: an ought based not merely on socialization but on ontology. One’s ontological position shapes one’s capacity for judgment. Lewis further argues:

And because our approvals and disapprovals are thus recognitions of objective value or responses to an objective order, therefore emotional states can be in harmony with reason (when we feel liking for what ought to be approved) or out of harmony with reason (when we perceive that liking is due but cannot feel it). No emotion is, in itself, a judgement; in that sense all emotions and sentiments are alogical. But they can be reasonable or unreasonable as they conform to Reason or fail to conform. The heart never takes the place of the head: but it can, and should, obey it. (19)

Thus the presupposition that human beings are rational beings who seek consistency between thought and action is not a new idea to theories of interpersonal communication. According to Lewis, reason itself calls for consistency. Yet to be rational is not merely a capacity of the human agent, it is an ontological necessity because Truth is *a priori*. One feels dissonance when one acts inconsistently with the objective order of relational

existence, yet it is a dissonance of a completely different phenomenological kind due to its roots in ontological necessity. Humans feel “ought” in order to “be” at all, for the feeling of the “shall” and “shall not” reveals the first steps toward relationally engaging the other, the self, and, ultimately, God.

1.4.3 Pain and Happiness in Self-Revelation

What, then, are we to learn about interpersonal relationships from our physical and emotional experiences of the world? What “ought” we to feel and do in the presence of real others? In the *Confessions*, Augustine argues that while all individuals agree that they want to be happy, the particularities of individual interpretations of satisfaction necessarily vary. The presence of alterity may solicit relational problems as partners attempt to find what satisfies them relationally. If the actualization of happiness were dependent upon the individual, the hope for realizing satisfaction in relationships would lie in contingencies of the communicative competence of relational partners. Happiness, according to Lewis’s interpretation, must lie in a source of a different kind than theories of interpersonal self-presentation and competence would allow one to believe. In fact, he claims that joy is not something one *contains* or *exercises* but that which is *revealed* to a person by God (*Surprised by Joy*). Augustine argues that at the seat of a person’s memory, and hence knowledge, is God. We do learn and are motivated by experiential memories and complex cognitive associations of abstract ideals; however, the capacity for these memories and associations is derived from God. The very existence of happiness as an idea depends upon the right relation between the will of the self and the one Truth underlying all experiences. Augustine writes “when they love the happy life, which is no different from joy in the truth, then indeed they love the truth as well” (*Confessions* 10.23.33).

Due to the fallen condition of humanity, however, it is difficult for humans to know and to make good relational decisions. In fact, some good decisions are momentarily, yet necessarily, painful. Lewis regards the root of all sin as the willful preference of the self over God. This sin has plagued humanity since the garden of Eden and taints, if not rules, human agency (*Mere Christianity*). Pain plays an important role not only in one's phenomenological experience of the world but the knowledge of the world beyond the Fall. Lewis argues that pain operates to disrupt two of our ordinary inclinations: it "shatters the illusion that all is well" and also "shatters the illusion that what we have, whether good or bad in itself, is our own and enough for us" (*The Problem of Pain* 94). We are born into a condition where we must learn how our impulses and actions do or do not fit in the relational order of creation—pain dictates that we cannot steadfastly ignore the Other. At the core of our relations is a true "ought": we ought to love. As Lewis writes, "to love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken" (*The Four Loves* 121). Love is not just an act or an emotion. It is knowing itself; one *knows* what one loves (Augustine, *Confessions; On the Trinity*). Knowledge of the self and the other are necessarily derived from love.

Lewis claims that Christian teachings point to self-knowledge as a painful, sacrificial experience. It is a sacrifice, however, that cannot be made within one's own power. In the *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, he uses the metaphor of scales being peeled from a young boy's skin in order to describe to moment of self-revelation before God. After several attempts to remove the scales from himself, the young boy Eustace must submit to the lion Aslan for help. The result is a revelatory episode of intense pain and unspeakable pleasure:

The very first tear he [Aslan] made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off.... Well, he peeled the beastly stuff right off—just as I thought I'd done it myself the other three times, only they hadn't hurt—and there it was lying on the grass: only ever so much thicker, darker, and more knobbly-looking than the others had been. And there was I as smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been. Then he caught hold of me—I didn't like that much for I was very tender underneath now that I'd no skin on—and threw me into the water. It smarted like anything but only for a moment. After that it became perfectly delicious and as soon as I started swimming and splashing I found that all the pain had gone from my arm. And then I saw why. I'd turned into a boy again. (116)

The illustration of shedding one's skin, or armor, points to the need for God to reveal the self. The self must be sacrificed because that is the very nature of good relationships.

Lewis argues that the story of Christ's sacrificial love is not meant to make us more careful of our own happiness. On the contrary, "we shall draw nearer to God, not by trying to avoid the sufferings inherent in all loves, but by accepting them and offering them to Him; throwing away all defensive armour" (*The Four Loves* 122). Good relationships turn more upon holiness than happiness, and, in that, they bring real joy.

1.5 The Willful Choice of Intimacy

According to Lewis, the Christian tradition teaches that humans are made for heaven, and, consequently, made for the most intimate and joyful existence. This desire for heaven, for "our proper place," (Lewis, "Weight of Glory" 29) is a piercing sweetness underlying all of our relationships. There is a distinctly spatial orientation to love in this Christian philosophical frame; love is a space of relation in which the self and the other can truly *be* and *know* together. The fullness of the self is only found in relations that help their ultimate desire to be revealed. In *On the Trinity*, Augustine claims that to truly know anything or anyone in this world is to willfully engage in how that relation "is" in God's

created order, not in how they “ought to be” in personal interpretation. He writes:

The more a thing is known, but not fully known, the more the mind desires to know the rest...For that form touches the mind that knows and thinks; it reveals the beauty of minds that have been brought together in fellowship by listening to and answering questions through signs that are known.
(10.1.2)

Within the created order, we are made to listen to all that is to be known from God and to seek intimacy with the Knower. Lewis argues that such significant Christian thinkers as Milton, Johnson, and Aquinas regard the source of all true desire as appreciation from God. We want to be “good listeners” of God, much like a “good child” takes comfort in listening to and doing the bidding of his parent: “nothing is so obvious in a child—not in a conceited child, but in a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised...of having pleased those whom I rightly loved and rightly feared” (“Weight of Glory” 37). We are motivated by our shared created desire for intimacy with God.

Yet our attempts at intimacy in this world will be deficient as well as continually subject to corruption from the Fall. Therefore, the task of intimacy *now* is to direct our willful loves in good ways in order to prepare our hearts for such meetings. When Augustine (*Confessions; On the Trinity*) addresses our need to properly order our will, he is speaking to the multi-faceted phenomena of our loves. We must think first about the *placement* of our loving attention: Is it proper in relation to *other* loves? (i.e., which love do we attend to first?) Then, we are to be concerned with the *quantity* of our love: Is our love true to its *own* order? (i.e., do we love too little or too much?) We have both of these dynamics at play when we choose who and how to love. We do not always choose correctly. We do not know the world, the self, or even our own will in any context but one of derivation, and we cannot act outside of relation. Further still, we live in a world of misguided and corrupted hearts—we both exercise and are vulnerable to imperfect loves.

How are we to work faithfully at intimacy given such conditions?

Lewis argues that we must choose intimacy, and we must choose it with the reality of our relational personhood in mind. He writes “but since it is only too obvious that we can withhold ourselves, our wills and hearts, from God, we can, in that sense, also give them” (*The Four Loves* 128). Given the trinity of human relations, every communicative exchange is one between the self, the other, and God. Every relational choice is a turning of the will either toward God or away from Him. Yet there exists even more complexity in this formula. By the willful choice to give our love, we place ourselves in a position of *receptivity* to love. Lewis’s discussion of need-love and gift-love in *The Four Loves* illustrates how we receive love even before we recognize our own capacity to give it. In a very real sense, we are *made lovable because we are loved first*. This is how we are to choose intimacy. Not solely with the conviction of what it is we ought to give; we enter into loving relations with the humble recognition that Love first chose us.

When a person offers one’s heart to another in any loving capacity, he or she receives Love. Lewis writes that we know God through our relations with others in the everyday. He states that “next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses” for God dwells in all persons (“Weight of Glory” 46). This project argues that when we are able to focus our attention on the eternal Personhood within all persons *as well as* the particular person before us, we are able to love each other well. There is something qualitatively different about approaching intimate relationships with the “weight of glory” (Lewis) on our backs. It is not a perspective which denies the existential—in fact, existence is given more weight because of the ontological. Yet it is a challenging approach to human relations; one which calls for

a more thorough look at the presence and practice of grace in intimate interpersonal communication.

1.6 The Presence and Practice of Grace: A Compelling Alternative

The remaining chapters of the project continue to address the initial questions and concerns of human being in discourse and relation from these theoretical starting points. Issues of sentiments, will, and responsiveness to the other in relationship create a philosophical foundation for thinking about the presence of grace and its practice in intimate interpersonal relationships. This chapter argues that we cannot interpret, know, relate, or love rightly without the Other, and from Lewis's standpoint, without God. Lewis writes that our experiences in loving relationships themselves "prove that they are unworthy to take the place of God by the fact that they cannot even remain themselves and do what they promise to do without God's help" (*The Four Loves* 118). We need help in loving one another. Lewis's work situates grace as both a presence and a practice in intimacy. First, we are born into relations—both with God and other human beings—in which love and mercy are extended to us. Second, we are compelled to extend grace to others through the interpretive power of our sentiments, the willful choices of our minds and hearts, and responsiveness to personhood. How then, as scholars and practitioners, can we talk about intimate love with attention toward the presence and practice of grace in the contemporary moment?

The work of this project is to bring the foundational questions of interpersonal communication studies concerning human nature, discourse, relation, and action to bear with a philosophical understanding of love and grace from the framework of Lewis and other major thinkers of the Christian intellectual tradition. Bringing premodern philosophical assumptions of heart, choice, and action in human relation to contemporary

discourse concerning intimacy, we can better understand the dynamics at play when young adults develop intimate relationships today. During the onset and subsequent growth of interpersonal communication studies in the modern age, the literature builds upon questions of human agency and relational and social progress. Into postmodernity, the literature expands into considerations of subjectivity and the discursive creation of relational spaces. Lewis's work emerges historically amidst these transitions—when modern and postmodern theoretical trends are beginning to be in conversation with one another. Consequently, Chapter Two situates Lewis's work not only as an entry point into premodern Christian philosophical presuppositions concerning human relations but also as a compelling alternative to theoretical trends and issues of human communication that were at play in his historical moment. As the concluding chapter of the project suggests, such an alternative continues to address the questions and practices of intimacy by young adults even today. The remaining chapters frame the writings of Lewis as a useful guide in building a theory of grace in intimate interpersonal communication attentive to love as heartfelt choice, willful labor, and responsiveness to forms of personhood.

CHAPTER TWO
LEWIS ON QUESTIONS OF HUMAN RELATIONAL BEING
IN THE MODERN AGE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the scholarly discussion concerning the theoretical presuppositions and trends of modernity, paying particular attention to issues relevant to interpersonal communication. Lewis engages similar questions and concerns regarding his historical moment as other philosophers who reflect on the epistemological and relational implications of modernity, such as Jürgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt, Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Christopher Lasch. Lewis sees how modernity holds serious implications for the theoretical and pragmatic conditions of human relation, loss of public and private spheres defining relational order, and for decision-making in relational contexts.

Although he is not entirely unique in this approach,[1] Lewis's Christian theism lends him a compelling scholarly and pragmatic standpoint amongst the other critics of modernity which is worth pursuing within the study and practice of interpersonal communication. Most importantly, he is a Christian theist writing and living within the cusp of historical change. Challenging political and social contexts are at the forefront of everyday human life (see, for example, his lecture on "Learning in War-Time"). Developments in technology and mass media are shaping expectations for human agency in relationships (see *The Screwtape Letters* and *That Hideous Strength* as examples of his fictional works which address these themes). Science and history are being reconsidered through shifting paradigmatic assumptions (see "Historicism" and "Modern Man and the

Categories of His Thought”). Accordingly, the chapter discusses key texts in which Lewis articulates the problematic trends within his historical moment concerning presuppositions of human discourse and relation. Together, these texts speak to the presence and practice of grace in intimate interpersonal communication.

2.2 Modernity’s Critics and Implications for IPC

2.2.1 Progress and the Condition of Human Relation

Many critics find the presupposed conditions guiding human knowledge, relation, and behavior in modernity to be problematic. One of the most significant themes framing these presuppositions is modernity’s emphasis on progress. Christopher Lasch argues that the modern conception of progress offers “the promise of steady improvement with no foreseeable ending at all” and the conviction that “nothing is certain except the imminent obsolescence of all our certainties” in modern scientific theory, technology, and philosophy (47-48). The result is the emergence of a social order founded on science: a consequence of the Enlightenment ideals of rationality and discourse. In “Modernity Versus Postmodernity,” Habermas characterizes cultural modernity of the Enlightenment, from the work of Max Weber, as “the separation of the substantive reason expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous spheres. They are: science, morality, and art” (8). The autonomous structures of the cognitive-instrumental, moral-practical, and aesthetic-expressive frame human-being-in-discourse as subject to specialization. Habermas explains that the modern project introduces “the culture of expertise” (9) as autonomous conditions of discourse are assessed and institutionalized. The goal is to address questions of knowledge, justice, and taste in their appropriate domains as distinct manifestations of human relation. Ideologies and issues of belief are thus divorced from issues of knowledge or even aesthetics. The aim of discourse becomes unduly descriptive

and the lack of prescription in analyzing conditions of human life leads to the treatment of interpersonal relations as “an engineering science of human relations” (Arendt, *Between Past and Future* 59). To its detriment, modernity segments human-being-in-discourse from what Habermas calls “the hermeneutics of everyday communication” (9). Consequently, the ideal of progress calls into question the inherent and complex sociality of human life.

The metaphor of progress and the consequent segmentation of human discourse undermines the philosophical understanding of action as relational in nature. The premodern world of the Greeks understood human life as essentially social and human action as entirely dependent upon the presence of others (Arendt, *The Human Condition*). Modernity’s narrative of progress assumes a world of consequentiality, not necessarily of relation. This is understood most distinctly in the Enlightenment ideals of utilitarianism and humanitarianism, modern philosophies which posited “the ideal of self-responsible reason,” “the pursuit of happiness,” and “the ideal of universal and impartial benevolence” as maintaining central significance (C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self* 322). The Lockean radical disengagement and the Cartesian emphasis on self-reason frees the individual from error and prejudice in order to practice utility and universal benevolence. Thus the narrative of progress is one of “the successive unchainings of reason, leading to successive discoveries of truth, and hence overcomings of error” (C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self* 352) so that human beings can live in a society in which the consequences of their actions are universally understood and communally enforced for the betterment of all involved. In this philosophy lies the seeds of the “reification” of “everyday praxis” (Habermas 11) and objectification of human relations in order to improve life together.

Critics of modernity argue that, ironically, this emphasis on universal freedoms

for humanity undermine the social complexity of human life in relation. This is a result from the loss of particularity—specifically in interpersonal role. Hannah Arendt characterizes the modern age as one in which the distinction between the public and private of spheres of life have become blurred in a new relational existence which she deems “the social realm” (*The Human Condition* 28). Prior to the onset of modernity, the city-state and the household maintained distinct boundaries which were interrelated. The household functioned as a monarchy designed to meet the necessities of life and labor of each of its members. The *polis*, by contrast, constituted the realm of freedom of speech and action for citizens. These spheres of human relation depended upon on another for the fulfillment of individual and collective potential. To successfully carry out the basic order of the household in the meeting of fundamental needs provided one not only with a physical but also with a phenomenological space to engage the public world of ideas. An individual knew order as a result of relationships with others in the household and thus was prepared to meet others in the public realm with a freedom of relational perspective; thus, “the mastering of the necessities of life in the household was the condition for freedom of the *polis*” (*The Human Condition* 30-31). Human action is inherently ordered and relational: in no other manner can one realize freedom. Therefore, modern arguments for the collapse of distinct private and public spheres in order to support the goals of universal freedom for humanity in fact compromise what essentially makes us human.

2.2.2 The Secular Public and Inordinate Private Relationships

The modern conception of progress leads to dominant presuppositions of secularity in the public realm. Secularity constitutes a radical shift from premodern presuppositions of understanding human being in ordinate relation. In *A Secular Age*, Taylor characterizes the public spaces of all premodern societies as being “in some way

connected to, based on, guaranteed by some faith in, or adherence to God, or some notion of ultimate reality” (1). Lasch, quoting Richard Niebuhr, argues that the Christian conviction that life in temporality bears hope of redemption calls for a critical engagement of the ontological significance of human history, traditions, and relationships. By contrast, the public and private spaces of modernity have been emptied of this ontological adherence. Instead, as we function within various spheres of activity in the public realm, such as the economic, the political, or the moral, “the norms and principles we follow, the deliberations we engage in, generally don’t refer us to God or to any religious belief; the considerations we act on are internal to the ‘rationality’ of each sphere” (C. Taylor, *A Secular Age* 2). Through the segmentation of the “culture of expertise” (Habermas 9), modernity finds its public spaces ontologically de-centered and, thus, hard-pressed to find definitive boundaries and purposes beyond human arbitration. Since one’s boundaries between the public and the household are most often permeable, the ontological challenges of public secularity also manifest challenges within the realm of intimate interpersonal communication.

With the loss of purpose within public spheres of politics and the workplace, the private domain becomes overtaxed. The modern secular emphasis on the universals of human rational and behavioral freedom counter the essence of intimate relationships in the household: that is, particularity of relation and role. The household contains the foundational relations of a society with definitive purposes. Due to the loss of particularity and ontological purpose in the public sphere, Lasch argues that modernity finds people desperately trying to recreate that significance within circles of intimate friends and family, “stretching its [the household’s] emotional resources to the limit” (32). Love and intimacy, as a result, become undirected, undifferentiated, and

disengaged. He claims:

My study of the family suggested a broader conclusion: that the capacity for loyalty is stretched too thin when it tries to attach itself to the hypothetical solidarity of the whole human race. It needs to attach itself to specific people and places, not to an abstract ideal of universal human rights. We love particular men and women, not humanity in general. The dream of universal brotherhood, because it rests on the sentimental fiction that men and women are all the same, cannot survive the discovery that they differ. Love, on the other hand—flesh-and-blood love, as opposed to a vague, watery, humanitarianism—is attracted to complementary differences, not to sameness. (36)

These scholarly critiques of modernity suggest that our current frames for intimate relationships have become idealistic. In contrast to premodern assumptions of interpersonal relations in the household, modern concepts of intimate relations lack ordinate relationships subject to particular roles in line with ontological and existential significance. From this modern idealism rises challenges articulated in the interpersonal communication scholarship such as Giddens's "plastic sexuality," Gurstein's "claustrophobic atmosphere of intimacy," and Hall and Zhao's work on cohabitation and divorce wherein the conditions of intimacy have become restrained by idealism and, consequently, subjective individualism.

2.2.3 Subjective Decision-Making in Relational Contexts

The emphasis on universal rationality and progress leads to a subjectivism in the public realm which holds significant implications for relational contexts and personal decision-making. This stems primarily from a lack of "strong evaluations" of relational behavior and discourse in both public and private contexts (C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*). Alasdair MacIntyre writes of the loss of impersonal criteria underlying individual opinion for debate within the public realm. Paradoxically, he claims that the modern conception of universal rationality—instead of supplying public moral argument with

tools for debate—has deprived the very theories and practices upon which discourse occurs at all. By discrediting ideologies and overemphasizing human capacity for disengaged reason, most modern philosophies lead to the assumption that moral disagreement is nothing but “a clash of antagonistic wills” while individuals vie for the articulation of objective standards (MacIntyre 9). Moral discourse is denied particular conviction yet embraces individual power of argument. He argues that “we simultaneously and inconsistently treat moral argument as an exercise of our rational power *and* as a mere expressive assertion” (MacIntyre 11, emphasis added). With discursive tools of ordinance, reason, and persuasion subverted, the self is left alone to decide among a myriad of seemingly viable options of relation. This ultimately leads to the emergence of what MacIntyre deems the discursive and relational framework of the modern age: emotivism. He defines emotivism as “the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expression of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character” (12, emphasis original). In the modern era, decision-making itself struggles for relational significance.

Scholarly debate concerning effects of modern presuppositions on interpersonal relationships in the postmodern era points to the dominant trends of subjectivism and individualism. Anthony Giddens’s work, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, addresses changing sexual activity and expectations of intimate relational partners in contemporary life. Giddens claims that his work concentrates on an interpersonal order characterized by the “pure relationship,” a relationship of sexual and emotional equality (1-2). From the rise of romanticism, an emotional abyss separates male and female as the perception of successful intimacy becomes less concerned with *extrinsic* assessments and

manifestations of relational stability and more focused on the *intrinsic* qualities of a bond which perpetuate emotional satisfaction for intimate partners. Simply put, a pure relationship exists “purely” within itself, as opposed to a traditional relationship which presupposes societal, cultural, and familial extensions of relational partners. Giddens suggests that the sexuality emergent from this intimacy revolution—which he coins “plastic sexuality”—is de-centered, de-naturalized, de-socialized, and bound in individual subjectivity (2). He writes:

“Sexuality” today has been discovered, opened up and made accessible to the development of varying life-styles. It is something each of us “has,” or cultivates, no longer a natural condition which an individual accepts as a preordained state of affairs. Somehow, in a way that has to be investigated, sexuality functions as a malleable feature of the self, a prime connecting point between body, self-identity and social norms. (15)

In contemporary discourse and practice in interpersonal relations, traditional conceptions of intimacy have been usurped by the sexual and emotional drives of multiple individuals.

The emergence of “pure relationships” out of the practices of “plastic sexuality” creates expectations and conditions of intimacy which have become problematic for discursive beings who function relationally. Among young adults especially, there is increasing unawareness or consideration of boundary and purpose in the formation of intimate relationships. Rochelle Gurstein, in *The Repeal of Reticence*, points to the problem of “the claustrophobic atmosphere of intimacy” due to the collapse of public and private boundaries in the postmodern era after the emergence of “the cult of domesticity” (28-29). Like Lasch in *The True and Only Heaven*, Gurstein argues that with shifting gender roles and identity in the domestic sphere, and most notably with the loss of the *public* function of the household, the conditions of marriage and family have become “a

refuge for emotion and self-disclosure” as “the promise of happiness” overburdens the scope and practices of interpersonal communication among family members (29). As a result, intimacy becomes isolationist, emotivistic, and short-lived. Notably, scholars who have extended Giddens’s work on intimacy, such as David Hall and John Zhao, have found that the attitude of a “pure relationship” in cohabiting couples correlates to higher relational dissatisfaction and divorce rate. Studies such as these show that, ironically, those individuals who adopt an overly inclusive and accepting ethic in terms of relational identity and practices are more likely to find themselves isolated in their preferences and unable to be relationally responsive.

Contemporary scholarship concerning decision-making in relational contexts is less likely to be attentive to ordinate relations manifested in discourse than to issues of mutual self-satisfaction, competency, and relational success. Critics of modernity point to the problems inherent within these assumptions: the objectification of human relations, the loss of particularity in social life, and undue subjectivism in discourse and decision-making. C.S. Lewis is, without doubt, critical of the major theoretical and practical trends of his historical moment and his writings will be framed as such in this chapter. However, through his criticisms one can see a deep attentiveness and concern for the legitimacy of the questions and problems of social and private life as they are disclosed in his lifetime. The modern age brings to bear questions of technology, objectivity and subjectivity, and purpose in decision-making to the expectations and practices of interpersonal relationships in unprecedented ways. Lewis finds his response to these questions through hermeneutic inquiry grounded within the Christian intellectual tradition. Lewis is by no means the only critic of modernity working from a Judeo-Christian perspective. Arendt, for example, works from the perspective of the Jewish tradition while also is influenced

significantly by the existentialism of St. Augustine (see her *Love and St. Augustine*). Taylor and MacIntyre, like Lewis, work with Christian theist presuppositions and are specifically attentive to the religious and intellectual traditions of Catholicism. Lewis takes his place among these thinkers and, as an additive viewpoint, he speaks directly to the unique relational challenges of his historical moment as they are concerned with the practical need for grace in all intimate interpersonal contexts.

2.3 Lewis's Response to Modernity

2.3.1 The "Modern Man and Categories of His Thought"

In his list of modern categories of thought, Lewis critiques two specific philosophical stances of the modern thinker: practicality and historicism. Like other critics of modernity, Lewis posits utility and radical disengagement as obscuring human understanding of the phenomenal world. In both his nonfiction and fiction, he places particular emphasis on the dangers of technology in the pursuit of progressively objective and practical concern with the world. This quest leads to an unquestioned belief in technological and sociological progress. Lewis argues that these philosophies hold detrimental implications for human being in relation: mainly, the objectification of interpersonal relationships.

Lewis is keenly aware of the dangers of materialism which modernity promotes. The result has been the disengagement of humankind from nature and, consequently, from natural relationships with each other. Lewis characterizes this as "practicality" ("Modern Man and the Categories of His Thought" 211). Modernity supports a technology of thinking and relating which is characteristic of disembodied scientism—all choices must pass the test of consistent interpretation and applicability to the observable, material world. In this frame, humankind itself becomes an object of measurement,

directing modern thought into a false sense of intellectual autonomy through science and technology. Ironically, however, Lewis argues that the quest for complete objectivity and scientific understanding degenerates humankind into subhuman-like engagement of the world. He describes modernity as a mindset encouraging the “disinterested concern with truth for truth’s sake;” instead, humans are becoming “as narrowly ‘practical’ as the irrational animals” (“Modern Man and the Categories of His Thought” 209, 211). Modern objectivity encourages a disengagement from interest, for interest may skew observation and interpretation. Thinkers are encouraged metaphorically to step further and further back from an object until nothing is clear but the “objective.” Lewis argues, however, that this is a fool’s move: modern thinkers do not gain more “distance” from what they are observing. On the contrary, they become so near to the object of explanation that they cannot see it for what it truly is: an object of interest. Without the perspective of interest, the object becomes limited by immediacy and consequentiality. Thus, modern philosophies encourage a kind of animalistic practicality, in which bias, a uniquely human phenomenon (see Gadamer’s *Truth and Method* for a phenomenological rendering of bias), is argued to be suppressed.

According to Lewis, interest and objectivity are interrelated. As a Christian theist, he argues that human capacity for understanding is divinely derived. Therefore, any and all objects worth identifying and studying exist within an established matrix of both eternal and temporal interests and significance. In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis argues that to reason truly is to recognize the congruity or incongruity of our sentiments and interests in accordance with the reality of a divinely created universe. He supports premodern presuppositions of the interrelation of material and spirit, or that which is natural and supernatural. When human interests become divorced from what is truly here

to know in both the eternal and temporal, the result is a society obscured by *information*, not informed by *reason*.

Thus modern theoretical assumptions concerning human interest and objective decision-making compromise the development of healthy relationships. In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis extrapolates modern materialistic assumptions into a dystopian technocracy under the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E). The N.I.C.E is a progressive partnership of the state and science, engaging in social experiments to engineer and control intellectually and materially ideal humans capable of communication with superhuman beings. According to the leadership of the N.I.C.E., the first step to higher intelligence involves radical materialism, or “the realisation that one must go outside the whole world of our subjective emotions. It is only as you begin to do so, that you discover how much of what you mistook for your thought was merely a by-product of your blood and nervous tissues” (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 258). The goal of this dystopia is clear: the elimination of the natural by way of radical materialism and scientism. “The individual is to become all head. The human race is to become all Technocracy” (259). In modernity, what is natural is overtaken by what is technical, and what is worth knowing is only that which is useful for the progression of humankind. From Lewis’s point of view, what necessarily results is a “hard, unchangeable core of individuals,” such as the N.I.C.E, who are vulnerable to being run by a cold, stuttering Deputy Director who *is* disembodied objectivity (242). Relationally, such a framework is unavoidably detrimental and ultimately unsustainable. Real human *growth* (Lewis does not use the terminology of intellectual or technological “progress”) constitutes a fullness of willful interest and relational attentiveness.

How one regards human purpose in history, then, holds significant implications

for how one chooses to live *today*. Lewis argues that modern philosophical assumptions of progress truncate the capacity for human choice and action in everyday contexts. He argues that the adoption of developmentalism, or historicism, is the principle of reality for modern thinkers due to their comfort with abstraction: “the modern mind accepts as a formula for the universe in general the principle ‘Almost nothing may be expected to turn into almost everything’” (“Modern Man and His Categories of Thought” 210). The modern man begins with nothing (“that a ordered cosmos should emerge from chaos, that life should come out of the inanimate, reason out of instinct, civilization out of savagery, virtue out of animalism”) and ends with a human-engineered utopia (210). The modern manifestations of historicism emerged from Hegelian philosophy and Marxist materialism, in which the progression of human spiritual, intellectual, and material capacities drive history forward. Consequently, Lewis argues that modernists emphasize the *future* as the center of human significance.

For Lewis, history and the future are meaningful. However, they are meaningful *only* in the context of eternity. He quotes George MacDonald in describing the experience of temporality as one with "the holy present" (“Historicism” 224) and writes that “the Present is all lit up with eternal rays” (*The Screwtape Letters* 76). It is in the present that human beings are able to exercise their capacity for choice and action. Yet Lewis knows that one’s focus of attention regarding the relationship between choice, action, and time can be distracted easily and thus compromised. For example, in *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape tells his nephew that a demon’s job is to keep his “patient” away from the Present and focused on the Future. Screwtape argues that “thought about the Future inflames hope and fear” and the patient will act based on unknown realities rather than “the present voice of conscience, bearing the present cross, receiving the present grace,

giving thanks for the present pleasure” (76). It is not necessarily the focus on any single moment in time which causes concern for Lewis—one can think about the past or the future purposefully and fruitfully. It is the *discursive isolation* of all moments of time *from Eternity* which he fears. He laments that the average thinker in his day is encouraged to consider most history “bunk” (Lewis, “Is History Bunk?”) unless there is a discernible linearity between the events of the past and the needs of the present moving into the future. Real human beings do not live in linearity; we live in a phenomenological fullness of time which brings existential and, Lewis would argue, ontological weight to our choices in the everyday. How one considers the “then,” the “now,” and the “later” holds significant implications for decision-making in everyday interpersonal contexts.

It is necessary to be attentive to a phenomenological engagement of past, present, and future in the development of habits and relationships. Simply put, it *matters* how one moves through history, and it is in the interpersonal realm where everyday choices hold particular poignancy and immediacy. Lewis identifies a false sense of movement in human relationships within the popular thinking of his day. One is led to believe that we move in the abstracted space called “now” without regard to how where we’ve been and where ultimately we are going *matters*. Accordingly, he argues that this linear objectification *constrains* history within the limits of human achievement. Like Screwtape suggests in the above quote, discourse concerning all forms of success—from relational to intellectual—becomes rooted in “unrealities” (76): hypotheses concerning what may happen or could be achieved. What happens interpersonally is the isolation of persons from relational purposes in real time. Models of behavior and techniques of communicative competence take the place of lived experiences of relational growth. By contrast, Lewis’s Christian phenomenological framework *opens* history to the will of the

Eternal. Such a belief by no means clarifies all of history; Lewis recognizes that there are still many mysteries to human temporal life. Yet the perspective establishes teleological weight for human decision-making and provides persons with *direction* to all relational contexts. The role of the interlocutor thus shifts from that of the *sole creator* and *manager* of a relationship to the *enactor* of relationships which have been afforded to him since before time began.

The common thread of critique which Lewis holds for modern thought both in regards to scientism and historicism is the assumption of relational disengagement. Yet, under the guise of disengagement, we can become unduly contained (and thus constrained) by the world and by one another. In such a state, humans lose the ability to see and understand the truth of something in its entirety. Human relationships, and thus humans themselves, become objects to be studied, engineered, controlled, and possessed: Arendt's "engineering science of human relations" (*Between Past and Future* 59). We lose our agency, our responsiveness, and our power of enactment. Lewis argues that to compromise understanding of human responsiveness is to compromise our most intimate of relations. In his chapter on "Eros" in *The Four Loves*, Lewis counters the modern evolutionist and psychoanalytic assumptions that sexual desire is the driving force of human relational decision making. He specifically quotes George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where:

his dreadful hero (so much less human than the four-footed heroes of his excellent *Animal Farm!*), before towing the heroine, demands a reassurance, "You like doing this?" he asks, "I don't mean simply me; I mean the thing in itself." He is not satisfied till he gets the answer, "I adore it."...Sexual desire, without Eros, wants *it*, the *thing in itself*; Eros wants the Beloved. (94, emphasis original)

One may experience sexuality without Eros, but what one encounters is subhuman. The

power of human agency does not emerge by segmenting human functions into dismembered categories. Lewis argues that we enter into relationships as *participants* of the purposes, function, and needs of that relation, for “to participate is to be truly human” (*The Abolition of Man* 74). Responsiveness in romance and intimacy is a uniquely human phenomenon wherein the *personhood of the other*—embodied, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual personhood reflective of God Himself—becomes the focus.

What Lewis points to is the easy movement in modern thought from *disengagement* to *dismemberment* of the living, breathing creation. It is no wonder, then, that he should take a strong stance against the modern scientific practice of vivisection: “the victory of vivisection marks a great advance in the triumph of ruthless, non-moral utilitarianism over the old world of ethical law” (“Vivisection” 288). Metaphorically speaking, complex human relationships are being mechanically and surgically simplified in the modern dystopia. Lewis claims that this severely constrains human beings from experiencing functional, discursive, and relational unity.

2.3.2 The “Inner Ring” Versus “Membership”

The disunity of modern technocracies is characterized by Lewis in a number of ways. One such critique pertinent to this project is the modern perceptions of the elite, or the expert. In the same vein as Habermas, Lewis points to the detrimental modernist drive toward the segmentation and demonstrated expertise of categories of human experience. He argues how this trend of modernity perverts the desire for knowledge and need for relation. The result is dangerous to a basic human relational structure: the Inner Ring.

Lewis characterizes the Inner Ring as the desire to belong to a particular group of persons exclusive of others. At face value, the inner ring is an unavoidable and relatively neutral human discursive phenomenon. It can occur among friends sharing intimate

thoughts or companions who need to get a particular job done. However, the danger of the Inner Ring lies in the tendency for it to become the *primary* relational motivation for an individual: “unless you take measures to prevent it, this desire is going to be one of the chief motives of your life, from the first day on which you enter your profession until the day you are too old to care” (Lewis, “The Inner Ring” 318). Lewis warns that what soon results from the endless pursuit of Inner Rings is that the phenomenon of belonging ceases to bring joy because the source of pleasure is not relational but situational. This is precisely the problem with Mark Studdock in *That Hideous Strength*—the compulsive desire to belong to the progressive inner ring of the N.I.C.E. at the expense of his relationship with his wife and even his own safety. Lewis warns “inner ringers” such as Mark: “You were not looking for virtue or kindness or loyalty or humor or learning or wit or any of the things that can be really enjoyed. You merely wanted to be ‘in.’ And that is a pleasure that cannot last” (“The Inner Ring” 319).

When the object of pleasure from the Inner Ring ceases to be relational, it subverts to other sources of meaning. In modernity’s “culture of expertise” (Habermas 9), Lewis argues that the source of significance for groups of people are deemed to be purely practical and objective. This leads to social structures being defined by access to particular realms of knowledge or presuppositions which allow them to coordinate behaviors and discourse with one another. In *That Hideous Strength*, Frost explains that the initiation into the “Circle” at Belbury is to demonstrate discipline in objectivity. If Mark were to join the circle because of feelings of confidence in or affection for the others, the group would be weakened. Feelings are arbitrary, short-lived, and easily replicable. Instead, Frost tells Mark that he was “made to pass through a number of conflicting feelings about the Deputy Director and others in order that your future

association with us may not be based on feelings at all” (255). Lewis describes this as “the delicious knowledge that we – we four or five all huddled beside the stove – are the people who *know*” while all others are left in ignorance (“The Inner Ring” 316). The irony is that, while modernity stems from egalitarian and humanitarian ideals of the Enlightenment, the end result is a world with a specific elite aiming to dismember themselves from the collective. Simply put, the social structures of modernity, guided by utility, are artificially engineered and maintained for a singular purpose: progress. On the other hand, authentic Inner Rings, Lewis argues, are relationally grounded in the metaphor of membership.

Membership promotes particularity of identity and role which characterizes human-beings-in-discourse. In similar fashion to Arendt and Lasch, Lewis laments the loss of definitive public and private boundaries in modernity, leading individuals to undue reliance upon ideals of equality. Lewis believes that the metaphor of “equality” has a very specific role in the fallen world: “Equality is for me in the same position as clothes. It is a result of the Fall and the remedy for it” (“Membership” 169). Political democracy is a necessary move in a world introduced to sin, for any human being with power can in the very least err and, at worst, corrupt or be corrupted. To share government amongst the collective provides a chance to defend ourselves against each other’s cruelty. Yet the metaphor of equality will always remain “a legal fiction” (168) which, particularly in modernity, robs people of real identity and relational purpose. Like Arendt’s metaphor of “the social” (*The Human Condition*), Lewis’s metaphor of the egalitarian fiction blurs the particularity of role and relation in public and private life into an amorphous collective of individual comrades. He writes, “we live, in fact, in a world starved for solitude, silence, and privacy, and therefore starved for meditation and true

friendship” (Lewis, “Membership” 160). Without a consideration of particular individuals *and* standards for relational structures—something which is absent from egalitarianism—persons are left to collect arbitrarily, relate superficially, and live in an impersonal world of sameness.

The household, as a model of membership, promotes a particularity of role and hierarchy of order which is absent in modernity’s collectives. Each person in the household is physically and phenomenologically “a different kind of person” (Lewis, “Membership” 164) from the other, and he or she embodies many interpersonal roles on multiple levels in relation to one another (i.e., husband/wife, father/son). This is the character of true membership: “the grandfather, the parents, the grown-up son, the child, the dog, and the cat are true members (in the organic sense) precisely because they are not members of units of a homogeneous class. They are not interchangeable. Each person is almost a species in himself” (“Membership” 164). In the modern egalitarian collective of individuals, interchangeability is a necessity. In the membership of a body of persons, particularity of role is the key. Human beings in discourse desire to live out these particular relations, stemming from our natural instincts for a *lived* (not just nominal) identity with others. It is for this reason that Lewis finds the modern notion that children call their parents by their first names particularly obstinate. Those who support modernity’s egalitarianism in the household “are trying to inoculate the child with the preposterous view that one’s mother is simply a fellow citizen like anyone else,” a prospect which any child should know instinctively is not the case (165). On the contrary, Lewis argues that human beings do know and recognize themselves to be relationally significant.

Lewis’s basic tenants of human-being-in-discourse are clear: humans have a

natural desire to belong with and to one another, to seek knowledge and wisdom as they grow together, to recognize the unique space which they as well as others occupy in the world, and to act accordingly. In such a frame, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual developments of a particular group (such as a family) are not manufactured—they are natural. This is an Inner Ring in its best form. Modern philosophies promote Inner Rings of another kind. As mentioned above, these Inner Rings work from *situational* presuppositions. As people are admitted or expelled into various “circles” defined by expertise, talent, or any other variety of arbitrary necessity, they begin to believe that to *possess*—not to *be*—is most important. From the objectification of interpersonal relationships in particular (such as the discussion of sexuality devoid of *Eros* above) comes the possession of human relation in general (e.g., Mark Studdock’s obsession with the “progressive element” in *That Hideous Strength*). This further disassembles human beings from participation in structured communities embodied with ethical and moral purpose. Lewis argues that modernity’s final blow to human relation lies exactly in this—the tendency toward subjectivism.

2.3.3 “The Poison of Subjectivism”

The emphasis on *possession* in the modern egalitarian technocracy, according to Lewis, brings a person full circle from attempts at absolute objectivity to insubstantial subjectivity. In “The Poison of Subjectivism,” Lewis critiques the modern understanding of practical reason. Unlike the Aristotelian perspective of practical reason, modern thinkers assume that “value judgments are not really judgments at all. They are sentiments, or complexes, or attitudes, produced in a community by the pressure of its environment and its tradition, and differing from one community to another” (250). As a result, Lewis claims that “out of this apparently innocent idea comes the disease that will

certainly end our species (and, in my view, damn our souls) if it is not crushed; the fatal superstition that men can create values, that a community can choose its ‘ideology’ as men choose their clothes” (250). Like MacIntyre’s metaphor of “emotivism,” Lewis deems “subjectivism” as a lack of tools for public moral discourse in modernity. By wanting to engineer, control, or own knowledge of the world, Lewis suggests that modernists lose the relational component to wisdom – truth-seeking becomes a matter of appropriation of ideas rather than a *positioning* of the self to the Truth in existence. In *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape celebrates modern notions of argument as disconnected with issues of truth and falsehood. According to the demon, jargon has replaced reason: “Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to have a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn’t think of doctrines as primarily ‘true’ or ‘false,’ but as ‘academic’ or ‘practical,’ ‘outworn’ or ‘contemporary,’ ‘conventional’ or ‘ruthless’” (1). As a result, persons cannot *participate* in society—they can merely be spectators of trends.

Lewis and Arendt, both premodern scholars, work from the presupposition that all action is relational in nature. Simply put, action is participatory. Where Lewis’s Christian theism provides an additive component to the idea of participation in social action, however, is in the metaphor of sacrifice. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Lewis points to how true knowledge—knowledge rooted in the eternal—stems only from the ultimate sacrifice (i.e., a repositioning) of the self. When Aslan is resurrected at the Stone Table, he tells Susan and Lucy:

though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim

who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backward. (178-179)

The White Witch's view of the Deep Magic was one of utilization and possession. The Deeper Magic placed Aslan squarely in an eternal narrative in which he is a participant—body and soul. In order to find one's place in this narrative, however, one must give up the desire to possess, to control, or to operationalize a given experience. The self must be sacrificed in order to find the self participating in a relational being that does not begin or end in the self, yet constitutes its very existence. As Lewis writes in "Membership," "it is not the individual as such who will share Christ's victory over death. We shall share the victory by being in the Victor" (172). In the simplest way, to participate is to gain just such an insight into the position of the self in the world.

True subjectivity, as opposed to subjectivism, is a phenomenological endeavor. Phenomenology holds unique implications for how one *looks* at the world, others, or objects. Such a perspective comes from the ability to maintain intellectual distance from as well as recognize one's place within the experience of perception and interpretation among and with others. Participation from any subject must begin with distinct spaces of embedded experience. For Lewis, these embodied spaces are subject to corruption due to the Fall, but they are still spaces to be occupied: "our righteousness may be filthy and ragged; but Christianity gives us no ground for holding that our perceptions of right are in the same condition. They may, no doubt, be impaired; but there is a difference between imperfect sight and blindness" ("The Poison of Subjectivism" 255). Lewis works from the assumption that human beings have direct (although imperfect) access to objective Truth. One's very ability to reason is dependent upon this access. Lewis often uses the metaphor of light in both his fiction and nonfiction to show that an object or person's true

form is dependent upon its revelation by the light of God.[2] However, because of the Fall into temporality, human beings in discourse experience God's eternal light only from a distance, as if looking through glass which has been fogged over (see 1 Corinthians 13.12). We bring obscurity to every object of knowledge and every relation. While Lewis claims that we cannot experience clarity until we experience the heavenly realm, our duty in this moment is to seek God's assistance in knowing, recognizing that we cannot rely completely on what our own eyes tell us.

This holds particularly poignant implications for interpersonal relationships, for knowing anything—since it cannot be done alone—becomes a relational, participatory act. In the simplest sense, knowing becomes an act of love.[3] Lewis argues that modernity would have the individual believe that “vision” is most important for success in relationships and works, a metaphor which supports modern ideals of possession, clarity of objectivity, and creativity in the pursuit of progress (“The Poison of Subjectivism” 257). Lewis's interpretation of the Christian theological tradition, on the other hand, would have a person “see” as an act of relational disclosure. In “Meditation in a Toolshed,” Lewis takes such a phenomenological approach to “seeing” another in relationship. He describes an example of the difference between looking *at* (explaining) and looking *along* (living within) the phenomenon of love:

A young man meets a girl. The whole world looks different when he sees her. Her voice reminds him of something he has been trying to remember all his life, and ten minutes' casual chat with her is more precious than all the favours that all other women in the world could grant. He is, as they say, “in love.” Now comes a scientist and describes this young man's experience from the outside. For him it is all an affair of the young man's genes and a recognised biological stimulus. That is the difference between looking *along* the sexual impulse and looking *at* it. (199)

At first glance, this passage seems to suggest that looking *along* is always the perspective

to take in a relationship. However, Lewis argues that this is not so. Since the discursive world contains both unchanging Truth and particular phenomenal experiences, human beings must occupy a unique position of being both *within* (subject of) and *without* (object to) this world. Relationships with one another must continually be reoriented to reflect these realities—we are like the young man in love whose life is made joyful by his beloved yet struggles not to be swept away with his desire. Simply put, it is a relational misnomer, and a serious mistake, either strictly to look *at* or look *along* one's experience with another. Instead, Lewis argues that a balance between looking *both* ways is essential for one's experience with anyone in this world. That is what it means to be blind but yet be able to "see."

At the core of all interpersonal relationships, from Lewis's perspective as a Christian theist, is not just a person. It is a *personhood*. The personhood of Christ is Lewis's answer to what he deems as the problematic conditions of interpersonal relationships in this world. Lewis is concerned about the direction which discourse concerning human relationships and action in the modern age could take young lovers, such as Jane and Mark in *That Hideous Strength*. Legitimate issues of human decision-making and interpersonal understanding underlie the theoretical trends of his time, a moment of increasing technological advancement and shifts in scientific, social, and psychological narratives. Lewis argues that scholars and practitioners alike must regain the discourse of human-being-in-relation for the sake of personhood. In order to understand what personhood means, one must have a standard of comparison. In order to live with other persons and within personhood, one must have an invitation to participate. Christ offers both of these in interpersonal relationships. The paragraphs above began to articulate Lewis's unique position amongst modernity's critics given his Christian theism.

The next section specifically grounds Lewis's responses to modernity in the Christian intellectual tradition and his belief in the personhood of Christ as the standard for our understanding of all relationships. Christ's life and death points to how the core of our relational existence is situated in the presence and practice of grace. As such, the concluding section of this chapter outlines how Christ provides the standard and opportunity for the exercise of grace within human sentiment, will, and responsiveness in relation, three metaphors which will be further explored in the following chapters.

2.4 Christ: The Presence and Practice of Grace in Human Relationships

First, Lewis's Christian theist tradition understands human discursive and relational being as incarnated; spirit and flesh together. Consequently, two central metaphors are spiritual and physical death and resurrection. Human beings are creatures of God. We exist in the temporal, material world. As a result of the Fall, death and suffering are introduced into temporality: "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3.19). Therefore, our imperfection is twofold: we are deficient because we are derived and we are subject to corruption because we sin. Lewis writes "in our flesh dwells no good thing, that we are, through and through, creatures not creators, derived beings, living not of ourselves but from Christ" ("Membership" 175). Within this imperfection, however, humans have access to the perfection of the Eternal God. Our embodiment, consequently, exists as a meeting of the temporal and the eternal.

As George MacDonald says:

It is by the body that we come into contact with Nature, with our fellow-men, with all their revelations of God to us. It through the body that we receive all the lessons of passion, of suffering, of love, of beauty, of science. It is through the body that we are both trained outwards from ourselves, and driven inwards into our deepest selves to find God.

(Unspoken Sermons, 91)

The body is the nexus of all physical, relational, and spiritual experiences in this world. It is in the body that humans experience both suffering and joy, the temporal and the eternal.

Consequently, from both a spiritual and a material standpoint, human beings live in *necessity*. Prior to the Fall, the sole necessity of human being was God, just as the very idea of a creature necessitates the existence of its creator. After the Fall, however, human need for God transformed and grew exponentially. The reality of physical death brings with it a temporal lifetime of fulfilling bodily needs, instincts, and desires. Most importantly, though, the spiritual death of the human race opened up the whole of creation to the need for redemption. Humans struggle in perversion, as “sold into bondage to sin,” many times struggling with contradictory needs, desires, thoughts, and purposes as articulated by the Apostle Paul: “For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate” (Romans 7.14-15, emphasis original). Humans occupy a different space in the material world—one characterized by, in the very least, embeddedness and, at worst, enslavement. Consequently, the greatest necessity of the temporal world is not disengagement from or control of material necessities. Given our status as fallen creatures, this is an impossibility. Instead, the greatest necessity of temporality is redemption.

The redemption of the world could only come from Him in both material and spiritual perfection: Christ. According to Lewis, the central tenet of the Christian faith is that Christ perfectly lived all of the physical and emotional sufferings of human being when He was incarnated so that His death would “somehow put us right with God and [give] us a fresh start” (*Mere Christianity* 58). Christ brought perfection once again to us

by redeeming our bodies and spirits for Himself through His death and resurrection: “We are told that Christ was killed for us, that His death has washed out our sins, and that by dying He disabled death itself” (*Mere Christianity* 59). The promise of this perfection brings renewal to the world and to human beings. Lewis compares the healing of a natural, living body with Christ’s grace extended to the spiritual body of a man. Just as a wounded body has the potential to heal itself through time, the incarnate power of Christ brings healing to humankind struggling in sin. Lewis writes that in the same way, a Christian is not a person who never goes wrong or suffers injury; instead he is a person “who is enabled to repent and pick himself up and begin over again after each stumble—because the Christ-life inside of him, repairing him all the time, enabling him to repeat (in some degree) the kind of voluntary death which Christ Himself carried out” (*Mere Christianity* 64). We are born into embodied and spiritual need and desire for relational restoration and renewal, and Christ’s incarnation allows for this to be so.

Consequently, Lewis argues that Christianity articulates a phenomenological embodiment of a participatory, relational reality. He states that in both body and soul, we are a participant in “the grand miracle,” or the reality of God’s creation of, incarnation within, and redemption of the natural world: “I believe that God really has dived down into the bottom of creation, and has come up bringing the whole redeemed Nature on His shoulder” (“The Grand Miracle” 62). God’s redemption is first and foremost a *relational* redemption; even the resurrection of the body restores the relation between the natural and the eternal. Thus even the simplest aspects of human existence constitute a participatory relation with Otherness. The source of all intention and purpose exists in the labor, pain, affections, and delights of our everyday lives. Lewis suggests that the Christian narrative calls us to participatory and purposeful relationships with one another.

The presence of God in our midst allows us to be *persons* with real relationships reflecting real needs and desires. So when we speak to the other, we speak to and participate within an embodied personhood of spirit, sentiment, and intellect.

However, Lewis would argue that the Christian tradition teaches that even our most well-intentioned relational acts are in need of grace. In fact, we cannot choose or act at all without Activity Himself in our life. Lewis discusses how the Christian conviction that “God is love” speaks volumes concerning the invitation which human beings hold to participate in the dynamics of Eternity. He writes “in Christianity God is not a static thing—not even a person—but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama” (*Mere Christianity* 152). We move and attend because we are creatures of Action; this is why Augustine characterizes the act as love (*On the Trinity*). The Incarnated Christ chose, acted, and loved perfectly and His greatest act, the “grand miracle” (Lewis, “The Grand Miracle”), is an act of grace. Thus the very enactment of our lives is a grace given to us, and we have to choose whether our actions will extend or inhibit this kind of love in everyday relations.

Lewis recognizes that this is indeed a difficult choice to make, or at least to follow through on from day to day. He writes that when he comes to his evening prayers and moments of confession, he realizes that his most obvious sin is in the enactment of grace and charity toward others: “I have sulked or snapped or sneered or snubbed or stormed” (*Mere Christianity* 166). He may try to excuse his behavior by thinking about the suddenness of the provocation or the fact that he was caught off guard by the other person. Yet, “on the other hand, surely what a man does when he is taken off guard is the best evidence for what sort of a man he is?” (166). It is then that he comes to realize that there always is and always will be something not quite right about his own ability to

choose and to act charitably. Thus, “the change which I most need to undergo is a change that my own direct, voluntary efforts cannot bring about...[it] can only be done by God” (166). In this Lewis echoes George MacDonald: “the perfection of his [Christ’s] relation to us swallows up all our imperfections, all our defects, all our evils” (*Unspoken Sermons* 15). It is only through repositioning all our action toward Grace Himself that we can hope to experience the fullest extent of our love for and with others.

With Christ as the source and standard of human relation, we are presented with a *form* for loving. Because Christ was incarnated in temporality, relationships are manifested in both historical and eternal forms. During Christ’s time on Earth he was a son, a friend, and a citizen. He lived and worked within both public and private institutions of relation—the family, the synagogue, and the marketplace. Yet in addition to being a son, He is the Son. He is both standards for the individual: “The Christ Himself, the Son of God who is man (just like you) and God (just like His Father) is actually at your side” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 163). Thus every human relationship and institution is both of the flesh and also divinely inspired. Since they are of the flesh, they are prone to imperfection, corruption, and error. Lewis argues that any experience in human history will tell you that people, organizations, and societies err time and time again: “That is the key to history. Terrific energy is expended—civilizations are built up—excellent institutions devised; but each time something goes wrong” (54). We are called to form particular relationships in particular ways, yet at times we cannot act and relate as we would like; our families, friendships, and organizations still remain vulnerable to troubles and tensions. Yet because our relationships are divinely inspired by Christ’s relationship to the Father and the Holy Spirit, we are called to see these relationships as purposefully derived from Him. Lewis writes:

If you could see humanity spread out in time, as God sees it, it would not look like a lot of separate things dotted about. It would look like one single growing thing—rather like a very complicated tree. Every individual would appear connected with every other. And not only that. Individuals are not really separate from God any more than from one another. (157)

Individually and collectively, we form relations in their proper places. That is why the metaphor of membership is so significant for Lewis's understanding of the Church institution: "By *members* ([Greek]) he [St. Paul] meant what we should call *organs*, things essentially different from, and complementary to, one another, things differing not only in structure and function but also in dignity" ("Membership" 164). We are most fully ourselves, especially in relation, when "we occupy those places in the structure of the eternal cosmos for which we were designed and invented" ("Membership" 172-173). Branches in the tree of humanity, we have the gracious opportunity to bear good fruit for one another according to our proper function.

In a similar manner, we must be responsive to the particularity of role and function of persons within each of our interpersonal relationships. According to Lewis, Christ's promise of renewal allows us, at each moment of choice, to be responsive to His personhood in the other before us, a personhood which manifests itself throughout the vast particularity of the human race. In light of a theory of interpersonal grace, this conviction functions in two ways. First, the one form—the one standard of relation always before us as Christ—affords the space for us to respond consistently with love toward the other, regardless of the level of alterity. In moments of tension or trouble, we can recall that it is Christ to whom we are responding (*Mere Christianity*; "The Weight of Glory") and that the purpose of our relations already has been established for us. Second, with the knowledge that the structure and function of relationships are set, we are free to

participate in the particularity of human experience and be present—attentive—to the emergent needs of the other. Basic commandments to love, honor, and forgive one another thus become poignantly real when faced with real relational responsibilities with real persons.

In bodily sentiment, willful action, and loving responsiveness we see Christ as the standard for relationships. His standard fixes the presence and practice of grace at the center of human relational experience. The next chapters explore the three metaphors of sentiment, will, and responsiveness in both theoretical and practical ways from the perspective of the Christian intellectual tradition primarily through the works of Lewis. In order to establish these metaphors as central to the theory and practice of grace in intimacy, each chapter will conclude with a reflection on general implications of the metaphor for interpersonal communication *vis a vis* fundamental theories and presuppositions in the literature.

CHAPTER THREE

SENTIMENTS AND TRAINING OF THE HEART

3.1 Introduction

This chapter articulates the role that sentiment plays in a theory of grace in intimate interpersonal communication contexts. For the purposes of this project, sentiment refers to the visceral, emotional, and aesthetic relations that human beings experience in the context of the everyday. These experiences hold significant implications for the knowledge the self as an embodied soul, the ontological order of the temporal and the eternal, and emergent relational significance in the existential world. Sentiment creates a foundation for understanding human-being-in-discourse as a condition of *heartfelt choice*.

First, the chapter explores a brief philosophical lineage of the metaphor of sentiment, paying particular attention to those thinkers working within from a Christian standpoint. Sentiment functions as a defense of universal values from ontological, teleological, and humanistic perspectives. Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment all point to how attentiveness to and the cultivation of sentiments holds significance to ethical human relations. Second, the chapter explores how Lewis's *The Abolition of Man* situates him within this conversation regarding moral training and the reality of our embodied selves. Read alongside key texts such as *Mere Christianity*, "Weight of Glory," and *The Four Loves*, one begins to see how a phenomenological rendering of sentiments and discourse is Lewis's first step in understanding how and why we relate to each other and God. Lewis's writings address questions of pain and pleasure, death and life, and the joy of eternity all within the context of one's relational participation in the ontological order of existence. The chapter

concludes with implications which Lewis's work brings to issues of need, relational training, and embodied values in the study and practice of interpersonal communication, particularly within the context of the household.

3.2 Sentiments and A Defense of Universal Values

3.2.1 Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine

In situating sentiments as important for understanding human relationships, Lewis falls in line with major thinkers of ancient, modern, and Christian philosophical traditions. In *The Abolition of Man*, he cites Aristotle, Augustine, and Plato in his defense of the link between training in moral virtue and the affections. These early thinkers argue that the principles of ethical conduct begin with an attentiveness to sentiments in the choices and behaviors of human relationships. Consequently, the metaphor of sentiments continued to be a significant component of the philosophical foundation for thinkers of the early modern era. Specifically, the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment centered their theories of ethical conduct and moral virtue in issues of pleasure, universal benevolence, moral reasoning, and justice. All of these thinkers together provide rich theoretical ground for practices in interpersonal communication attentive to sentiments and the embodiment of moral value.

For Plato and Aristotle, sentiments and reason *both* play a significant role in the moral development of a person. In the *Republic*, Plato argues that human infants are not born with appropriate responses to the world and its relations. We all must learn just responses to our conditions. We are born with the capacity for pleasure and dislike, but we must be trained to delight in that which is beautiful and good while disavowing ourselves from ugly and hurtful relations. Plato writes that this must be done before one is of "an age to reason; so that when Reason at length comes to him, then, bred as he has

been, he will hold out his hands in welcome and recognize her because of the affinity he bears to her” (qtd. in Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* 16-17). Reason is not just a capacity of the mind; it is the proper balance of all internal relations—heart, soul, and mind (Plato Book 4). Aristotle later argues that virtue is the result of proper habitudes, or the exercise of our natural capacities for the sake of choices and acts which do not come to us naturally (such as temperance, charity, and justice). In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, he writes “the moral virtues, then, are produced in us neither *by* Nature nor *against* Nature. Nature, indeed, prepares in us the ground for their reception, but their complete formation is the product of habit” (2.1, emphasis original). Thus, when we exercise virtue, we necessarily feel pleasure, because we engage in proper relations. We feel that we relate purposefully to the world and to others, or, as Aristotle puts it, we “observe the mean relative to us, this being determined by such a rule or principle as would take shape in the mind or a man of sense or practical wisdom” (2.6). For Aristotle, practical wisdom is the principle of human relations. What both Plato and Aristotle point to is that there is a just and proper way for us to relate to the world and to one another. Our ability to recognize and act upon what is valuable and good in the universe stems from our nature as feeling *and* thinking human beings. Thus our hearts and minds must be trained to align with the Good if we are to *be* good.

St. Augustine later expands upon the notion of alignment of the heart and mind in his discussion of the movement of the will and our loves and affections. He refers to virtue as ordained, or aligned in proper quality and degree to Truth and Love. Lewis describes it as “*ordo amoris*, the ordinate condition of the affections in which every object is accorded that kind of degree of love which is appropriate to it” (*The Abolition of Man* 16). Augustine’s emphasis on the incarnate God positions love as deeply concerned

with embodiment: affections and sentiments *matter*. He writes that a human being is indeed “a creature of needs”; every creature and creation on the earth asserts its own mutability before God (*Confessions*, 12.1.1). The implications of human mutability are twofold: (1) we are endowed with the ability to *move* just as the One who created us moves, yet (2) our changefulness is predicated by our derivation. Thus, the movement of our hearts are subject to the push and pull of creaturely needs. Our pains, our pleasures, our necessities, and our desires serve either to help us attend toward or away from God. In Book 13 of the *Confessions*, Augustine describes God as the “Spirit above the waters” as in the Genesis story of creation. A Personhood—a Trinity—who rests over and within all of creation, God calls into the hearts of human beings (*Confessions* 13.5.6). Augustine writes that our embodied, spiritual selves can either be lifted up or weighed down as we respond to the call of the Spirit. What allows our souls to move in such a manner?:

They are affections; they are loves: the filthiness of our spirit, flowing away downwards with a love that brings but care. But here too is holiness of your Spirit, raising us aloft by a love that is free from care, so that we may lift up our hearts to you (13.7.8)

One’s affections, then, hold significant implications in regards to the attention of one’s will. According to Augustine, our hearts move in response to a call. Therefore, it is vital that an individual learn the doctrine of Truth, or as the heart naturally moves it will be misinformed or misdirected (*On the Trinity*). Like the Greek philosophers, moral training plays an important role in Augustine’s understanding of a life embodied with sentiments. His defense of a philosophical and ethical treatment of the affections supports his presuppositions regarding Truth and the proper condition of human relations.

3.2.2 The Scottish Enlightenment Philosophers

The ancient thinkers create a philosophical foundation attentive to sentiments, a

ground which continues into the early modern age in the Scottish Enlightenment.

Philosophers such as Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, and Thomas Reid were concerned with the question of moral training and its connection to motives and action. Generally, their approaches emphasize the humanistic ground of moral inquiry and action, rather than the teleological and ontological doctrines of the ancients. Yet their attentiveness to the common basis of humanity in the appetites and affections, as well as our inclination to articulate and act upon moral precepts in community with others, leads them to a concern for the presence of universal values and motivations in human relations.

A precursor to the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, Hutcheson presupposes that immediate judgements are propelled by a natural moral sense. This inherent moral sense allows us to apprehend moral qualities in others and in the world and compels us to approve and act upon certain phenomena. He echoes the Stoic tradition of perfect virtue as “*vita secundum naturam*,” or ““acting according to what we may see from the Constitution of our Nature, we were intended for by our Creator”” (xvii.19-20). Moral sense—our sense of obligatory response to the world—always precedes our ability to reason. Thus, our sentiments serve as the conceptual source for our moral reasoning; reason alone cannot compel us to perceive ideas such as beauty or goodness. Hutcheson argues against the Hobbesian world of selfishness and brutality. Instead, any action is good, in a moral sense, “when it flows from benevolent Affection, or Intention of absolute Good to others,” (I.ii.38.18-19) or what Hutcheson terms as the “calm universal Benevolence” (I.ii.34.18). Moral action and moral judgment are thus disinterested; that is, not egoistic. We approve of benevolence by nature and value it universally according to our moral sensibilities.

Later, Hume, in *A Treatise on Human Nature*, agrees with Hutcheson we are incapable of choice and action without our sentiments. He writes “the chief spring or actuating principle of the human mind is pleasure or pain; and when these sensations are remov’d, both from our thought and feeling; we are, in a great measure, incapable of passion or action, of desire or volition” (Hume III.iii.1.2). We are able to distinguish pleasure and virtue from pain and vice because we have sympathy, or a responsiveness to the common experiences of humanity. However, Hume maintains a more indirect connection between sympathetic responses and moral judgement than Hutcheson does in his writings. Sympathy constitutes a conceptual ground for the distinctions of moral action in the same manner as the concept of “colors” allows us to distinguish between red, blue, or green. Thus, we feel direct (or original) satisfaction with the idea of the pleasure that a person or object generates for us and for others (i.e., a natural virtue). We further feel “indirect passion” to morally approve of said person or object *because* of their character traits (i.e., an artificial virtue) (Hume). Thus, moral judgements are not mere expressions of sympathetic responses; instead they “exhibit both a stability and an independence from individual perspectives that our sympathetic responses do not” (Sayre-McCord xxiv). Hume argues that our moral standards are set not by how we *individually* feel at any given time but instead by how we *all* would feel were we to universally conceptualize and operationalize our responses. It is *both* our ability to reason and to feel which constitute our capacity to think morally.

In *A Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith offers more complexity to the issue of sentiments, sympathy, and moral action. Like Hume, sympathy is central to Smith’s account of morality. However, Smith’s theory of moral sentiments is grounded more in *justice* than utility and emphasizes the role that the moral agent’s *motive* plays in

the act. He regards sympathetic relations as a complex mirroring of sentiments between agent, recipient, and spectator. We are endowed with the ability for basic judgment of right and wrong not only by observing effects of actions but also by the motives of the agent. Pleasant or painful effects of action certainly are relevant to moral judgment, Smith argues. Yet, these effects are of little use or consolation due to their particularity—general social utility is more of an afterthought, not the foundation for action.

Sympathetic responses must be guided by (and guide us to) principles of meritorious action. Smith claims that nature has “implanted in the human breast” the consciousness of deserved reward, of ill-desert, and the “terrors of merited punishment” (II.ii.4.3). We feel gratitude or resentment toward others when we witness benefit or harm *respectively*, not just when we experience pleasure or pain particularly. Simply, we have a natural consciousness for justice—for merit and demerit. Smith writes that the best society stands on the condition of benevolence *as well as* the reciprocity of just judgement and action by its moral agents: “all the members of human society stand in need of each others assistance, and are likewise exposed to mutual injuries. *Where the necessary assistance is reciprocally afforded* from love, from gratitude, from friendship, and esteem, the society flourishes” (II.ii.3.1-3, emphasis added). Because of his emphasis on the complexity of moral judgement and agency in relationships, Smith’s theory of moral sentiments is tempered by issues of relational approbation and praise-worthiness, duty, and justice.

Thomas Reid answers Hume’s and Smith’s accounts of moral sentiments through his notion of common sense, a theory which emerges from his Christian theism. In *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind*, Reid recognizes appetites, desires, affections, and passions as principles of action. He works from the presupposition that

“human knowledge and human virtue are both very imperfect,” and the sentiments are “necessary supplements to our imperfections” (Reid III.ii.2). Similar to Plato, Reid recognizes that knowledge and virtue come in slow degrees to individuals; thus in their procurement we learn *first* how to intend and to will, *then* we sharpen our abilities to judge and reason. Growth in knowledge and virtue occurs when a person is able to discover the connections and consequences of his actions in time and relation, or what Reid terms “our good on the whole” (III.iii.2). Thus, all powers of the human mind, including the affections, are “useful and necessary in our present state. The perfection of human nature consists, not in extinguishing, but in restraining them within their proper bounds, and keeping them in due subordination to the governing principles” (III.iii.8). Our conscience keeps us aware of the governing principles of God’s purposes for our bodies, minds, and hearts, and “we condemn ourselves, or, in the language of Scripture, *our heart condemns us*, whenever we go beyond the rule of right and wrong which conscience prescribes” (III.iii.8). We all possess common sense concerning the governing principles of creation because of our relationship with the Creator. The faculty of common sense furnishes the human mind with the ability to imagine, conceive, and judge existence purposefully with consideration of that which is *other than* themselves. Thus, one’s sensations of the world confirm what one already conceives to be true about the nature of humanity—that the “good on the whole” (III.iii.2) brings purpose to the existence of even the most mundane of our appetites and affections.

What the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment and other early modern philosophers point to is that sentiments are central to ethics. Consequently, there exists a distinct *pedagogical* implication to the experience of sentiment. Ancient and early modern philosophers contend that our sentiments not only *teach us* something about the

nature of the relational universe, but that we have a moral obligation to *teach ourselves* how to cultivate their willful expression in a society of others. Even those sentiments which are undesirable for a community, such as anger or desire to harm, are consequences of limited or mistaken understandings of the larger good. Thus, these philosophers carefully place sentiments not only in particular systems of human relation but also universal systems of moral responsiveness with varying levels of ontological, teleological, or humanistic significance. Together they create a defense for universal values, or a “reflection on the universal ‘oeconomy’” (Garrett xvi), a picture of the household of humankind.

3.3 Lewis and the Training of the Heart

Lewis is able to talk meaningfully about sentiments and moral training in *The Abolition of Man* because of those before him, such as the philosophers mentioned above, who have thought seriously about such issues. In his own defense of universal values, he references Augustine, Plato, and Aristotle, and the tone of his conclusions pays homage to the presuppositions which Reid holds. From this theoretical ground, Lewis calls for the recollection of sentiments in modern discourse concerning human beings in relation. *The Abolition of Man* is a pedagogical piece; he subtitles it in part “Reflections on Education.” In this and other key texts, he lays the groundwork for moral training—*relational* training—as attentive to human embodiment with its subsequent needs, pleasures, and loves. As Lewis argues, the “weight” of our bodies *matter* from the perspective of Eternal Glory (see reference to “The Weight of Glory” below), and by thinking, feeling, and loving we participate in the ontological order of Creation. The following section outlines Lewis’s position regarding the cultivation of moral sentiments, the place of the body in such discussions, and the difficult questions of pain and pleasure,

death and joy in our relationship with God and others.

Lewis regards sentiments as a fundamental characteristic of human beings. Yet unfortunately, he finds himself within a time in history in which all deemed emotional or sentimental is unduly criticized and philosophically simplified. In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis discusses a modern English schoolbook under the fabricated title *The Green Book*. In this book, the authors, who Lewis calls Gaius and Titius, refer to a story of the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a waterfall, and the remarks of two tourists. One tourist calls the waterfall “sublime” while the other deems it “pretty.” The authors argue that, on the surface, it seems as if the two tourists are commenting about an observable characteristic of the waterfall and, consequently, articulating a statement of value. However, Gaius and Titius state that this is not the case: ““This confusion is continually present in language as we use it. We appear to be saying something very important about something: and actually we are only saying something about our own feelings.”” (Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* 2-3). The lesson to be learned in the modern schoolbook, Lewis argues, is that all sentences which contain statements of value are merely reflections of the emotional state of the speaker and, as such, these statements are insignificant. The modern emphasis on rationalism and objectivity leads to a denial of the subjective: ironically, Lewis argues, the very thing which tempts a person into subjectivism.

As is discussed in Chapter Two, Lewis’s critique of modernity’s subjectivism leads him to recover the metaphor of sentiment in its theological and philosophical significance. For Lewis, sentiments constitute a phenomenon of the human self in an ordered, eternal reality. We are both witnesses of and participants in the goodness of God’s creation, for we have the privilege of naming reality. Consequently, when a person remarks “This is sublime” in the face of a great waterfall, she speaks from out of the

experience of a *real* condition in the world. The waterfall *is* beautiful, good, and sublime because God created it. It is intrinsically valuable. Lewis argues that modernity has lost the conviction of intrinsic value; instead, modernists argue that value is contingent and conditional. With no essential standard for decision-making, modernists become seduced by the call to overextend their capacities of rationalization and may become trapped in their own minds. Lewis characterizes this state as Hell. In *The Great Divorce*, the Teacher tells the narrator:

Hell is a state of mind—ye never said a truer word. And every state of mind, left to itself, every shutting up of the creature within the dungeon of its own mind—is, in the end, Hell. But Heaven is not a state of mind. Heaven is reality itself. All that is fully real is Heavenly. For all that can be shaken will be shaken and only the unshakable remains. (68)

When we face any creation or creature on Earth, we meet a reflection of Heaven, the true reality. As such, the object “merits” emotions of awe and appreciation from us (Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* 15).

The manner in which humans come to perceive the goodness of God’s creation is phenomenological in nature. Lewis challenges the modern understanding of how we know in the world; real knowledge is a complex meeting of the self, a particular phenomenon in the world, and an emergent knowing of the thing itself. We have a *participatory consciousness* of the world because we are not only creatures of God but also co-creators of the phenomenal world. We are created good so we are to know that which is good. Lewis argues that even modernists must recognize that there are actions and decisions which are more *preferable* than others (hence their emphasis on technological, rational, and social progress) (“The Poison of Subjectivism”). The very fact that we are *inclined* to make one decision over another suggests that phenomena called “good” and “bad,” “better” and “worse,” exists. This is why Lewis begins his

famous apologetic, *Mere Christianity*, not specifically with the question of God but with the question of moral law and “right and wrong as a clue to the meaning of the universe” (15). Good acts as a phenomenological “fixed point” for our attention: “Our ideas of the good may change, but they cannot change either for better or the worse if there is no *absolute and immutable good* to which they can approximate or from which they can recede” (“The Poison of Subjectivism” 253, emphasis added). The “fixed point” of good is not an imposing epistemological framework, however. Contrary scholars such as Gaius and Titius in *The Abolition of Man* who suggest that a person brings knowledge to an object of perception (and, in a sense, imposes this knowing on it), Lewis argues that the Christian tradition teaches that human beings engage in an emergent—an incarnate—knowledge of the world. Our mind and hearts are derived from the Divine (see Augustine’s *Confessions* and *On the Trinity*). Good is the transcendental epochē of all perception and interpretation; it is the way in which are able to know and reason at all.[1]

Human experience of the world calls for the exercise of both mind and heart. Much like St. Augustine (*Confessions*), Lewis understands the communicative act as an incarnation of Truth, or the Word as flesh. When humans name, it is a relational participation in the personhood of Eternity. Yet because we are willful creatures, we can choose either to name justly or unjustly. Lewis quotes Traherne’s *Centuries of Meditations*: “Can you be righteous unless you be just in rendering to things their due esteem? All things were made to be yours and you were made to prize them according to their value” (*The Abolition of Man* 16). The world is ripe for revelatory naming, and as human-beings-in-discourse, Lewis recognizes that we will name according to our inclinations, and, ultimately, our hearts. We *will* experience anger, and it can be righteous or unrighteous. We *will* find things beautiful, and we can appreciate or misplace the

source of glory. We *will* love, and we name or misname its object. To deny the validity of such sentiments is not simply to deny what makes us human; Lewis argues that is it an outright *lie*. That is why he argues that the “cold vulgarity” of modern education leaves students defenseless against the conditions of the world: “The right defense against false sentiments is to inculcate just sentiments. By starving the sensibility of our pupils we only make them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes...a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head” (*The Abolition of Man* 13-14). Both head and heart are necessary for reason and relationship.

We live as embodied souls in a world that demands both our hearts and minds when it comes to how we exist, how we know, and how we relate to others. A philosophical and theological understanding of sentiment, such as Lewis supports, crafts our personhood as eternally and relationally significant. Consequently, Lewis argues that relational training begins with a consideration of how our bodies meet the world and how this meeting brings us to recognition, appreciation, and love for the other as a result.

3.3.1 The Body and the “Weight of Glory”

In his writings, Lewis assumes the importance of the body in the Christian understanding of grace. The body experiences need, pain, and pleasure manifested in both physical and spiritual ways. The function of all of these, according to Lewis, is to introduce the potential for *disinterested love* into human existence. Disinterested love paves the way for gratitude, appreciation, and acceptance of Love’s gifts. This can only occur, however, when the body is understood from within the ordinate relation of the temporal and the eternal, or simply put, when it is given its proper weight.

We inhabit a unique existence in this world. It is an existence where the spiritual and the carnal, the eternal and the temporal, meet. As Screwtape writes to his nephew,

“humans are amphibians—half spirit, half animal....As spirits they belong to the eternal world, but as animals they inhabit time” (Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* 37). Because humans are temporal creatures, we are subject to change. While the eternal demonstrates a constancy of existence, temporal undulations of experience subject human beings to our fundamental characteristic as creatures—need. Lewis argues that our need creates within us a homeostatic impulse toward eternal constancy or, perhaps more accurately, a teleological push toward the fulfillment of potential. However, our temporal needs will not be satisfied because the vehicle for realizing them is the body, a fallen instrument. In its simplest form, need introduces us to our embodied selves. With desires like thirst and hunger, we become aware of ourselves as object-like or, more accurately, as “composite creatures” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 100). Something about our temporal selves exists beyond our subjective control (e.g., as in an experience of sickness) and our existence becomes predicated by a need for something which is external, whether it is water, food, or warmth. Yet at the same time, we can possess a disinterested awareness concerning our own need; we have the willful ability to act toward meeting or sacrificing those needs.

What this creates in us is a *choice* in how to view ourselves as bodies. Lewis describes three views of the body. There are those, like the ascetic Pagans, who view the body as a tomb or a prison of need and desire; it is something to be destroyed, escaped from, or transcended. There are others, such as the Neo-Pagans, to whom the body is the most glorious creation and something to be celebrated and revered. Lewis supports a different view. In line with St. Francis, he refers to the body as “Brother Ass.” In the same manner that a donkey is a “useful, sturdy, lazy, obstinate, patient, lovable and infuriating beast,” Lewis argues, so is the body. We live most authentically in our own bodies when we acknowledge that “one of its functions in our lives is to play the part of buffoon. Until

some theory has sophisticated them, every man, woman and child in the world knows this. The fact that we have bodies is the oldest joke there is” (*The Four Loves* 101). The human condition is all at once messy, tiresome, and at times ravenously needful as well as transcendent, gratifying, and capable of sacrifice. This is the divine joke—that which allows us to view our own bodies both with egocentric concern and with selfless disinterest. And as Lewis writes: “It is a bad thing not to be able to take a joke” (*The Four Loves* 100).

The danger of not being able to understand the divine joke of an embodied soul lies in the metaphor of ownership. Lewis claims that Christian doctrine teaches that the human creature is derivative of God and, thus, necessarily incomplete. Consequently, the Absolute is *incarnated* in the flesh, but it is not *located* therein. Attempts to locate certainty, security, and control in the body may suggest a false sense of ownership of the natural, but it really limits humanity to the boundaries of the temporal. Lewis argues that this aggrandizement of the body often occurs in sexual encounters in intimate relationships. Our bodies, as a medium through which one can experience physical and emotional pleasure, can often become confused as the *end* of all such desire. Consequently, human beings are in danger of believing pleasure to be something that which we can own and call forth instead of something which is given to us by God *and* by others. Especially in matters of sex, Lewis writes that we must not be too serious about it: “Indeed we can’t be totally serious without doing violence to our humanity....We must not attempt to find an absolute in the flesh. Banish play and laughter from the bed of love and you may let in a false goddess” (*The Four Loves* 99). The laughter which Lewis calls for is not mere levity or inappropriate frivolity. Rather he argues for a sense of humor which lends weight to the human body, for humor involves placing the body in its

proper context and allows for proper relation of the self to others.

In his fictional writings, Lewis often contrasts the solidity and fullness of Heaven with the shadows and reflections of Earth. In *The Great Divorce*, for example, the ghosts who are brought to Heaven on the bus from Hell—once they are bathed in the glorious light of the Eternal—become fully transparent. The narrator describes them as “smudgy and imperfectly opaque” against the landscape as if they were “man-shaped stains on the brightness of that air” (28). The phantoms are unable to walk without pain, for their insubstantial bodies cannot bend even a blade of grass against the solidity of that which is Eternal. Only those creatures who belong to Heaven are “solid people” (32) with proper weight and substance. In the preface to the story, Lewis describes his choice of depicting heavenly matter with an “unbendable and unbreakable quality” as an indication of the fullness of bodies in their eternal glory (11). Lewis argues that human beings are made for heaven, and its glory gives our embodiment not only physical but *relational* weight and substance (“The Weight of Glory”).

The metaphor of the physical and relational weight of glory is one which Lewis inherits from his intellectual and theological heritage. Lewis considered George MacDonald his spiritual mentor and literary master. In fact, MacDonald plays the part of the “Teacher” to the narrator (presumably Lewis) in *The Great Divorce*. MacDonald’s writings not only introduced Lewis to the revelation of joy as holiness (see discussion below) but also to his presuppositions of the body and soul as self in relation. MacDonald’s “country whence the shadows fall” in “The Golden Key” (36) contains a powerful allegory of Earth’s relation to Heaven, one that is clearly reflected in Lewis’s *The Great Divorce*. A more significant parable of the weight of glory, especially in terms of relational training, is “The Light Princess.” In this story, a princess is cursed as a baby

to grow up absolutely weightless. She floats from place to place and must be tethered to a person or object lest she should fly away. Her weightlessness is not only physical, but it is relational. Her *heart* is without weight; she cannot cry, she cannot smile, and she cannot truly laugh. Instead, she giggles mindlessly and apathetically from place to place, from person to person, concerned only with herself. It is not until the end of the story when a prince lovingly and willingly sacrifices his own life to save hers that she begins to transform into a “solid” person. Learning how to walk under her own weight for the first time, the princess continually falls and is hurt but happy:

“Is this the gravity you used to make so much of?” said she one day to the prince, as he raised her from the floor. “For my part, I was a great deal more comfortable without it.”

“No, no, that’s not is. This is it,” replied the prince, as he took her up, and carried her about like a baby, kissing her all the time. “This is gravity.”

“That’s better,” said she. “I don’t mind that so much.” (106)

As all fairy-tales go, the prince and princess lived a happy and fruitful life. The last line of the story illustrates how their legacy, their children, inherited the lessons which the princess learned in both body and heart: “not one of whom, was ever known, on the most critical occasion, to lose the smallest atom of his or her due proportion of gravity” (107).

MacDonald’s story, and Lewis’s robust retelling of these themes in his own works of fiction, points to the phenomenological and theological texture to human bodies in relation with one another. First, the earthly and the temporal are serious. Yet they are not serious absolutely; the Absolute is also other than the body. It is the context in which the body is to be placed, or the Light which allows for it to be seen completely and truly. “The Glory flows into everyone, and back from everyone: like light and mirrors. But the light’s the thing” (Lewis, *The Great Divorce* 81). This Eternal Light allows us to see the fullness of ourselves and of others with merriment—grading imperfections as both

inconsequential idiosyncrasies and burdens we carry toward the hope of glory. In the proper weight of Earth's temporality, we are simultaneously needful and disinterested bodies.

Second, these stories articulate how our substance is derived from relation. Ultimately, one's willful acceptance of the Eternal Relation with God brings fullness to the self. However, it is through temporal relations that Love is made manifest and incarnate. The princess bore no weight to her body or soul without love for another. The first thing that love brought to her was sadness and pain, for it was predicated by an act of self-sacrifice, or a disinterested act of selflessness. Yet her disinterest in herself *gave back her self*. When she gained substance, she was able to feel her own foot on the ground and to feel her husband carry her. A "due proportion of gravity" (MacDonald, "The Light Princess" 107) allowed her to do so. Without it, she is unable to experience existential, relational, or spiritual weight. This weight is not ours alone; it is derivative from Whom gives substance and purpose to all of creation. Yet as the story suggests, gravity—as a force pulling upon human bodies and hearts in temporality—is so much easier to bear when we are carried. Discomfort and pain are only the beginning of the fullness of self in body and soul.

3.3.2 The Function of Pain and Death

From Lewis's perspective, to take the body seriously means to understand the function of pain and death from not only physical but also relational and spiritual perspectives. Throughout his writings he points to the fact that pain is not a *created* condition. All that which is created is good and real, and pain is evil (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*). In the vein of St. Augustine in the *Confessions*, Lewis understands evil as a lack of that which is good. Pain, in its simplest form, is an empty space—it is the unreality of

the fallen world amidst the reality of the fullness of God. Pain exists because *absence* exists in temporality: not the absence of God but the absence of full personhood. Human beings live and labor in a fallen world of deficient, broken selves. Consequently, it is painful to be a self as well as to be in relation with another. “Pain is inherent in the very existence of a world where souls can meet,” writes Lewis (*The Problem of Pain* 86). Yet the function of pain is for us to recognize that a condition of lack is not our created nature. Pain reminds us that this deficient selfhood will (and must) end; that is, it must die.

At its basest level, Lewis describes how human experience of pain rouses the body and the soul out of complacency. That is why demons such as Screwtape advise their protégés to keep humans in a comfortable, mundane existence: it keeps them from remembering the Eternal. “They find it all but impossible to believe in the unfamiliar while the familiar is before their eyes. Keep pressing home on him the *ordinariness* of things” (Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* 4, emphasis original). However, pain finds its way into human experience despite Hell’s best efforts. Lewis writes that the wages of sin in temporality manifest itself in two experiences of pain: (1) “a particular kind of sensation, probably conveyed by specialised nerve fibres, and recognisable by the patient as that kind of sensation whether he dislikes it or not,” and (2) “any experience, whether physical or mental, which the patient dislikes” (*The Problem of Pain* 87). Simply put, human beings since Adam both inherit and suffer pain. Even though pain is not God’s creation, it is nonetheless one of His tools for our restoration. Lewis argues that “pain insists upon being attended to. 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.” (91).

Pain constitutes a phenomenological encounter with the self in temporality. We

have a *choice* of where we focus our attention in a moment of pain. One can focus on the self *through* the pain; that is, through the awareness of the need, brokenness, and lack of ourselves as fallen creatures. On the other hand, one can focus on the self *in* pain—that is, to drown in pain until it envelopes the heart and mind in perverted comfort. For example, a mother holds on to the misery of losing her son until the grief causes her to disregard anyone but herself and anything but her own pain (Lewis, *The Great Divorce* 89-94). Her grief functions as something she believes she can hold on to and control and that which can fill her life with purpose. Phenomenologically speaking, there is no distance between her and the pain; it is too close for her to see it clearly. Because of this danger, God must act as the intermediary between us and our pain, for without Him suffering is devoid of its proper function and purpose.

Suffering and sacrifice characterize the faithful movement from desperate lack to sufficiency in Christ. As Lewis writes, pain shatters our misconception that we are and can be *for ourselves*: “if the first and lowest operation of pain shatters the illusion that all is well, the second shatters the illusion that what we have, whether good or bad in itself, is our own and enough for us” (*The Problem of Pain* 94). Pain means loss, brokenness, and absence. It is an indication that what we know as ourselves, from our temporal birth, must be given up if we are to realize anything greater. Lewis, quoting Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei*, names the sufficiency of God as the only way to fullness of strength in body and spirit: “in supreme ‘Trial’ or ‘Sacrifice’ it [pain] teaches him the self-sufficiency which really ought to be his—the ‘strength, which, if Heaven gave it, may be called his own’” (*The Problem of Pain* 101). The shift from faith in the self *alone* to faith in the self *in God* allows human beings to participate in the life and death of Christ. In a moment of suffering and uncertainty, when one can “leave it to God,” he “trusts that Christ will

somehow share with him the perfect human obedience which He carried out from His birth to His crucifixion: that Christ will make the man more like Himself, and, in a sense, make good his deficiencies” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 130). Consequently, “martyrdom always remains the supreme enacting and perfection of Christianity” (*The Problem of Pain* 102). Christ, in His sacrifice, places Himself between us and death and gives us the space to perceive and interpret pain rightly. It is only in this context that we experience absolution and comfort from the burdens of our bodies and souls.

Lewis clarifies that interest in or attention to one’s own pain is not a willful act of disobedience toward God. On the contrary, pain is, in colloquial terms, a necessary evil in our world. It allows for our interests to become phenomenologically disinterested from the self. Our interest in our existence is placed in an eternal framework which simultaneously is *in*, *with*, and *beyond* the self. Thus our sentiments function relationally; even pain helps us to attend to the other if we allow it. Good relational training, then, considers human physical and emotional need not only as an inconvenience or pain, but also as a pleasure afforded to us by Grace.

3.3.3 The Gift of Pleasure

Lewis introduces his treatise on love in *The Four Loves* with this very issue of the relation between need and pleasure. There are two classes of human experience of pleasure: need-pleasure and pleasures of appreciation. They differ in two regards: (1) the relation of the object to the person experiencing the pleasure, and (2) the temporal experience of the thing itself (Lewis, *The Four Loves*). Need-pleasures are preceded by natural desires of embodiment, such as thirst or hunger. Appreciative pleasures, on the other hand, are experienced as moments of pleasure without qualification or preparation, a “super-added gift” of delight (11). Need-pleasures, once the desire is fulfilled, “die on

us” abruptly and completely (13). Pleasures of appreciation linger in our minds and souls: “they make us feel that something has not merely gratified our senses but in fact claimed our appreciation by right” (13). Need-pleasures speak to the “momentary condition” of “the human frame” (14), while appreciative pleasures are savored as a glimpse of the eternal. At first glance, one may surmise that pleasures of appreciation are better or more desirable than those of need-pleasure. Yet this is not Lewis’s point in making such a distinction. *Together* these experiences constitute our embodied souls, and *together* they allow us to appreciate a world created by Goodness.

The juxtaposition of our experiences of need and appreciation invites us into a world of disinterested (i.e., selfless) love. Our needs create a space for appreciation to manifest itself. Need-pleasure, or the fulfillment of need, begets gratitude. Gratitude momentarily breaks the bonds of the self to temporality. In these momentary glimpses of life where bodily need is satisfied, the self is free to exist as a self in proper perspective. This is the perspective of “goodness” of God’s creation. Lewis describes it as a feeling of appreciation for the beauty and creativity which sustains us. When we encounter great works of art, magnificent landscapes, or even quaint gardens nestled in the sun, “we do not merely like these things; we pronounce them, in a momentarily God-like sense, ‘very good’” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 16). Appreciation for what exists as good for the self turns into gratitude for what exists in goodness by its own right. We are then able to take on a disinterested love toward the self—not because the self is devoid of good but because goodness surpasses the boundaries of self. The pleasures of beauty and goodness in this world are our gift: not originated or given by us but nonetheless completely *for us* if we should accept it.

Appreciative-pleasure, according to Lewis, foreshadows our existence as creatures

who are defined by love. There is one need-pleasure which endures, and it is the pleasure humans experience from needing Love Himself. Our need of God can never end, for we are not only His creation but His children. In “The Weight of Glory,” Lewis writes “I suddenly remembered that no one can enter heaven except as a child, and nothing is so obvious in a child—not in a conceited child, but in a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised” (37). The satisfaction of pleasing “those whom I rightly loved and rightly feared” (37) is at the very core of who we are as human beings whose first heartbeats, first breaths—even our very conception—are predicated by need. It is both a fearful and a joyful thing to be so needful as creatures. “We are born helpless. As soon as we are fully conscious we discover loneliness. We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually; we need them if we are to know anything, even ourselves” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 2). There is real pleasure, and even joy, to be found in being needful creatures.

Because our existence is relational, everything we feel holds implications for how we live among the other. One of the first steps in understanding relationships from a philosophical understanding of love and grace is to be attentive to our embodied experiences. Lewis describes such an understanding as one characterized by “surprise” as it is a robust, emergent meeting (*Surprised by Joy*). When we are met with significance in the world, we feel it in the racing beat of our hearts, the fluttering of our stomachs, and the tightness of our throats—we are there not only to meet an embodied experience but a *relationship* of the self with otherness. Any weighty interpersonal moment—either pleasurable or painful—can teach us that our bodies *react* to our discourse. From his understanding of pleasure and pain, Lewis transitions to a framework of interpersonal affections and relationships as being predicated by embodied meetings. First, however, it

is necessary to discuss his characterization of Joy as a meeting with Holiness, for this establishes weight to our affections. Our everyday experiences and relationships *matter* to Lewis, for it is in the ordinary that we are surprised by the joy of the extraordinary of life together. [1]

3.3.4 A Soul *Surprised by Joy*

Lewis describes his moments of meeting otherness as occasions for contemplation, comfort, longing, and joy. The first experience Lewis claims to have had with Joy is in the memory of a memory. While standing beside a flowering bush on a summer's day in the garden, a memory of his brother's toy garden in the nursery overtakes him. Lewis writes that it was difficult for him to find the words to describe exactly what he felt: "Milton's 'enormous bliss' of Eden (giving the full, ancient meaning to 'enormous') comes somewhere near it" (*Surprised by Joy* 16). He could only describe it as a sensation of desire, yet the object of his desire was just beyond the grasp of identification. As quickly as the sensation arrived, it departed: "the whole glimpse withdrawn, the world turned commonplace again, or only stirred by a longing for the longing that had just ceased. It had taken only a moment of time; and in a certain sense everything else that had ever happened to me was insignificant in comparison" (16). Lewis's experience of joy "was something quite different from ordinary life and even from ordinary pleasure; something, as they would now say, 'in another dimension'" (17). Joy constitutes a participatory moment in Eternal Glory. In such a moment, we can make no distinction between wanting and having: it just *is* before and within us.

The first error in approaching Joy is in thinking that one can approach it at all. Lewis writes of the frustration he felt in his early adulthood at the fact that the "old thrill" of Joy was becoming rarer and rarer for him (*Surprised by Joy* 168). Then he realized that

to regard Joy as a thrill at all is a mistake, for it is “only when your whole attention and desire are fixed on something else—whether a distant mountain, or the past, or the gods of Asgard—does the ‘thrill’ arise. It is a by-product” (168). Having falsely understood Joy as being a state of mind (i.e., a “thrill,”) Lewis mistook Joy for a product of his own efforts and interpretation. There were moments where life startled him into self-forgetfulness, yet more often than not Joy was frightened away “by my greedy impatience to snare it, and, even when it came, [I] instantly destroyed it by introspection, and at all times vulgarized it by my false assumption about its nature” (169). Lewis’s focus of attention made all of the difference when it came to finding satisfaction for his longings.

It was not until Lewis picked up a copy of George MacDonald’s *Phantastes, a faerie Romance* at a train station bookstall that he recognized Joy as Holiness. While he read, Lewis remembers that a voice which before seemed so distant was suddenly speaking to him *right here*. “It was with me in the room, or in my own body, or behind me. It is had once eluded me by its distance, it now eluded me by proximity—something too near to see, too plain to be understood, on this side of knowledge” (*Surprised by Joy*, 180). Unlike his first taste of Joy as a child with the memory of his brother’s toy garden, the revelation of Joy as Holiness rendered the common world not as insignificant but as being drawn into Significance Itself. He saw all things common as a reflection of the Divine; he inhabited a world engulfed in the bright shadow of Heaven.

The revelation of God through our existential and embodied experiences in this world has significant implications for human relationships: mainly, that what happens between us and others in the everyday absolutely matters. We each are souls marching either toward Heaven or Hell, and all of our relations should be considered in this light

(Lewis, “The Weight of Glory”). Our bodies and souls mirror the Incarnate Christ. Lewis writes:

our model is the Jesus, not only of Calvary, but of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions, the lack of all peace and privacy, the interruptions. For this, so strangely unlike anything we can attribute to the Divine itself, is apparently not only like, but is, the Divine life operating under human conditions. (*The Four Loves* 6)

Even the most ordinary relationships are eternal in nature, because the humans who create and sustain these relations are so. Christ, as the substance of human personhood, worked and served among others with sadness, anger, exhaustion, and pain—all for the sake of Joy being made manifest in the temporal. We are to approach our relationships in the same manner: with Goodness and Joy providing a phenomenological framework for understanding the complexity of our everyday affections.

3.4 Lewis on Living in the Household in the Everyday

3.4.1 Our Natural Affections

Lewis describes those ordinary human relationships as affection. As “the humblest and most widely diffused of loves,” affection is particularly embodied and familiar (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 31). The Greeks called it *storge*, or the affection parents have for offspring. Lewis maintains the central meaning of this metaphor, imaging this love as “that of a mother nursing a baby; a bitch or a cat with a basketful of puppies or kittens; all in a squeaking, nuzzling heap together; purring, lickings, baby-talk, milk, warmth, the smell of young life” (*The Four Loves* 32). Affection is a comfortable, warm, and quiet love which continues to grow as we grow with it.

While it may be familiar, Lewis claims that an extraordinary thing about affection is that it teaches us to love the unfamiliar. Affectionate thoughts, acts, and moments are experienced between people of varying ages, classes, and sexes. It is an indiscriminating

love; we can feel it for anyone who “happen[s] to be there” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 37) in our household or in our community. It helps us to develop, as Lewis calls it, a “truly wide taste in humanity” allowing us to find “something to appreciate in the cross-section of humanity whom one has to meet every day...teaching us first to notice, then to endure, then to smile at, then to enjoy, and finally to appreciate, the people who ‘happen to be there.’” (37). This simple and humble love teaches us to recognize and appreciate otherness as a necessary condition for the fulfillment of our everyday lives. Just as in the first moment when a baby opens its eyes to his mother, “affection opens our eyes to goodness we could not have seen” otherwise (37).

Because of the closeness—both in body and soul—of our affectionate relations, need-love and gift-love play a complex role in its manifestation. Mother and child, for example, both need and give to the other simultaneously and paradoxically, for “it is a Need-love but what it needs is to give. It is a Gift-love but it needs to be needed” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 32). Bodily, both the mother and child need each other or else they suffer. Yet emotionally, they also crave the affection of the other. They give to each other because they need each other. Need-love and gift-love in affection teaches us that we can love another person not just because of what she can *do* for us, but because of the fact that who she is *gives* so much to us. We learn how to *offer* love to one another in our being and in our actions. Lewis argues that, unfortunately, it is exactly this juxtaposition of need-love and gift-love which places us in danger of coming to *expect* this love from others, regardless of how we treat them. We have what Lewis calls a “reasonable expectation” (40) of loving and being loved by those in our households and communities, but the very fact of the matter is that we may not be (neither worthy nor loved). Due to the unassuming and comfortable nature of affection, we may take the love and the

relationship for granted.

Consequently, affection introduces us to a paradoxical element of love. In order to be loved, we must be lovable. Yet we are made lovable by being loved. That is why the constancy and integrity of affection depends upon the presence of Love Himself. Only God can establish the right groundwork for affection to keep it from going wrong, for only He loves completely. He has no need and thus, we have nothing to offer Him in our love. He loves simply because that is His nature, and we are loved because that is why we were created. When it comes to loving other people (who perhaps have nothing particularly lovable about them), “it makes it easier if we remember that that is how He loves us. Not for any nice, attractive qualities we think we have, but just because we are the things called selves” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 108). Lewis points to the fact that it is not only our *actions*, but our *focus* which establishes and maintains affection. If we focus on Christ as Love, then we can offer love to others and receive their love in return. Affection becomes as natural as being the things called selves.

All that which is natural, Lewis argues, functions as a doorway into the unnatural or the supernatural. “No natural feelings are high or low, holy or unholy, in themselves. They are all holy when God’s hand is on the rein. They all go bad when they set up on their own and make themselves into false gods” (Lewis, *The Great Divorce* 92). Consequently, the humblest of loves has the potential to become either the most perverted or the most glorious.

3.4.2 Affection and Ownership

Affection, like any human condition, is subject to perversion. Lewis’s demons in *The Screwtape Letters* knew this all too well. In the preface to the 1961 edition to *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis writes that the devils in his story are not motivated by a pursuit

of Evil itself. They are first and foremost motivated by a fear of punishment. The second motivation is a kind of hunger: “I feign that devils can, in a spiritual sense, eat one another; and us” (Lewis, “Preface” 8). The hunger to devour the other exists even in human relationships, for “we have seen the passion to dominate, almost to digest, one’s fellow; to make his whole intellectual and emotional life merely an extension of one’s own” (8). The demons satisfy their hunger only through violent strength, for in Hell, the stronger spirit survives by “suck[ing] the weaker into itself” and gorging on the other’s individual body and soul (8). The need for the other becomes excessive and perverted in Lewis’s understanding of Hell, a temptation from which humans are not immune.

People often confuse overwhelming passion for the other as “true love,” especially in intimate relationships of the household. Lewis argues how, in reality, this experience is an inordinate affection where one is focused on the self rather than on Love. Lewis demonstrates such relationships in much of his fiction. At the end of *The Screwtape Letters*, Uncle Screwtape is enraged that his nephew Wormwood has lost his patient to the Enemy (i.e., God). However, his last letter to Wormwood addresses the devouring affection he feels for his nephew:

How mistakenly now that all is lost you come whimpering to ask me whether the terms of affection in which I address you meant nothing from the beginning. Far from it! Rest assured, my love for you and your love for me are as like as two peas. I have always desired you, as you (pitiful fool) desired me. The difference is that I am the stronger. I think they will give you to me now; or a bit of you. Love you? Why, yes. As dainty a morsel as ever I grew fat on. (171)

Wormwood has failed and so he is no longer useful to Screwtape. The stronger spirit can now devour the weaker. More significantly, however, is the fact that the arrangement of affection between Screwtape and Wormwood was mutual. Each maintained preference for himself while naming their desire “love.” They loved, indeed. Yet what they loved

was only *themselves* and how the other nourished their own spirits. As such, Wormwood's last attempts to solicit pity from his uncle falls on deaf ears. He remains, to the end, his "increasingly and ravenously affectionate uncle" (175), and his hunger *will* be satisfied.

Here again in Lewis's writings is his caution toward an inordinate understanding of ownership. The simplest of affections, such as that between a mother and a son, will become perverted when the mark of love ceases to be Love Himself. In such a relation, the other becomes an object to hold tight, to control, and even to possess for the sake of the one's own mistaken presuppositions of security, fidelity, and happiness. "Change is a threat to affection," Lewis writes (*The Four Loves* 45). If one's object of selfish affection is changed or taken away, misery and hatred's slow consumption of the soul inevitably results. In *The Great Divorce*, the narrator witnesses how the ghost of a controlling, overbearing wife begs for the soul of her husband back, for "there's lots, lots, lots of things I still want to do with him....Please, please! I'm so miserable. I must have someone to—to do things to" (Lewis 87). Later, he sees this scene between a Spirit and the ghost of a broken mother searching for her son in Heaven:

Give me my boy. Do you hear? I don't care about all your rules and regulations. I don't believe in a God who keeps mother and son apart. I believe in a God of Love. No one has a right to come between me and my son. Not even God. Tell Him that to His face. I want my boy, and I mean to have him. He is mine, do you understand? Mine, mine, mine, for ever and ever.

He will be, Pam. Everything will be yours. God himself will be yours. But not that way. Nothing can be yours by nature. (93-93)

That which is given to us naturally, including our affections, is not ours to own. We carry them only for a little while they guide us to Love Himself. Only through God can we belong to and with anything, even ourselves.

Consequently, Lewis's understanding of how we can *have* anything in this world at all is more akin to the metaphor of *belonging* than to *ownership*. Ownership connotes an exclusivity of control and a distance between proprietor and property. Belonging, on the other hand, indicates a phenomenological participation of the self in the potentiality of the world. From Lewis's perspective, human beings belong in, with, and to God. When human beings are obedient to Him, the authority of Heaven is bestowed upon them over all of creation: "From beyond all place and time, out of the very Place, authority will be given you: the strengths that once opposed your will shall be obedient in your blood and heavenly thunder in your voice" (Lewis, *The Great Divorce* 101). We have the ability to participate in the created order of temporality and eternity with God as the Master. It is a relational order, placing all relationships before Him. Let us take, for example, the relationship between a husband and wife. Lewis writes that when a woman can say "I belong to You, God," only then can she truly understand what it means to say "I belong to you" to her husband. A husband has headship over his wife in so far as he understands his belonging to Christ as the embodiment of his authority: "He is to love her as Christ loved the Church—read on—and give his life for her (*Eph. V, 25*). This headship, then, is most fully embodied not in the husband we should all wish to be but in him whose marriage is most like a crucifixion" (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 105, emphasis original). To belong means *to be rightly placed* before God just as Christ is placed as our intermediary at the right hand of the Father. A husband and wife do not *own* one another. They *belong* to one another in a relation of two selves meeting each other in the fullness of willful obedience to and embodied participation within Love.

3.10 Moving With and Beyond Our Affections

Affection is the most basic form of love, coloring all other forms of loves touched

by familiarity, comfort, and warmth. Yet affection alone does not suffice; Eternity within us wills that our relationships provide greater depth than simply what comfort can provide. There must be real grace in an affectionate relationship if it is to be considered love at all. “Affection produces happiness if—and only if—there is common sense and give and take and ‘decency,’” Lewis writes. “In other words, only if something more, and other, than Affection is added.” (*The Four Loves* 54-55). In affection, we are introduced to both the lovable and unlovable characteristics of those persons closest to us, including ourselves. Sometimes it is easy to love; yet at other times maintaining real affection—especially within the ordinariness of the everyday year after year—is difficult. All love is costly love, but the rewards for loving rightly are eternal. Consequently, while all affections can become rivals to our love for God, Lewis argues that “they can also be preparatory imitations of it, training (so to speak) of the spiritual muscles which Grace may later put to a higher service” (24).

Even the simplest of sentiments and affections work for us interpersonally. They demonstrate need, they rouse us to alterity, and they bring us joy in relation. Like those thinkers before him from the ancient Greeks to the Scottish Enlightenment, Lewis contends that our bodies are persuasive vehicles indeed—the material situates the discursive and, hence, the ethical. Our embodied existence establishes a framework for living according to universal values of relation, such as interpersonal affection and sympathetic relations. Yet Lewis also recognizes that persons have a *choice* in the naming of their own sentiments and how inclinations and affections are realized in communicative action with others. It is not enough to need or to feel; we must situate those sentiments relationally. Consequently, Lewis agrees with Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and others in defense of the training of the heart in interpersonal relationships.

As both Plato and Aristotle argue, from a very young age, we all must learn good habits and practices which address the needs of our bodies and the desires of our hearts *as well as* the good of relational reason and responsibility.

Lewis's philosophical rendering of sentiments carries significant implications for how people feel, act, and relate in everyday contexts. Thus, his writings exhibit theoretical touch points with the literature in interpersonal communication studies. First, Lewis's work establishes a common ground of embodiment in human relationships. Much like the common values of Sissela Bok or the universal ethics of Clifford Christians, Lewis articulates a defense of universal values in human relation. In addition, his framework attends to the need for grace in the enactment of values, both in body and discourse. Consequently, Lewis's writings also articulate the need for the training of our hearts in interpersonal relationships. He challenges us to think about the complexity of need in interpersonal relationships, and how our inclinations of fairness and exchange in relation are almost right—but not quite. Lewis argues that our hearts need the assistance of grace in making good relational choices, especially in the everyday communicative interactions of the household.

3.5 Implications for IPC: A Common Place to Begin

Ethicists Sissela Bok and Clifford Christians have pioneered the reclamation of universal moral norms in philosophy of communication and communication studies in recent years. Although their philosophical approaches are different, both argue for the establishment of a common place to begin thinking and talking about communicative theory and practices, especially in global and technological infrastructures which illuminate the alterity of human life together. Both are keenly aware of the reality of human fallibility in moral discourse and action and bring to bear important questions

concerning the discovery of values which speak to the challenges of human being in discourse and relation.

Bok's work particularly is relevant to understanding interpersonal meetings between and among diverse people. In her book *Common Values*, Sissela Bok suggests that a "limited set of common values so down-to-earth and so commonplace as to be most easily recognized across societal and other boundaries" (1) would provide a basis for collaboration and opportunities for dialogue among persons and cultures. Such values, she argues, would allow for people to approach both the human and natural demands of communal life. Bok's framework is a minimalist approach to ethics, one that addresses the basic necessities and inclinations of human existence and participation in the world. Although her focus is societal and global in scope, her theory of common values holds significant implications for understanding the intersection of moral theory and practical ethics in all types of human discourse and relation.

Christians takes a more historical and interpretive approach to understanding our common humanity. In his "The Ethics of Being in a Communications Context," he argues that philosophical defenses of universal morality have eroded since the late 20th century. The language of "universal norms" now is being replaced by language theories, deconstructionist ethics, and philosophical relativism. However, Christians writes that although many philosophers and ethical theorists now "speak in concert against the totalizing conditions of knowledge that the 18th century fostered," this condition shows itself to be problematic when "there are no widely accepted rational means for people committed to different beliefs to debate them constructively" (5). He claims that a reclamation of universal morals may be conceivable and intellectually defensible. The question of such a "metaethics" would be: "Are there global principles or a moral order

or master norms which belong to our humanness?" (6). Christians's approach to ethics in human relations calls for attention to the universal within the particular—the discovery of the ontological within the existential.

Lewis shares the concern for articulating common values such as is demonstrated by Bok and Christians. In *The Abolition of Man*, he argues that even Gaius and Titus have an end in mind—a good which drives the whole purpose of the book, even if that end be to “debunk” the traditional idea of values. What Gaius and Titus do not realize, however, is that in order to move propositions of fact to issues of practice, there must be a moral component introduced. For example, Lewis writes “*This will preserve society* cannot lead to *do this* except by the mediation of *society ought to be preserved*” (32, emphasis original). With “ought” introduced into the equation, we come to realize that our impulses for action are framed by choice and reflection. We seek a “way” to lend validity to our assumptions. It is exactly in this idea of “the way”—the *Tao*—which helps Lewis to advance the thinking of universal moral theorists. Whether it is referred to as Natural Law, Traditional Morality, or the First Principles of Practical Reason, “it is the sole source of all value judgments. If it is rejected, all value is rejected. If any value is retained, it is retained” (43). Lewis argues that we inherit a moral world, thus “there has never been, and never will be, a radically new judgement of value in the history of the world;” all ideologies find their way back to the *Tao* (43).[3] He admits that his purpose specifically within this context is not to advance his Christian theism. He is simply arguing that there is a value-system in our consciousness and discourse—it gives us the ability to think and talk in terms of “ought” at all. “Outside of the *Tao* there is no ground for criticizing the *Tao* or anything else...if we are to have values at all, we must accept the ultimate platitudes of Practical Reason as having absolute validity” (48-49). Our common

values, then, are never abstract principles. They are concrete manners in which we live together in existence.

Where does the concrete manner of our life together “begin”? Although he may not self-identify as such, Lewis is indeed a philosopher of communication who is concerned deeply with the relationship between the material and the spiritual, the universal and the particular, and the moral and the practical. He situates the body as a starting point for our common values and subsequent relationships. In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis articulates a phenomenological approach to understanding the language use of embodied selves:

What we need for human society is exactly what we have—a neutral something, neither you nor I, which we can both manipulate so as to make signs to each other. I can talk to you because we can both set up sound-waves in the common air between us. Matter, which keeps souls apart, also brings them together. It enables each of us to have an “outside” as well as an “inside”, so that what are acts of will and thought for you are noises and glances for me; you are enabled not only to *be* but to *appear*; and hence I have the pleasure of making your acquaintance. (21-22)

For Lewis, the common place to begin is our phenomenological encounter with the material world of other selves. The space of our bodies introduces us to alterity and makes us aware of the thing called a self. With the consciousness of selves as such, one meets the ethical in every interpersonal context.

As a Christian theist and essentialist, Lewis understands that the ontological order of creation manifests itself in existence every day. The fact that the “Divine life operat[ed] under human conditions” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 6) establishes the temporal and material as eternally significant. Thus we need to attend to that which happens within and among us as human beings—the movements, the appearances, the inclinations, the thoughts, the “inside” and the “outside” (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* 22). Although

Lewis claims that our standards of relation are deeply material, he contends that they should never rely on the material *alone*. He writes that God will someday redeem all of the temporal world in fullness and perfection (*Mere Christianity*; see also the example of Heaven in *The Great Divorce*), but we are not there *yet*. In the meantime, we have many physical and emotional burdens to bear within our lives together; our fallibility makes this so. Our humanity needs to be tethered to that which will help us realize that our hearts constitute a longing for more than just the bodily, the immediate, or the necessary. We desire to *commune*, not simply to identify commonalities. In order to do so, one must recognize that which is *other than* the body of the self while remaining an embodied self.

Thus Lewis contends that relational training must include a consideration of the unique space which sentiments hold in allowing human selves to establish households and communities. Interpersonal relationships are an issue of heart, and our hearts must be guided by Love to make good choices. What begins in basic needs and affections must be translated into standards for communicative practices. As discussed in Chapter Two, Christ's incarnation within and redemption of the material and temporal world allows for relational redemption and significance (*Mere Christianity*). According to Lewis, then, the standard for our embodied relations is already set—we need only to make the choice to follow. We must be taught what these choices look like in everyday contexts, however. Consequently, Lewis defends the need for intellectual, moral, and relational development of all people in the inculcation of just sentiments (see also Simon's *The Disciplined Heart*).

3.6 Implications for IPC: “Men Without Chests”

Lewis's work in *The Abolition of Man* fundamentally is a warning against of a world of “men without chests.” His critique of modern models of education such as is

illustrated in *The Green Book* is twofold: (1) he laments the loss of universally valued relational practices as they are exhibited in the literature, philosophy, and history of premodern times, such as courage, honor, and compassion; and (2) he blames this loss on the rationalism and intellectualism which characterizes most of modern pedagogy. Lewis writes that although modern educators are proud of the intellectuals which they create in their school, it is “not the excess of thought but defect of fertile and generous emotion that marks” students of his time: “Their heads are no bigger than ordinary: it is the atrophy of the chest beneath that makes them seem so” (25). He calls for the training of sentiments as a crucial component of educating young minds for good relationships in the world. One cannot expect virtuous actions of *anyone* if the assumption is that one’s heart is disconnected from one’s head.

Lewis’s approach to relational training attentive to sentiments still holds weight in the context of interpersonal communication theory and practice today. While much of the interpersonal communication literature does not deny the role which sentiments and affections play in relational development, some dominant theoretical trends do overemphasize the cognitive demands of interpersonal communicative contexts. Lewis would find the social scientific analytical framework of evaluating, quantifying, or objectifying human interpersonal experiences as especially problematic. Working from Lewis’s framework, other foundational theories can be viewed as *almost right* when it comes to understanding the complexities of human relationships, but still are deficient.[4] Social exchange theory is a significant example in this regard.[5] The theory assumes that human beings in relation experience an “objective interdependence” with one another and make relational decisions accordingly, which in turn creates relational “problems” toward which we must attend (Thibault and Kelley 4-5). Each person simultaneously is

dependent upon and independent from the other with whom their behaviors and decisions are intimately tied, and each vies for the fulfillment of interpersonal needs. Thibault and Kelley explain that relational decisions are made based on a cost-reward analysis, where the most beneficial relationships allow one to maintain or pursue desirable communicative and relational behaviors in the context of mutual pleasure, satisfaction, and gratification. If a relationship is not deemed satisfactory by one or both partners in terms of the fulfillment of interpersonal needs and desires, then the relationship is subject to termination.

Need obviously exists in human relationships, and we do act according to these needs. In addition, we do think according to issues of exchange and reason together on how to meet individual requirements for fulfillment. However, Lewis's argument against theories such as social exchange would highlight two presuppositions: (1) the assumption that all interpersonal needs should be fulfilled and (2) that people have an expectation of consistent fair exchange of communicative efforts in a given relationship. The hearts of real people in real relationships, Lewis argues, are much more complicated than that.

First, Lewis's claims that there is a real liability within the relational state of need. Interpersonal needs demand to be filled, and once they are they "die on us" (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 13). This poses a risk in relational contexts—once needs are met, there is little left to motivate reciprocity of care, not to mention acts of charity. What happens when needs become the primary motivator for care in a family, for example? Lewis describes a challenging scenario of need and affection in a family in the character of Mrs. Fidget, who "lived for her family" (*The Four Loves* 49). She did all of their laundry (despite the fact that she was begged not to—she had not the talent for it); she provided every hot meal for them (even when they asked for cold food during midsummer); she

would stay up late until they got home safely (to the point where they would not go out at all for fear of facing that pale and weary face when they returned) (49). Her family, because they knew it was the right thing to do, had no choice in the matter. In the end, they “did things for her to help her to do things for them which they didn’t want done” in the first place (50). Lewis writes that in an effort to remain “needed” even after the wants and desires of her family have been addressed, Mrs. Fidget made all of them miserable, including herself. On the surface level of needs and affections, she could not remain relevant—few of us can. He continues to write “that is why the world rings with the complaints of mothers whose grown-up children neglect them and of forsaken mistresses whose lovers’ love was pure need—which they have satisfied” (15). Some of our very real needs—such as Mrs. Fidget’s need to be needed—can indeed be detrimental to healthy relationships. With the existence of need in real relationships, fair exchange and reciprocity often goes to the wayside.

For this reason, standards for good interpersonal relationships must be attentive to need and feelings but not overemphasize our abilities to satisfy or address them for each other. Simply, we cannot expect a fair exchange of effort and care in *all* communicative situations. In the very least it would be exhausting to try and, at worst, disingenuous for those in the relationship. Lewis argues that since we are derivative creatures of God, we live in inescapable need of our Creator. There is a desire and longing in our hearts which no one else but Him can satisfy (*Mere Christianity; The Problem of Pain*). Practically speaking, we will live in unceasing need in this world—both in body and soul. Consequently, a relationship predicated by the fulfillment of needs will never be satisfactory. In addition, from a communicative standpoint, it would be unwise for us to assume that we can understand completely the needs and feelings of the other. Lewis’s

treatment of gender relations in his writings on *Eros (The Four Loves)*, Christian marriage (*Mere Christianity*), and even the story of Jane and Mark in *That Hideous Strength*, suggest that difficulty and tension permeates human communicative action, especially between the sexes. We try to attend to the ones that we love as best as we can, but at times we misunderstand or disappoint each other. Human fallibility makes this so. In poignant ways, Lewis challenges his readers to consider the difficult questions in any interpersonal relationship: What happens when the other person is not giving “enough” for you? Or further still, is there ever reason to care for another even when he or she has nothing left to offer?

Lewis contends that healthy marriages, families, and communities need to ask these challenging questions concerning just what it is we are asked to give to one another and under whose terms. To train true women and men with “hearts” takes more than just considerations of fair exchange, rational approaches to relating, or making sure everyone is happy and satisfied. It takes heart. We *must* be attentive to our own hearts and the hearts of others—it is an “ought” of our existence together. Thus, placed in our chests are hearts inclined to seek the presence and practice of grace in our loving. Our hearts give weight to our existence with one another, yet lend us levity—allowing us to carry one another when called. Our hearts allow us to be needful persons who are also capable of reflection, choice, and sacrifice with and for the other. Our hearts call us to commune with one another and work toward a better life. Lewis argues that it is men and women “with hearts” who exhibit the practical reason for which healthy households and communities call. At the center of it all is grace—grace for how we are created, how we meet one another in discourse, and how we choose Joy.

From Lewis’s perspective, real heart constitutes an embodiment of goodness,

affording our loves their proper weight in relation. Because of the choice which we have in displaying and naming our pleasures, pains, and affections with one another, Lewis's framework for sentiment is tied inescapably with his understanding of human will. The next chapter examines more closely the question of human will in relationships and Lewis's stance on how bodies are moved into relation.

CHAPTER FOUR

WILL AND THE MOVEMENT OF REFLECTIVE SOULS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses will as a critical theoretical and practical component in building a theory of the presence and practice of grace in intimate interpersonal communication. The question of human will is a significant issue for rhetoricians and philosophers of communication, a question which holds ontological, existential, epistemological, and discursive implications. As discussed below, will constitutes the manner in which we meet the world in decision, action, and affirmation of response. Questions such as “To what extent can we determine our own beliefs, deeds, and formation of character within a world of others?,” “How do we decide to act on particular beliefs?,” and “How are we motivated through language and relationships?” are all questions of will from a rhetorical perspective. The Christian philosophical tradition framing this project garners a particularly unique approach to and reverence for human will in relational considerations. Accordingly, for the sake of clarity and consistency of theoretical approach, the preliminary discussion regarding the question of will is framed by primarily an Augustinian framework. Will creates an understanding of human-being-in-discourse as a condition of *loving labor* with the other.

First, the chapter briefly addresses the distinctive character of will from the perspective of St. Augustine. The metaphor of will, like the metaphor of sentiment discussed in Chapter Three, describes how we meet the world. Yet will is an incremental step toward a fuller understanding of and appreciation for the self as we consider the *movement of the soul* in our discursive practices. Extrapolating on Chapter Three’s focus on the relational training of the heart, this chapter discusses the loving labor we meet

when particular souls face each other in relation. In Augustine's work, the metaphor of will integrates both belief *and* practice in everyday discourse, for he posits knowing, loving, and willing as consubstantial. Will is a function of our relations both theoretically and practically as we learn to love in proper ways. Taken in light of fundamental questions in interpersonal communication studies such as cognition in decision-making, shared symbolic action, and self competence in relational contexts, an Augustinian understanding of will offers a compelling approach to the literature. Thus, the preliminary section concludes with a brief discussion of the *functional* importance of will in interpersonal communication studies.

Next, the chapter illustrates specifically how Lewis's writings address questions of will and decision-making in interpersonal relationships. Although Lewis only occasionally references the writings of St. Augustine in his own books (see *The Abolition of Man* for an example), reading Lewis's writings in juxtaposition with an Augustinian perspective on the nature of the will allows one to see how Lewis closely followed in the footsteps of the saint. He describes the will as an issue of attention and movement of the soul. We exercise our will from within a fallen condition, and good responsiveness of the self lies in the recognition of the need for grace from the Other. Lewis shows how each person is granted a choice; one of positioning the self in the space of *pride* or *personhood*. Throughout his writings, Lewis urges his readers to choose the orientation of personhood over that of pride, for only in personhood do we experience the fullness of self in loving relation. Building upon the discussion of sentiments in Chapter Three, this chapter shows how Lewis's writings provide a framework for understanding human beings in discourse as constituted by both *choice* and *labor*. The final section of the chapter will reflect on the heuristic value which Lewis's writings on human will have for

understanding love and discourse in the interpersonal communication literature.

Responsiveness, choice, labor, and grace all play a part in Lewis's recommendations for relational wisdom in everyday interpersonal encounters.

4.2 An Augustinian Approach to the Will

St. Augustine was one of the earliest Christian philosophers to discuss human will within a relational context—he considered one's relationship to the world as well as to others as one constituted by a loving willfulness of the self. According to the saint, the order of creation is constituted by love. In *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine articulates that no creature (including the self), should be loved for the sake of itself, but instead should be loved on account of being derivative of God's substance and will (1.22.21). God as Love is the source and medium for all subsequent acts of will. Human love, then, functions as attentiveness to and acceptance of willful relationships within and to the world.

The relation of soul to the world is one of *intention*. In *Epistulae* 166.2.4, Augustine writes that the soul "...is stretched out through the whole body which it animates, not by a local diffusion, but by a vital intention" (qtd. in Teske 119). Consequently, Augustine assumes that we learn by meeting the world with a willfulness in body, mind, and spirit unlike any other creature made. The human mind—our thoughts, our beliefs, our capacity for volition—is the same substance or spirit as love. Consequently, Augustine argues that love is not merely a subject to be thought about or felt, but an act of the will and an exercise of knowing (*On the Trinity* 9.4.5). Our mind, our love, and our knowledge, in other words, form a trinity of substance that constitutes the complexity of the human self—a consubstantiality as exhibited by the Trinity of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus, when we are compelled to meet the world and act

within it, our willfulness is consubstantial with love.

Augustine argues that human love is responsive to a form, or an order. To know is to love and to love is to will to imitate. He understands imitation as the act of moving toward an exemplar or form. He works from the belief that each person's soul moves with and is moved by a desire to know, and this desire is relationally driven. When we are introduced to the beauty of forms, we want to know *more*—that is, we want not only to know but to *fellowship*: “For that form touches the mind that knows and thinks; it reveals the beauty of minds that have been brought together in *fellowship* by listening to and answering questions through signs that are known” (*On the Trinity* 10.1.2, emphasis added). The mention of fellowship here is key. For Augustine, behind every movement of the soul—ultimately that which compels us to act—is not just a form; it is a Person. Every heart, mind, and will in creation calls out in a restless state to know God. He is the origin and the compulsion for all action and all knowing (*Confessions* 1.1-2). Directing our hearts and minds toward God in a desire to know and to imitate Him is by no means a homogenizing moment, Augustine claims. On the contrary, every instance of love is a unique act because particular people meet existence in particular moments. This lends a beauty to our loving—human beings truly *participate* in this world. Yet, at the same time, within fallen existence all human knowledge is fragmentary and our wills are corrupted (*On the Trinity; Confessions; On Christian Doctrine*). Augustine argues that, epistemologically, to move toward a Form is to willfully recall the images of all *related* forms according to their proper place. Even though the Truth of God is available to all human beings, we must work to make connections, to know objects and others as they are to be known, and to align our decisions and actions accordingly. We think and act relationally. Yet in the exercise of a corrupted will, knowledge of our place within the

world can become distorted (*Christian Doctrine* 1.26.27). In other words, we can love “out of order” when we imitate a form or forms not true to the self’s position in the created order.

Consequently, Augustine argues that each individual, while wholly participatory in knowledge, will, and love in existence, never belongs completely to oneself. Augustine argues that to truly know oneself as a self is to know that one is from God. After his conversion experience, Augustine writes in the *Confessions* that he continued to pursue the question of the self. In Book 9, he asks “Who am I, and what am I?” and claims that the answer lies in “...not to will what I willed and to will what you willed” (9.1.1). For Augustine, the turning of the will toward God’s will, or the participation in and imitation of God’s order, is the beginning of knowledge and love. The pursuit of wisdom begins with a question about knowing the function and position of the self in relation. In other words, Augustine argues that a self knows form and function *before* one knows particularity. This is because one must know oneself as a creature of God *first* and then as a particular self. In describing the form of an individual soul, Augustine uses the metaphor of a mirror: we “...will never see [our]selves except in a mirror; nor are we to believe in any way that such means may be also used for the contemplation of incorporeal things, as the mind should know itself as it were in a mirror” (*On the Trinity* 10.3.5). Human minds and hearts, by the light of divine illumination, are made to *reflect*, not to create, images of God’s truth.

To exercise the will is a participatory movement of the soul, but as Chapter Three intimated, we are born with hearts and minds which inherently are needful. When we begin with the question “Who am I, and what am I?” the self eventually finds the proclamation “I am not he, but he who has made me” (Augustine, *Confessions* 10.6.9).

Augustine argues that it is a fundamental truth; we are ourselves, but we are nonetheless made. Thus, the will is a function of relations—relations which inform our practices. One never engages anything within the created world, including the self, without the presence of relation. Specifically, Augustine (*On the Trinity*) argues that this relation is always between the self, the person or object of attention, and the third Person—God—who endows our souls with the ability to attend in the first place. God is present in every act of decision, allowing *the act* to be so. In recognizing our willful relations, according to Augustine’s work, we can know and love “properly” under God.

4.3 The Functional Importance of Will in IPC

Augustine’s understanding of will emphasizes the *relational* in the context of personal decision-making. He is concerned with how one’s attention to and within everyday relationships reflect our selves and inform our practices. Such questions of the will and self are not unfamiliar to general interpersonal communication studies. As outlined in Chapter One, key studies within the interpersonal communication literature examine how a person decides to act in a relational context. Yet the discourse of the literature is often framed in such terms as “decision-making” and “motive,” not necessarily “will.” This chapter argues that the metaphor of will introduces a more complex dimension to studies of decision-making and motive in interpersonal communication, for according to Augustine and Lewis, the will constitutes the manner in which a human being meets the world in discursive and practical response.

As discussed later within this chapter, will is a phenomenological labor to know the self and others in loving relation. First, however, the chapter briefly returns to the functional purpose of will in personal decision-making as it is introduced in Chapter One. *Functionally*, both Augustine and Lewis are concerned with similar questions as many

interpersonal communication scholars; that is, how does (and, they argue, *should*) one's relationship with the Other shape our discursive practices? The question of will is important not only theoretically but also functionally for interpersonal studies because issues of decision-making and motive are inescapably tied to relational practices. How theorists frame human agency—cognitively, socially, and discursively—shapes understanding of how we learn together, respond to contexts with competence, achieve and share communicative control, and exercise the ability to act on our beliefs in everyday relational situations. In order to discuss how interpersonal theorists regard the connection between volition and practices in interpersonal studies, three theoretical issues concerning human agency will be outlined briefly: (1) human cognition and perception formation, (2) the social significance of meaning construction, and (3) the development of self-competence.

To begin, it is important to note that learning theories of development maintain strong connections to the interpersonal communication literature when it comes to discussion of human cognition in decision-making. As discussed in Chapter One, learning theory presupposes that personal decision-making as well as collective problem solving are a result of the complex interplays of cognitive behavior and environmental and relational contexts. Foundational texts in the field of psychology and sociology, such as the writings of Jean Piaget, Robert Gagné, and Kurt Lewin, describe communicative interchanges as complex stimulus-response contexts in which individual behavior is conditioned by environmental reinforcement. Such reinforcement helps the self to build relational memory for further perception, interpretation, and decision-making.

Within the interpersonal communication literature, theorists who emphasize cognitive functionality and development in relationships often focus on the capacity for

human beings to rationalize contextually and learn to act accordingly. Two theoretical examples which work in tandem are Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance and Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese's uncertainty reduction theory. Festinger (*A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*) examines the human compulsion for cognitive and behavioral consistency or what Berger and Calabrese refer to as predictability of communicative contexts. Humans seek to reduce the discomfort of cognitive dissonance (or conscious inconsistency) associated with our decision-making. Thus, upon initial encounter with a new person, one's "primary concern is one of uncertainty reduction or increasing predictability about the behavior of both themselves and others in the interaction" (Berger and Calabrese 100). We seek out as much information as possible in order to form accurate expectations for future encounters. Once these perceptions are formulated, a person will seek supporting and avoid contradictory evidence of their presuppositions (Festinger *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*). However, as human beings we will be faced with contradiction and inconsistency of our assumptions and expectations. Consequently, we may attempt to distort, discredit, or forget the source of new and contradictory information. If it proves impossible to eliminate or forget inconsistency, a person eventually concedes to modifying one's beliefs or actions in an attempt to relieve the dissonance. Consequently, interpersonal decision-making, according to these foundational theories of cognitive behavior within the literature, is largely a matter of the formation of particular relational expectations. Whether the choice is to pursue or end relational encounters based on perceived mutual pleasure, satisfaction, and gratification, (Thibault and Kelly) or to design person-centered messages (O'Keefe), these theories presuppose that human beings are individuals marked by cognitive complexity and who *reason* about their communicative practices.

Interpersonal communication theorists continue to broaden our understanding of human complexity as it relates to interpersonal decision-making and action. Studies in the literature show how interpersonal knowledge and judgment do not function *solely* cognitively—they emerge discursively and relationally. For example, as discussed in Chapter One, Albert Bandura’s work articulates the role which mimetic behaviors and social cues play in the formation of individual personalities and systems for decision-making. Together, we construct relational environments consisting of particular interpretations, behaviors, and rules for engagement with one another. Expectations for reciprocation, commitment, and authority are just some of the ways in which relational decision-making is shaped by one’s interactions with the other (Cialdini). Essentially, human volition is a phenomenon with roots and consequences in sociality. Accordingly, many interpersonal theories advocate for mindfulness, or an awareness of the extent to which perceptions and behaviors are socially determined (see Ellen Langer, “Minding Matters: The Consequences of Mindlessness-Mindfulness” for an earlier example of this work). Becoming mindful in interpersonal situations involves an awareness of those social expectations and contextual rules which trigger interpersonal behavior and the ability to align these with interpersonal goals, roles, and messages. We not only reason about our *individual* choices, we reason *together* concerning the consequences of our discursive practices.

Consequently, the majority of interpersonal decision-making models within the literature situate the development of communicative self-competence at the core of the interchange.[1] Chapter One argued how issues of message competence, consistency between thought and action, and authenticity in behavior are important theoretical and functional issues of relational decision-making. Interpersonal theorists Walter Carl and

Steve Duck argue that interpersonal communication affords one to “take a position, to espouse beliefs, and to promulgate attitudes and opinions,” and as human beings we “continuously [seek] confirmation of the self in relation to others” (3). The goal of relational exchanges is for all persons involved to exercise their capacity for interpretation and volition in the pursuit of shared communicative goals while remaining attentive to expectations and limitations of relational contexts. Foundational concepts in interpersonal communication studies, such as *face* (e.g., Erving Goffman, “On Facework: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction”), *social comparison* (e.g., Leon Festinger, “A Theory of Social Comparison Processes”; Jerry Suls and Ladd Wheeler, *The Handbook of Social Comparison Theory and Research*), *self-disclosure* (e.g., Lawrence Wheeless, “A Follow-Up Study of the Relationships Among Trust, Disclosure, and Interpersonal Solidarity”; Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, “The Johari Window, A Graphic Model of Interpersonal Awareness”), and *self-awareness* (e.g., Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*) all point to how the self in relation constitutes human agency. While the self is shaped and sustained through relationships with others, a person ultimately has a *choice* in interpersonal communication contexts concerning exhibited behaviors and continued practices.[2]

Thus questions of decision-making and volition in interpersonal communication studies are attentive to issues of the self in relation and how the understanding of the self guides and shapes communicative practices. From both a theoretical and functional perspective, it *matters* how one understands the self—cognitively, socially, discursively—and his or her capacity to choose. A Christian understanding of human will as articulated by St. Augustine and discussed by Lewis shares these concerns. Yet this project argues that two fundamental issues differentiate Lewis (following Augustine)

from the presuppositions of many interpersonal communication competence models: (1) the will as derivative yet deficient and (2) the presence of God in all relationships and action. The final sections of this chapter explore more fully the heuristic value which Lewis's work holds for the study and practice of interpersonal communication. Before that discussion, however, the chapter provides a review of Lewis's arguments concerning human will and personhood in relational contexts.

4.4 Lewis on the Movement of the Will and the Fall

In line with the discussion in the previous chapter concerning the *body* and its need for fullness and glory through Christ, Lewis also supports that we are not born with a *will* which reflects the fullness of personhood. This is due to the Fall of humankind into an existence of limited consciousness and impeded relations. Consequently, the human will suffers lack and even corruption from epistemological and communicative standpoints. Yet although we cannot perfectly know or relate in temporality, we can nonetheless *attend*. Like Augustine, Lewis's writings point to how the divine gift of attention, or the movement of the will, characterizes human relationships and lends us the ability to work toward relational restoration and fulfillment with God and others.

Human beings have always been creatures, and thus derivative, of God. Yet in the beginning of time the human creature enjoyed a complete consciousness and fullness of self, a consequence of an unimpeded relation with the Creator. In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis describes how the Paradisal human came to self awareness:

Then, in the fullness of time, God caused to descend upon this organism, both on its psychology and physiology, a new kind of consciousness which could say "I" and "me," which could look upon itself as an object, which knew God, which could make judgments of truth, beauty, and goodness, and which was so far above time that it could perceive time flowing past. This new consciousness ruled and illuminated the whole organism, flooding every part of it with light, and was not, like ours, limited to a

selection of the movements going on in one part of the organism, mainly the brain. Man was then all consciousness. (72)

The consciousness of Paradisal man constituted a perfect will; an unencumbered relation of choice, being, and response. The first human experienced a fullness in matter and mind we cannot now imagine, for even the natural processes of the body were obedient to the will. His entire being—body, soul, and will—reposed fully in God and His creation. Lewis describes how “in perfect cyclic movement, being, power and joy descended from God to man in the form of gift and returned from man to God in the form of obedient love and ecstatic adoration” (*The Problem of Pain* 74). God and human being enacted a perfect relation; creatures in perfect attention toward the Creator.

Lewis’s understanding of the movement of the human will is deeply indebted to the Christian teaching that “God is love.” This statement, Lewis claims, speaks volumes concerning the invitation which human beings hold to participate in the dynamics of Eternity. He writes “in Christianity God is not a static thing—not even a person—but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama” (*Mere Christianity* 152). We move and attend because we are creatures of Action; this is why Augustine characterizes the act as love (*On the Trinity*). Consequently, in order for us to choose at all, we must move in and with Movement and Life Himself. Human beings were brought into this world not as fixtures, but as living participants in a world responsive to its Creator. In Lewis’s terms, humans are to be adjectives to God as Noun (*The Problem of Pain* 75). Essentially and existentially, it *matters* how we know and relate to the world. The will, as the instrument for our attention, moves the self toward or away from the subject of knowledge and relation; we can only know that toward which we *attend* and we attend toward what we *love* (Augustine, *Confessions*; *On the Trinity*). The Paradisal human

attended to Love Himself absolutely; perfect adjectives of the Eternal Subject of attention.

Lewis asserts that God created the freedom of attention as a good for all rational creatures. Yet there is an inherent risk in this gift: “The freedom of a creature means a freedom to choose: and choice implies the existence of things to choose between” (*The Problem of Pain* 20). With the introduction of sin into temporality came the realization that one could turn toward someone or something else as if it were God—most notably the self. Prior to the Fall, the Paradisal human “had...no *temptation* (in our sense) to choose the self—no passion, or inclination obstinately inclining that way—nothing but the bare fact that the self was *himself*” (*The Problem of Pain* 77, emphasis original). When the Fall occurred, Lewis writes how “someone or something whispered that they [the Paradisal humans] could be as gods” and that the self could be the primary object of attention. As a result, there was a shift in the human will as “they wanted, as we say, to ‘call their souls their own’” (*The Problem of Pain* 75). It is important to note that the *capacity* to choose was not afforded to us during that moment of the Fall. Since we were created, we always have had volition. According to Lewis’s description of the original Paradise, we always chose God. We chose Him because that is what we are. Attending to God never meant forsaking the self. Yet with the Fall, we began to *believe* this to be so.

However, Lewis argues that for human beings to believe that they can live “as their own” (*The Problem of Pain*) is a self-contradiction and a lie. Adjectives cannot be the Subject; mirrors cannot be Light; response cannot act as Being. Fallen humans turned their attention inward only to find the self recede from his grasp, like an object eternally in the periphery of their vision. Consequently, after the Fall humankind’s vision of and relation to God and to His creation became impaired. In his writings on human

knowledge and volition after the Fall, Lewis echoes Ephesians 5:8: we are born into darkness, or into an imperfect relation with Light.[3] Our task now is to cast our eyes back toward Him, and it is a *labor* for beings with a corrupted will. Yet MacDonald describes how God sees us in such labor: “for he regards men not as they are merely...but as they are now growing, towards that image after which he made them that they might grow to it” (*Unspoken Sermons* 20). When sin entered human existence, God did not deprive us of the gift of attention. Without it, we cannot experience the movement of growth. Even simpler still, if we cannot move, we cannot fall—either at God’s feet or away from His side.

In relational terms, to attend toward something means to *care* for it. Herein lies Augustine’s insight into the condition of will and love. What or who one loves, one wills to attend to in responsiveness (*On the Trinity*). As Lewis puts it, to love is to respond to the question of whom “(when the alternative comes) do you serve, or choose, or put first?” (*The Four Loves* 123). Love is a promise of return of the self; so, how one regards the self is of crucial significance for his or her relations. Recognizing this, Lewis frames the basis of human relations within a fundamental choice of the will regarding self.

4.5 “Two Ways with the Self” in Relation

4.5.1 Pride

As discussed in Chapter Three, relation begins from where the self is positioned among others. This positioning is a phenomenological act of attention and manifests itself a fundamental choice: “From the moment a creature becomes aware of God as God and of itself as self, the terrible alternative of choosing God or self for the centre is opened to it” (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* 70). Lewis writes of the choice in terms of love. On the one hand, the self is a creature of God and thus “an occasion of love and rejoicing; now,

indeed, hateful in condition, but to be pitied and healed” (“Two Ways with the Self” 120). On the other hand, Lewis argues, “it is that one self of all others which is called *I* and *me*, and which on that ground puts forward an irrational claim to preference” (120, emphasis original). The claim to preference which Lewis addresses is a positioning of the self as the primary object of attention. In its simplest form, it is an act of pride. Lewis, referencing St. Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*, describes this sin as the result of Pride, or “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” (*The Problem of Pain* 69). Echoing St. Augustine, Lewis writes that pride is “the basic sin behind all particular sins” (*The Problem of Pain* 70) and “is the complete anti-God state of mind” (*Mere Christianity* 110). There is an ordinate relation of the self to all other beings and to Being Himself. Each sinful act is a positioning the self in improper spaces of relation. Simply, sin is loving wrongly.

Consequently, a sin is an act not just inordinate to a law but an act contrary to *personhood* as modeled by God Himself. Lewis rejects modern theological arguments, such as is supported by N. P. Williams in *The Ideas and the Fall of Original Sin*, that the first sin was a social sin, or a sin against a law of human relations. Instead, he argues that the first sin was one against the *personhood* of God, and it is *only* within the personhood of the Trinity that the nature of relation and society can be manifested (*The Problem of Pain* 20). According to Lewis, Christian doctrine teaches that the Person of God and the Law are one. Thus in the Personhood of God is the condition of all being, all relation, and all motivation. For example, when a Christian kneels in prayer to God, he is praying to a three-fold personality; God is simultaneously the subject, the motivation, and the way of prayer. In this communicative act, the man is “being pulled into God, by God, while

remaining himself” (*Mere Christianity* 143). For a creature “to exist for itself” (*The Problem of Pain* 69) essentially is an attempt to position the self apart from Relation Himself. Thus when placed as primary, derivative subjects lend disappointment and resentment to our hearts, for we frame the object of attention in the narrowest terms—absent of its situatedness in Relation.

Lewis speaks clearly of the sin of pride in terms of love. There is one Subject of love—God—and all other subjects are derivative and thus *lower than*. Since attending to Love Himself is the only way in which our actions can be considered loving, when we love wrongly we essentially experience a manifestation of hate. In “Two Ways with the Self,” Lewis writes of the complexity of self-love. Essentially, the issue becomes one of how a person attends to selves as such, their own self included. All selves, he claims, are to be regarded with *disinterest*. A disinterested love emerges only when one willfully attends to the truth that all interests are of and in Love. When we properly love ourselves, we recognize our derivative nature and the depravity of our fallen condition.

Subsequently, we recognize that we love any and all things *by way of* God. Our selves are loved and capable of loving, but we are not the *source* of love. Improper self-love, on the other hand, attempts to love *through the self* and finds only the lack which characterizes the heart of the creature called “me.” Thus, what would be proper disinterest of the self breeds into hatred for all selves:

The other kind of self-hatred, on the contrary, hates selves as such. It begins by accepting the special value of the particular self called *me*; then, wounded in its pride to find that such a darling object should be so disappointing, it seeks revenge, first upon that self, then on all. Deeply egoistic, but now with an invented egoism, it uses the revealing arguments, “I don’t spare myself”—with the implication “then *a fortiori* I need not spare others”—and becomes like the centurion in Tacitus, *immitior quia toleraverant* [“More relentless because he had endured (it himself).”] (Lewis, “Two Ways with the Self” 120-121, emphasis original, footnote

added for translation purposes).

Herein lies Lewis's argument concerning the implications for interpersonal relationships stemming from the seeds of pride. The disappointment which a person experiences from improper self-love colors all loving in general. One cannot properly relate to or love any self at all. Eventually, the person is unable to recognize the ability to live out his or her own personhood in love nor to extend true grace toward others.

In many interpersonal relationships, pride and selfishness are evident. There is real danger to one's relations when one engages in obvious preferential treatment of the self. According to Lewis, however, this is not pride of the most dangerous kind when it comes to intimacy. Throughout his writings, he points to how the most deceptive type of pride parades as *unselfishness* in interpersonal relationships. The temptation for so-called "unselfishness" is particularly prominent in marriages and families. For example, in *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape describes the dangers in the perceptions of obligatory unselfishness of a married couple:

In discussing any joint action, it become obligatory that A should argue in favour of B's supposed wishes and against his own, while B does the opposite. It is often impossible to find out either party's real wishes; with luck, they end by doing something that neither wants, while each feels a glow of self-righteousness and harbours a secret claim to preferential treatment for the unselfishness shown and a secret grudge against the other for the ease with which the sacrifice has been accepted. (143)

The particularly deceptive sin in this example stems from Lewis's arguments concerning what it means to be a human being in discourse. As discussed in Chapter Three, Lewis claims that we must recognize our needs and interests in their proper condition. It follows in this chapter that we are beings characterized by phenomenological attention. Simply put, we will love and we will attend. However, in a twisted articulation of personhood, each spouse is too prideful to admit that they have personal preferences. They want to see

themselves as blameless, selfless—the very condition from which love should emerge. Yet human being constitutes no such condition of selflessness; we must remain a *self* responsive to such ground. Thus, by denying their preferences the husband and wife succeed only in exalting them, leaving grace toward each other by the wayside. Both are martyrs to the wrong subject of their love.

When pride is chosen, we experience a perversion of our personhood. Our will constitutes a turning toward an anti-self; a being isolated from interest, relation, and love. Lewis characterizes this turning from anti-self (i.e., pride) to self (i.e., personhood) as a painful movement which is to be endured continuously. The condition of pride is our “habitual self”: “thus all day long and all the days of our life, we are sliding, slipping, falling away—as if God were, to our present consciousness, a smooth inclined plane on which there is no resting” (*The Problem of Pain* 71). Yet God did not create us to be so. He created human beings to participate in a fullness of personhood in the reflection of His glory. Lewis argues, however, that our selves can be claimed only when we give them up to God.

4.5.2 Personhood

It is the nature of our fallen condition that we should live egocentrically. We have embodied needs and desires which vie for our attention and a disposition toward self-interested intent. Lewis recognizes this throughout his writings. He knows that we are keenly aware of the lack in our existence and the faults of our character. Yet somehow we manage to find forgiveness and restoration. In his chapter on “Forgiveness” in *Mere Christianity*, Lewis cites the Biblical commandment of “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” juxtaposed with the petition in the Lord’s prayer to “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those that sin against us” (104). At the center of the Christian message of

restoration is a complex understanding of grace and scorn: we are commanded to love yet there are conditions of our character which render us unlovable. Thus for clarity's sake, Lewis suggests that we begin with the question: "Well, how exactly do I love myself?" (105). He argues that loving one's self does not necessarily think oneself nice or attractive. At times, it is appropriate to loathe one's own thoughts, inclinations, and behaviors. However, hate only becomes appropriate in the context of ordinate self-love:

Just because I loved myself, I was sorry to find that I was the sort of man who did those things. Consequently, Christianity does not want us to reduce by one atom the hatred we feel for cruelty and treachery. We ought to hate them....But it does want us to hate them in the same way in which we hate things in ourselves: being sorry that the man should have done such things, and hoping, if it is anyway possible, that somehow, somewhere, he can be cured and made human again. (105-106)

For Lewis, self-love means the recognition of faults and the need for salvation. It is a personhood participating in the Law of Relation. That which tempts our wills to turn from Love should be scorned and, ultimately, destroyed.

What is to be hated above all is the fallen, prideful ego. Pride aims to destroy relation: "pride always mean enmity—it is enmity" (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 111). "As long as you are proud you cannot know God," Lewis writes, for "a proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you" (111). The position of pride not only impedes our vision of God and others, but it takes the very condition of our knowledge out of context. As creatures, we have derivative knowledge of the creature called a self. Only God knows us completely; we lack perfect knowledge all things, even of ourselves. Lewis argues that God's condition of personhood is of a particular kind: "God wills our good, and our good is to love Him (with the responsive love proper to creatures) and to love Him we must know Him: and if we know Him, we shall in fact fall on our faces"

(*The Problem of Pain* 46). Thus pride robs one of being placed in the position of personhood and, consequently, it must be destroyed. The “irrational claim to preference” of the self “is to be not only hated, but simply killed”: “The Christian must wage endless war against the clamor of *ego* as *ego*: but he loves and approves selves as such, though not their sins” (“Two Ways with the Self” 120.). The self is more than the *ego*; he or she is a participant in Relation Himself. God desires that His children live in the fullness of personhood through Him. If one’s will attends solely and primarily to the self, one’s being is spiritually, temporally, and relationally limited.

We experience the fullness of personhood only through submitting our will to Christ. Trusting the self to God means trusting that “Christ will somehow share with him the perfect human obedience which He carried out from His birth to His crucifixion: that Christ will make the man more like Himself and, in a sense, make good his deficiencies” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 150). Only in Christ can a person exercise willful obedience, experience spiritual fullness, promise relational perfection, and live in eternity, for Christ Himself does and is all of these things. It is the most significant, if not the only, choice humans make. The offer of Christianity is to share in the life of Christ and, if one chooses to do so, little by little he or she is able to “become a little Christ” with each subsequent choice (*Mere Christianity* 154). Each self is to become a person through Christ; the one Man who encompasses complete humanity. A person spreads the “good infection” (154) of His will, His glory, and His love, responding as a vehicle for just such gifts toward other selves.

Thus martyrdom becomes a crucial metaphor for the revelation of personhood. Lewis argues that the surrender which Christ displayed during His life and crucifixion defined His mortality; His resurrection reveals His immortality. The personhood available

to us within the temporal mandates just such surrender. The act, by its very definition, is a willful choice. Lewis writes “Since I am I, I must make an act of self-surrender, however small or however easy, in living to God rather than to myself” (*The Problem of Pain* 76). What is to be surrendered is not the true, glorious creation of self; it is the fallen temporal hold of a corrupted heart. In his fiction, Lewis often frames this choice as one that cannot be made alone. In *The Great Divorce*, the narrator witnesses a Burning Angel poised to kill the Lizard (representative of the sinful self) on the shoulder of a Ghost:

“If you wanted to help me, why didn’t you kill the damned thing without asking me—before I knew? It would be all over by now if you had.”

“I cannot kill it against your will. It is impossible. Have I your permission?”...

“I know it will kill me.”

“It won’t. But supposing it did?”

“You’re right. It would be better to be dead than to live with this creature.”

“Then I may?”

“Damn and blast you! Go on can’t you? Get it over. Do what you like,” bellowed the Ghost: but ended, whimpering, “God help me. God help me.”

Next moment the Ghost gave a scream of agony such as I never heard on Earth. The Burning One closed his crimson grip on the reptile: twisted it, while it bit and writhed, and then flung it, broken backed, on the turf.

“Ow! That’s done for me,” gasped the Ghost, reeling backward. (99-100)

The next moment, the narrator witnessed the Ghost as he grew in fullness and strength. He emerged as a Person materialized in glory while the Lizard transformed into the stallion which was to carry the man off into Heaven. With this story, Lewis seems to say to his audience: “Look at who you are today, in all of your brokenness, needfulness, and spite. It is not who you are *truly*. You can choose otherwise. But if you let it, this will be the only lizardly thing you can become.” Glory ultimately strangles that which hisses death and deceit in our hearts. All we need is to attend to the Hands which free us. (See also Simon’s discussion of love, marriage, and sacrifice in *The Disciplined Heart*).

Because of the will, the issue of self-love in Christianity is complexly tied with the seemingly contradictory metaphor of self-surrender. Lewis's writings call us to reject that deceitful preference toward what is really just the shadow of our true selves. Instead, he asks that we consider the choice to give up the ghost—to die to that shadow—and become embedded and enfolded in the arms of Relation. An act of love is always an act of submission. When a person learns to attend to the Other, he moves closer to fullness of self. "To love and admire anything outside yourself is to take one step away from utter spiritual ruin;" Lewis writes, "though we shall not be well so long as we love and admire anything more than we love and admire God" (*Mere Christianity* 113). Loving another is a good act; to love God as the Other is the source of all goodness. Such a choice situates a person firmly in the path to selfhood. Thus, in the moments of relation throughout his life, a person "may hope that when he has truly learned (which will hardly be in this life) to love his neighbor as himself, he may then be able to love himself as his neighbor" ("Two Ways with the Self" 120). Human beings are lovable only because the choice of loving is first granted to them.

4.6 The Lovability of Human Beings

Lewis claims that Christian doctrine teaches that loving is a human being's willful responsiveness to the condition of being *in* Love. He argues that the human self is derivative of Love and thus has the potential only to live in Love. We cannot *be* Love. Only God is Love Himself; His love and His being are the same. He cannot be concerned with Himself in loving because, by loving, He is exercising the fullness of His nature. Lewis writes "God gives what He has, not what He has not" (*The Problem of Pain* 47). Human beings, on the other hand, are creatures of and can participate in Love, but our selves necessarily remain *other than* Him. We must come to love within a condition

which is *not* love—ourselves. In the very act of loving, we experience both union and alterity; we feel both comfortably at home and painfully vulnerable.

Human beings feel at home in love and relation because of God's nature as and choice to Love. He makes us lovable by drawing us into Love Himself: "the very possibility of our loving is His gift to us" (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* 45). Lewis argues that we are not loved for any reason inherent to us; instead, we are lovable only by relation. Because the condition of the human creature is one of need, our nature cannot exist apart from the condition of fulfillment. Before and behind all relations which a person holds to the self and to the world lies a debt: "a Divine act of pure giving—the election of man, from nonentity, to be the beloved of God, and therefore (in some sense) the needed and desired of God, who but for that act needs and desires nothing, since He eternally has, and is, all goodness" (*The Problem of Pain* 44). Love constitutes both the debt human beings owe from their birth and also the fulfillment of that debt through relation. Thus "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" (43). Through God's love, our debt is paid. We are fulfilled into selfhood and are invited to participate in the condition of lovability—a condition for which we were made. All we are called to do is to choose it.

Yet love creates unease in relational knowledge and practice, especially in the relationship between humans and the divine. Lewis's writings consistently admit the element of the absurd inherent within God's love for us. It is a love not predicated by need nor by merit—two conditions within which we find ourselves inescapably tied in our relationships. It is the question of "*why*" directed at God (or any other person) who loves us: "But *why* do you love me?" Those who chose to love improperly will forever

only speculate at the answer to such a question, for their focus of attention is in the wrong place. For example, in *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape discusses with Wormwood what the Enemy must *really* mean by love. “We know that He cannot really love: nobody can: *it doesn’t make sense*,” Screwtape writes (Lewis 101, emphasis added). The demons test hypothesis after hypothesis while “more and more complicated theories, fuller and fuller collections of data, richer rewards for researchers who make progress, more and more terrible punishments for those who fail” are invested in the pursuit to figure out why God loves as He does (101). Yet the demons are disappointed time and time again. Herein lies one of Lewis’s powerful critiques of the modernist understanding of human relation. The demons attend to the “why” of love solely through cognition and scientism, completely ignoring issues of *heart* and *choice*. With a limited understanding of the depth and breadth of relational and epistemological ground, they remain in a position unwilling to attend to Love Itself, deliberately averting their eyes. Yet even human beings, who are created by, in, and for Love, cannot fully understand the “why” of love while in temporality. The ontological and epistemological functions of love, as St. Augustine claims (*Confessions; On the Trinity*), are incarnate yet incomplete in human relationships. While we remain in temporality, the fullness of “why” cannot be placed before our eyes. We may attend to love, but it will be a veiled meeting.

Consequently, not only the question but also the *practice* of a loving relation creates a wonderful yet painful burden of being. Lewis admits that it is deceptively easier to choose *not* to attend to others in love. Yet in reality, it is a move not worth making at all. In *The Four Loves*, he writes:

to love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an

animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside of Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell. (121)

We are often at a loss as to “how” one should or does love another, for, as Lewis suggests, the option of *not loving* seems an impossibility: a contradiction to our created existence. Real human love runs the risk of tragedy, brokenness, and disappointment. In the temporal, fallen world of human existence, pain exists necessarily side by side with love. As Chapter Three suggests, without the darkness of existence we cannot recognize light—we cannot know comfort if we do not know need and pain. We must learn how to live in such a juxtaposition, and the task is a difficult one. Thus Lewis sets forth this simple admonishment regarding the “how” of loving relations: “Christian Love, either towards God or towards man, is an affair of the will” (*Mere Christianity* 117-118). We must accept it; we must practice it. Love is revealed as the *choice to labor* for the gifts of joy and comfort.

Because of these two factors—the burden of vulnerability but also the potential for divine joy—Lewis calls for us to approach our loving relations with humility. However, such humility does not abandon the self; instead, we turn toward the very source of our selfhood. God wants nothing more than for His creatures to know Him, to attend to Him, and thus to attend to others. When one is successful even a little bit in this movement, one begins to feel humble. Lewis describes this humility as “the infinite relief of having for once got rid of all the silly nonsense about your own dignity which has made you restless and unhappy all of your life” (*Mere Christianity* 114). Humility brings existential and relational fullness to our being for it makes “this moment possible” with

the self and others (114). It allows us “to take off a lot of silly, ugly, fancy-dress in which we have all got ourselves up and are strutting about like the little idiots we are” and experience “the relief, the comfort, of...getting rid of the false self, with all its ‘Look at me’ and ‘Aren’t I a good boy?’ and all its posing and posturing. To get even near it, even for a moment, is like a drink of cold water to a man in a desert” (114). Only humility frames the condition for us to truly love others. As relational beings, we are attune to what humility is and looks like in practice. Lewis describes how it is to meet a truly humble person: “he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what *you* said to *him*” (114). A humble person’s self is necessarily present and significant in any relationship because God loves all selves. Yet the wonder of such love is that it leads the humble person into a relational space where he quite forgets to think about himself all together.

The movement toward humility is the practice of selflessness. Lewis does not pretend that it is an easy step to take. He knows the condition of his own heart and imagines others experience similar difficulties living as egocentric, needful beings with corrupted wills and selfish hearts. As his introductory chapters of *The Four Loves* suggest, all human love is grounded in and colored by need. As such, there is often “the clash of interests” (*The Problem of Pain* 42) between people in interpersonal relationships, a condition derived from need. We continually are tempted to satisfy our own needs at the expense of another’s, especially in the comforts of the household: “as when a father keeps at home, because he cannot bear to relinquish their society, children who ought, in their own interests, to be put out into the world” (42). In such intimate, complicated relations, there often is “a need or passion on the part of the lover, an

incompatible need on the part of the beloved, and the lover's disregard or culpable ignorance of the beloved's need" (43). We are thinking, willing, loving creatures who do not always think, will, or love in the same direction. It is a difficult consequence of being-with-others in this world. Lewis, in response to relational realities of the household and beyond, calls his readers to *attend to the practices* rather than worry about the *perfect* alignment of the heart: "Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbour; *act as if you did*" (*Mere Christianity*, 116, emphasis added). Love will be revealed in a heart attentive to loving practices.

It is the issue of practices which moves Lewis's phenomenological understanding of the will into conversation with foundational theories of interpersonal communication. How are questions of self, choice, otherness, and love framed in contemporary interpersonal communication discourse? As discussed above, interpersonal communication scholarship frames the self in relation from a variety of cognitive, social, behavioral, and symbolic frames, and if we look closely, we can see how Lewis's work speaks to major theoretical touch-points of interpersonal studies. The heuristic value of Lewis's writings, however, is his grounding in an intellectual tradition which presupposes the will as a derivative yet corrupted characteristic of our lives together. It is a manner in which we meet existence in the reality and possibility of grace. Simply put, Lewis's interpretation of the Christian tradition makes successful interpersonal communication a matter of *loving labor*. Consequently, understanding decision-making and choice in interpersonal relationships shifts from cognitive and discursive phenomena to discernible communicative practices of the heart. The concluding section of the paper addresses how Lewis's writings on will meet the study and practice of interpersonal communication, paying particular attention to the relational wisdom afforded by grace in real

interpersonal relationships.

4.7 Implications for IPC: The Looking-Glass Self

Heuristically, Lewis's work addresses and broadens major theoretical assumptions concerning the relationship between discourse and self-concept. A particularly salient and familiar metaphor within the interpersonal literature is "the looking glass self" (Cooley; Mead). The looking-glass self assumes that identification and meaning-making lies in our unique capacity to reflect and relate with the other. Mead's work especially points to how linguistic role-taking, or role-playing, is the manner in which we learn and think at all. He describes the developmental stages of childhood and the symbolic role-playing games which children love, games which develop identity, empathy, and relational maturity. However, the taking on of a role is not complete until the self and the other coordinate behaviors in the co-construction of meaning. Even identifying *oneself* involves the coordination of expectations, attitudes, and behaviors between the self and the other. The self is actualized through the dynamic interplay of the "I" and the "me." Any given communicative interaction presupposes that a person both *acts* based upon one's own interpretations of a given context and *reacts* on the basis of his or her perception of the other's interpretation as well. The issue of communicative responsiveness allows us to see our own selves in the looking-glass of the other's face (Cooley; Mead).

Symbolic interactionism and theories of role-playing in the creation and maintenance of self-concept situate human relationships as undeniably participatory. Yet what lends Lewis's voice unique in this conversation stems from his theoretical grounding in the Augustinian trinity of knowledge, will, and love. The exercise of choice is a movement of the will toward greater or lesser knowledge of a *Person*. The Christian understanding of "God is Love" brings even more "relating" to our relations; even more

complexity to our personhood. Thus, Lewis's viewpoint offers a unique perspective on how exactly discursive meetings between others should and do take place due to: (1) the reality of created, as well as co-constructed, ordinance in relationships; (2) the presence of a standard of role-playing; and (3) the revelation of the purpose in communicative responsiveness.

Lewis argues that relational ordinance is both created and co-constructed. The important role which others play in shaping identity is evident in his works. He certainly does not argue that the self is determined completely, for the presence of the will points to the fact that we are active participants in our own making. Yet our relationships are not entirely discursively negotiated either. As will be discussed further in Chapter Five, human relationships—especially the intimate relation of man and wife—begins with a created template. In *That Hideous Strength*, the heroine Jane is walking through the garden while reflecting on her “true self.” She is frustrated at the idea that others such as her husband and friends may regard her one way (“sweet and fresh”) while she really wants them to think of her in another way (“interesting and important”) (318). Like many people, she wants to be able to own and construct her identity and the perception others have of her. The last thing she wants, she has convinced herself, is to be a “thing” with determined qualities. Then, she has a spiritual revelation as she meets the presence of God:

In this height and depth and breadth the little idea of herself which she had hitherto called *me* dropped down and vanished, unfluttering, into bottomless distance, like a bird in a space without air. The name *me* was the name of a being whose existence she had never suspected, a being that did not yet fully exist but which was demanded. It was a person (not the person she had thought), yet also a thing, a made thing, made to please Another and in Him to please all others, a thing being made at this very moment, without its choice, in a shape it had never dreamed of. (318-319)

Jane's true self is not just a perception; it is absolutely a created thing with a particular purpose. She exists with other "things" with particular purposes, and, while they call each other into particular relationships, it is God who first calls them into existence and commands them to love. The discursive world of human relationships, manifested in the face of the other, works *with* the reality of created relations in the construction of human identity. What results is a template which human beings inherit for responsiveness to the Other and others.

The life and the personhood of Christ is the model for all relationships. According to Lewis, Christ represents an impossible relational standard for human beings in discourse, but yet He is the *only* standard and source for relational being. Consequently, Lewis uses the analogy of "pretending" to characterize our relationships. The very first words of the Lord's prayer are "Our Father," suggesting that the speaker puts himself in the same position as the Son of God. This is an act of pretending of the most significant kind, since "you realise that you are not a son of God. You are not being like the Son of God, whose will and interests are at one with those of the Father: you are a bundle of self-centered fears, hopes, greeds, jealousies, and self-conceit, all doomed to death" (*Mere Christianity* 163). It is outrageous to think that we can even pretend to be a Son of God. Yet *God commands that we do so*, for He knows how we learn. Lewis writes that "very often the only way to get a quality in reality is to start behaving as if you had it already" and, just as children playing at their games of make-believe, those who are dressing up as Christ "are hardening their muscles and sharpening their wits, so that the pretense of being grown-up helps them to grow up in earnest" (163). This is a serious pretense for it not only shapes the reality of one's own personhood but also carries the capacity of personhood to others. We must all practice at becoming our selves.

Our communicative practices are purposefully reflective. In the same vein as St. Augustine, a metaphor which Lewis uses throughout his fiction and nonfiction to describe the responsiveness of human being is that of a mirror. In *Mere Christianity*, he writes “Men are mirrors, or ‘carriers’ of Christ to other men” (164). The reflection of the looking-glass is not simply contextual or constructed—it is teleological. To be responsive to such a role is an occasion of great joy and comfort, for the core of human identity is filled with light, love, and activity. That is why, Lewis argues, we must continually “play” at this thing called relationships and identity; merriment is called for in such work. Yet our task is also one of fear and trembling at the “weight of glory.” We reflect by *design*, not by coincidence. Therefore, Lewis writes “our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously” (“The Weight of Glory” 46). As human beings in discourse—participating in the movement and naming of the world—we are designed to reflect a particular Personhood. Yet can a mirror *practice* its reflections? Lewis would argue not necessarily; reflections just *are*. We can, however, choose the movement of our turning and the strength of our reflections in our own and other’s eyes.

4.8 Implications for IPC: Wisdom and Work Through Weak Spots and Blind Spots

Practicing good choices in real interpersonal communication reveals that we often are weak, distorted, or muddled reflections of our selves. As the discussion above articulates, human beings fight selfishness and pride in every relationship since the Fall. Thus practical wisdom in relational choices merits a lot of our daily attention. Themes of relational maintenance permeate through interpersonal communication studies, especially in the context of intimacy and family. The “work” of relationships has been characterized in a variety of ways by scholars in the discipline. To name just a few examples, Mark

Knapp and Anita Vangelisti describe the stages of “coming together” and “coming apart” of a romantic couple based on the patterns of communicative behaviors. Laura Stafford and Dan Canary observe the range of strategies that satisfied couples use in relationship maintenance, such as positivity, openness, assurances, and sharing activities and tasks.[4] Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery view the creation and sustenance of relationships as a complex interplay of dialectal tensions and dialogic responsiveness between interlocutors. However it may be characterized, many interpersonal scholars recognize that relationships require communicative labor. Lewis, grounded in the Christian tradition, articulates *grace* as a necessary presence and practice of the relational work before us each day. In his exploration of gracious wisdom through his writings, Lewis contributes to the conversation in interpersonal communication studies concerning self-concept and alterity by reflecting on just what it means to lovingly labor in relationships.

Lewis begins with the assumption that we have a “weak spot” built into the nature of our loving. It is a risk, he writes, “which God apparently thinks worth taking” (*The Problem of Pain* 76). In “The Trouble with ‘X’ ...,” he describes the wisdom of God in His choice to grant humans a derivative will, a characteristic that makes us particularly unique yet allows for us to share a common being. God has granted human beings with particular characters and unique manifestations of His character. Because of such alterity, people in our households and workplaces do and will “rub us the wrong way” from day to day because of our varying “clash of interests” (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* 42). Even in our most intimate of interpersonal relationships, we come to realize that we must live, at times, with people who act in insufferable ways. Further still, we may even come to realize how we ourselves become insufferable toward the other, a disappointment of our own relational expectations. In love, vulnerability is inevitable.

One of the first steps toward relational wisdom among human beings who disappoint each other is to understand that one's essential character endures; we cannot erase it. One of the most significant relational identities of human beings lies in the choice of responsiveness, even if that choice is not what we expect or desire. Since all relations are derivative of the Relation in God, Lewis writes that we find ourselves in a similar situation with others as God sustains with us as human beings. He has provided all that we may need in order to be fruitful and happy in this world, Lewis writes, yet we succeed in spoiling His plans with our quarreling, jealousy, gluttony, and selfishness. Despite this, God will not alter people's character by force; he waits for us to choose. "He would rather have a world of free beings, with all its risks, than a world of people who did right like machines because they couldn't do anything else" (Lewis, "The Trouble with 'X'..." 108). In imagining what such a world of automatons would be like—relationally, intellectually, spiritually—we cannot help but to recognize God's wisdom in His choice. By recognizing the necessity of regarding others as willful creatures whose characters we dare not deprive, we share in God's wisdom.

A further step to relational wisdom involves recognizing the limitations of the self in difficult interpersonal situations. The flaws of the self, according to Lewis, are not just character flaws. They are deficiencies in *loving*—mistakes and misinterpretations we are doomed to repeat throughout our relationships if we are unable or unwilling to address them in the proper way. He writes, "it is no good passing this over with some vague, general admission such as 'Of course, I know I have my faults.' It is important to realize that there is some really fatal flaw in you: something which gives the others just that same feeling of *despair* which their flaws give you" ("The Trouble with 'X'..." 109, emphasis original). Just as we cannot change the characters of those with whom we live

and work, we cannot change our fallen character. Lewis argues that the Christian tradition calls us to die to the self: in relational terms, we must seek grace from the Other. This sensibility of one's own character is more than insightful; it is willful. We must never encourage "a man to mistake his first insights into his own corruption for the first beginnings of a halo round his own silly head" (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* 62). Deficiencies in loving call for a change of heart which never forgets the necessity of grace.

God's relational wisdom provides our standard for exercising grace toward others. The Creator's relationship with His creatures differs from human relationships in two ways. First, He sees all characters completely, even our own. We cannot see our own character completely; we maintain blind spots to our self identity which at times are painful to address in relationships. Thus, we need the Other to not only help us recognize our blind spots but also to extend grace toward us in their manifestation.[5] Second, He loves all people despite their flaws: "He goes on loving. He does not let go....He is with them far more intimately and closely and incessantly than we can ever be" (Lewis, "The Trouble with 'X'..." 109). We, on the other hand, are necessarily limited in our loves. We are physically, spiritually, and intellectually *other than* one another. No matter how hard we strive for union, alterity presides. In fact, without otherness, relations are not possible at all. Therefore, we need to *direct* our loves in charitable ways by loving *practice*. Thus Lewis argues that "the more we can imitate God in both these respects, the more progress we shall make. We must love 'X' more; and we must learn to see ourselves as a person of exactly the same kind" ("The Trouble with 'X'..." 110).

Good communicative practices acknowledge the other not only by recognizing the particular person before you but also attending toward the *potential* for the *good* which

the self, the other, and the relationship can exhibit. In his chapter on “Affection” in *The Four Loves*, Lewis claims that when we come to love those in our communities and households “in their own way,” we are crossing into a liberating type of love. He writes “‘in his own way’ means that we are getting beyond our own idiosyncrasies, that we are learning to appreciate goodness or intelligence in themselves, not merely goodness or intelligence flavoured and served to suit our own palate” (*The Four Loves* 36).

Recognizing that all relationships and selves have weak spots and blind spots, we fashion our relational expectations and messages with interpretive and communicative grace.

Thus we regard love in interpersonal relationships not only as an issue of choice but as a charitable labor. As Lewis writes, Christianity situates the personal and the purposeful in every willful act, creating a multi-faceted life in which “you advance to more real and more complicated levels” of understanding human existence with each relation (*Mere Christianity* 142). According to Lewis, Christianity teaches that the Trinity is the manifestation of God’s perfect functional, relational personhood. In derivative fashion, our habitudes attend to the complexity of love as all at once ordering, maintaining, creating, inspiring, and serving our different functions, responsibilities, potentialities, and perspectives. There is much work to be done in interpersonal relationships, a reality making the necessity of grace fully evident. Should our work in relationships be limited primarily to “relational maintenance,” “negotiating dialectical tensions” or “coming together and coming apart,” we would have many opportunities to fail and disappoint one another. Yet when the task at hand reflects the fullness of God’s purposes for human love in its many forms, the habits of our souls become tethered to a potentiality which drives us beyond the relationship itself, compelling us to labor well, attend deliberately, and forgive often. We can then approach the work of intimacy in

proper perspective as husbands and wives, friends, co-workers, and family members who work for and with each other, but not themselves only.

The metaphor of will is a cornerstone in building a theory of the presence and practice of grace in intimate interpersonal communication. The discussion of will builds upon the previous chapter's exploration of human sentiments and relational training of the heart. With the addition of will into the equation, a philosophical understanding of love can be characterized by the *choice* of loving *labor*. Chapter Five extrapolates on these components of interpersonal relationships even further through the metaphor of responsiveness. Love constitutes responsiveness to both the ontological and existential forms of our relationships with one another, and through his discussion of the forms of love, Lewis shows us the necessity for the presence and practice of charitable responsiveness in intimacy. Without it, he argues, we should never fully know our own personhood.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESPONSIVENESS TO THE FORMS OF PERSONHOOD

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the metaphor of responsiveness as characteristic of the nature of human action in relationship with one another. Responsiveness is a widespread theoretical and practical component of both interpersonal communication and the philosophy of communication in general. Questions of discursive exchanges, relational reciprocity, and the factors which shape our communicative practices are major themes of scholarly discussion regarding human action and response to the world and others. The chapter's discussion of human action from different theoretical standpoints functions to locate Lewis's work solidly in a tradition attentive to issues of human action as responsive. Building upon the previous two chapters on will and sentiment, we begin to see how the totality of human responsiveness creates a framework for understanding love as constituted by *heartfelt choice*, *willful labor*, and *responsiveness to form* in communicative interactions.

First, the chapter briefly outlines questions of communicative reciprocity in intimate interpersonal communication studies. The majority of our communicative models suggest that the reciprocal nature of exchanges fosters a complex understanding of our expectation for relational response. In these models, the self and the other in relation constitutes a powerful dyad of responsiveness to messages, goals, roles, and interpretations in the communicative context. Yet, this chapter argues that in order for the presence and practice of grace to be available in intimate relationships, it is important to move beyond to the dyadic and into a triadic understanding of human discursive responsiveness. The rhetoric and philosophy of communication, framed by such thinkers

as Calvin Schrag, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur, articulate how a person stands in relation not only to the other but also to existence, or that which is otherwise than the immediate relation itself. Dialogic theory holds particularly important implications for understanding human responsiveness in this regard. It is the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, however, that creates a theoretical bridge between the rhetoric and philosophy of communication and a Christian philosophical understanding of the conditions of human responsiveness. Bakhtin's understanding of the Third, or the super-addressee, as articulated in *Toward a Philosophy of Act* introduces the triadic *personhood* into interpersonal interactions.

From Bakhtin, the chapter moves into a Christian framework for human responsiveness driven by the writings of St. Augustine and George MacDonald. These thinkers situate human relationship as a trinity of self, other, and God. Faith, hope, and charity characterize all of our loving relationships as we willfully submit to Love Himself. Lewis, building upon the works of Augustine and MacDonald, characterizes human responsiveness as feminine responsiveness—creatures to Creator; mirror to Divine Light; bride to Bridegroom. All persons can participate in such responsiveness, regardless of their sex, for it calls for a perfection of our willful obedience, reflection of glory, and communicative labor together. We participate in forms of personhood which reflect both our ontological and existential significance.

Lewis's writings help us to understand the nature of personhood through a relational lens, allowing us to better approach interpersonal contexts which may challenge our beliefs and expectations regarding the self and other. Nothing tests our ability to respond well to the other quite like a conflict situation; consequently, conflict management is the focus of the implications section of this chapter. Conflict is a major

obstacle to intimacy development in relationships. Lewis's "The Trouble with 'X...'" suggests that until we can take a perspective that allows us to see people and ourselves as we really are, we will not be able to successfully manage conflict. By being able to frame our relationships with others both ontologically and existentially, we are better able to interpret the conditions of a conflict situation and submit to the other while maintaining the validity of our own interpretations, inclinations, needs, and desires. The emphasis for this framework of conflict management sets expectations and practices on the self and avers the flaws of others. In addition to the conflicts of everyday life with one another, the differences between male and female and masculine and feminine threaten intimacy. These are differences which threaten to be an unresolvable conflict and thus can create continual tension within an intimate relationship. Lewis suggests that the solution is to look to grace so that we can interpret the other charitably. We are called to meet our essential natures—our eternal teleology—in an authentic form of personhood in intimacy. The implications of this framework suggest that our communicative expectations and practices be driven by a loving desire to develop the *personhood* of each partner in all of its forms in intimacy.

5.2 Communicative Reciprocity in Intimate IPC Studies

Textbook introductions to the interpersonal communication literature often begin by articulating the structure and nature of the communicative act. Scholars generally regard communication as an action, a transaction, and an interaction (Foulger). All three characteristics point to communication as discrete speech acts textured by the dynamic interplay of the self and other in relation. Commonly, our models expect reciprocity, situating the term in varying degrees of theoretical importance. One of the earliest communication models, Claude Shannon's "Mathematical Theory of Communication"

published in 1948, describes the elements present in a speech act, yet does not touch upon the reciprocal nature of communication. Shannon characterizes communication as a system of constitutive elements (source, transmission, channel, and receiver) unilaterally functioning for the successful transmission of a message. As the field of interpersonal and small group studies developed, scholars nuanced and expanded the basic communicative model into interactional and transactional forms which more readily articulate the complexity of message exchange, the bi-directionality of transmission, the relationship of sender and receiver, and the complications of transmission in a medium. For example, Weiner's work in cybernetics (*Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine; Human Use of Human Beings*) posits that both senders and receivers provide feedback in real time and adapt their messages to the demands of the communicative exchange. While the practice of communicative reciprocity at times may seem mechanistically oriented, the *principles* behind relational exchanges are indeed complex. Human communication is a phenomenon of "who...says what...in which channel...to whom...with what effect" (Laswell).

Generally, interpersonal communication models assume that human beings seek reciprocity from communicative and relational perspectives. Our speech acts are guided by expectations of response—we speak out into the world and expect something to happen as a result. From some theoretical standpoints, the expectations of response are egocentrically oriented (i.e., the self is the focal point of communicative presentation and speech act completion). For example, sociological and communicative theoretical frameworks such as social exchange theory (Thibault and Kelly; Roloff) or Maslow's hierarchy of needs assume a level of reciprocity in intimate relationships that addresses basic and universal human desires such as security and emotional and physical comfort

for each self in the relationship. Alternatively, the expectation of response may be other-oriented, such as feminine ethics of care proposed by scholars such as Nel Noddings (e.g., *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*) or Julia Wood (e.g., *Who Cares?: Women, Care and Culture*), in which the self's attentiveness to the other takes precedence in a communicative exchange. Attentiveness to the self or the other may not be mutually exclusive from any one of these theoretical standpoints, for human communication constitutes a system of reciprocal verbal and nonverbal dynamics as interlocutors attend to a variety of relational, nonverbal, verbal, and interpretive constraints in order to be successful.[1] Clearly, responsiveness and relationship are a symbiotic pair.

The dyad is the core of interpersonal studies. The patterns of communication are definable and the interlocutors are discernible. As the scope of human interaction expands into small group and family, for instance, the dynamics of dyadic responsiveness necessarily change. Interactive systems theory, studying how and why individuals align themselves in groups, families, and organizations, assumes that the self can only experience comprehensive development through interaction with others. Communication occurs in various levels of social relationships, starting with the intrapersonal and moving finally to the cultural. Any communicative act not only indicates the *content* of what a person is trying to say but also reflects the *relational* complexity of self and other in the communicative act (see Reusch and Bateson and Watson, Beavin, and Jackson).

Relational communication is about the “interact,” or how the mutual positioning of acting individuals within dyadic and small group situations produce patterns of interrelation (Rogers). Individuals can position and re-position themselves in spaces of relational control through their messages and communicative behaviors, positing either to “one up,”

“one down,” or “one across” the others in the system (see, for example, Markman and Notarius, and Millar and Rogers). Yet the theoretical and pragmatic pivot upon which the communicative system turns is the dyadic relation of the self and the other.

Positions of interaction and spaces of responsiveness hold important implications for studies of intimacy and marriage. In Gottman’s *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*, for example, he suggests that maintaining a five to one ratio of positive to negative messages sustains a healthy relational environment. The author encodes messages for patterns of dominance, submissiveness, conflict negotiation, and relational support and warns against speech acts such as stonewalling or resentment which damage relational integrity. Other examples in the literature, such as Knapp and Vangelisti’s *Stages of Relational Development*, characterize how the interactions of two individuals create, sustain, or inhibit relational growth and decline. Relational growth articulates a movement from identifiable interpersonal boundaries in communicative exchanges (e.g., limited self disclosure) to interactions indicative of shared relational identity and integration of perspectives, goals, and expectations (e.g., public and private recognition of “we” and “us”). While the individuals are in relationship with one another, they move within a system of intimacy development and relational decline, renegotiating communicative acts and expectations and, consequently, their relational identity.

Human communicative action presupposes responsiveness by both the self and the other. The literature suggests that the communicative exchange is tightly contained by what verbal, nonverbal, interpretive, and relational dynamics each person brings to the interlocution. The dyad, being the crux of theoretical and functional responsiveness, takes into account a variety of factors on the horizontal plane of influence, such as cultural, gender, ethnic, or racial dynamics at play in relationships. Yet we have a tendency to

orient our studies toward how these issues work within and upon a *particular boundary* of a relationship. It is necessary to maintain the dyadic nature of the interchange, for what this project builds upon is one human being in an intimate relationship with another. Yet, before considering the necessity of charity within an intimate interpersonal relationship, the responsiveness assumed within the relation must be contextualized by that which is *transcendent to the relationship* as well as what is brought to bear *within* the relationship itself. We as scholars should account for both the horizontal (dyadic) *and* the vertical (triadic) dimensions of relationships if we are to consider the nature of human responsiveness more deeply. The rhetoric and philosophy of communication introduces the interpersonal literature to the third dimension of human interaction through considerations of human responsiveness to *existence*. In a triadic model, the third element can thus be understood as a third *person*, which is where the Christian intellectual tradition framing this project expands and strengthens a philosophical perspective on interpersonal studies.

5.3 The Rhetoric and Philosophy of Human Communicative Action and Responsiveness

The rhetoric and philosophy of communicative action adds an understanding of discourse as both *relationally* and *existentially* responsive within interpersonal encounters. Philosophers of communication such as Calvin Schrag, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur discuss the texture inherent in human communicative acts. In *The Self After Postmodernity* (1997), Schrag recognizes that human subjectivity emerges from embedded discursive practices. Embedded communicative action counters the postmodern deconstructionist threat of the “death of the subject” (Foucault 387); one’s subjectivity manifests itself within a rhetorical and existential community of practices

(Schrag, *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity*). Schrag frames four characteristics of the human subject: the self in discourse (“Who is speaking?”), the self in action (“Who is acting?”), the self in community (“Who is responding to other selves?”), and the self in transcendence (“Who stands within and before transcendence?”) (Schrag, *The Self After Postmodernity* 4). These four questions point to a spatial model of human communicative action along both vertical and horizontal axes. Individuals move with and among others in relationship toward a transcendental understanding of human experience (Y axis) while their action is embedded in dynamic historical and communal constitution, or “the cultural-spheres of science, morality, art, and religion” (X axis) (*The Self After Postmodernity* 5). Discursive responsiveness is at the core of subjectivity; we respond not only to our historical and cultural embeddedness but, more importantly, we are compelled to transcendence by the speech acts of the self and Other.

What gives meaning to communicative action is one’s hermeneutic response to the phenomenon of human discourse. If one’s aim is to understand a given text or communicative event, one must be prepared “for it to tell him something” and “to be aware of one’s own bias, so that the text [or communicative act] may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one’s own fore-meanings” (Gadamer, *Truth and Method* 238). As Ronald C. Arnett suggests in “Interpretive Inquiry as Qualitative Communication Research,” openness to the phenomenon of human bias situates understanding within an historical and relational mode of being. We must be responsive to how given fulcrums of meaning, or what Ricoeur calls metaphors in *The Rule of Metaphor*, emerge, shift, retract, and reemerge throughout history and within communities. Meaning emerges not just between two people but also in the context of a dyad’s responsiveness to the influence of the triadic. In other words, human

communicative action takes place not only within relationships but also within existence.

Responsiveness is a fundamentally relational act. One stands in relation to the Other and to existence, compelled to respond. Consequently, dialogic studies is a significant realm of theoretical overlap between the rhetoric and philosophy of communication and interpersonal communication. Emergent from the works of philosophers of communication such as Martin Buber, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jürgen Habermas,[2] dialogic studies marries the discursive, the relational, the existential, and the transcendental in everyday contexts. Early works in the discipline stemmed mostly from the philosophy of Martin Buber,[3] showing how the “essential movement in dialogue” is the turn toward the Other (Johannesen 375) and that the self, the Other, and the “between” constitute the dialogic act. Later, perspectives on dialogic theory advanced by John Stewart (“Foundations of Dialogic Communication”) and Ronald C. Arnett (“Toward a Phenomenological Dialogue”) explore how the study and practice of dialogue from a phenomenological perspective lend a unique understanding of the nature of human-being-in-discourse as embedded, intentional, and relational.

Dialogue shifts the focus of interpersonal communication from the ideas of communicative self-competency and progression of relational development to the importance of openness to the other, responsiveness in communicative expectations, and emergent understanding between the self and other.[4] These scholarly trends lend particular importance to the theory and practice of intimate communication from a philosophical and rhetorical perspective. Specifically, Baxter and Montgomery situate interpersonal communication within the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, articulating a model of intimacy as being constituted by responsiveness to the Other and recognition of the dialectical constitution of self-identity (i.e., self-other dynamics).

In particular, the presence of Bakhtin's work in intimate interpersonal studies allows for the consideration of a *triadic* model of intimacy. Bakhtin works from the assumption that what informs and guides one's understanding of all relationships is the existence of a transcendental third addressee. Bakhtin explains how each person in relation acts as "the witness and the judge" for the other; we see both what is and what ought to be in our relationships. As we function in dyadic relation with each other in temporal existence, we reflect what he calls the *supra-existence*, or a component both within and beyond all existence that acts first and foremost as "the witness and the judge" of our discourse (Bakhtin, "From Notes Made in 1970 to 1971"). All communicative action occurs not only among the self and other *within existence* but also to the self and the other in relation to the *supra-existence* of Being.

Bakhtin's understanding of the act is not only ontological; it is rhetorical. In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, Bakhtin defines "act" as "an actual living participant in the ongoing event of Being" (2). All communicative acts are predicated by responsiveness—not only of the self but also of others and of Being. We are driven by an ethic of responsibility, or an inclination to participate in a rhetorical "ought" that articulates both what *is* (the witness) and what *ought to be* (the judge) in our actions. We do this all from within consciousness of being judged and witnessed ourselves. The rhetorical introduces a *personal* component to our responsiveness. We speak because our existence *is* personal; our existence reflects the personhood of the Other.

What Bakhtin points to in his work and what other Christian thinkers fully emphasize is that the "third" element of human communication and relation is a *Person*, not just Being. People respond to *people*, not just to existence. The study of rhetoric and philosophy of communication frames responsiveness in interpersonal studies with

existential and transcendental considerations. The Christian philosophical perspective guiding this project demands that responsiveness be ontologically tethered *and* relationally particular as we meet the *Person* behind all personhood. To respond to and within such personhood is the very nature of charitable responsiveness. As such, this tradition holds significant implications for the study and practice of intimate interpersonal communication, especially in conflict situations. Each person within a relationship carries a multidimensional role, or forms of personhood which create spaces for us to respond truthfully, faithfully, and graciously toward one another in each communicative moment.

5.4 Responsiveness to Personhood

From the Christian narrative perspective framing this project, the Incarnation characterizes how speech acts are understood. In John 1:1, it is described how the Word already was in the beginning of human existence, and the Word and God are one. In 1 Corinthians 1:21, one reads how the Word was incarnated in the flesh through Christ. Thus any and all speech acts are incarnated into existence as the Word dwells among the flesh. St. Augustine describes our speech as thus:

In order that what we are thinking may reach the mind of the listener through the fleshly ears, that which we have in mind is expressed in words and is called speech. But our thought is not transformed into sounds; it remains entire in itself and assumes the form of words by means of which it may reach the ears without suffering any deterioration in itself. In the same way the Word of God was made flesh without change that He might dwell among us. (*On Christian Doctrine*, 1.13.12)

The Word of God, which exists beyond time, dwells in human hearts and minds. Yet in time, the Word is to be incarnated through speech. Augustine recognizes that all sounds, even though they are necessary for communication, are temporal and subject to distortion and noise (*On Christian Doctrine*, 2.4.5). In addition, our symbolicity can just as easily lend obscurity as understanding (2.1-6). He does not despair in this, however. For human

beings speak not only into the incarnate temporality but also to the eternity dwelling in the heart of the other. We speak to the Word of God always, and the Truth of God remains entire and incorruptible. Since the Word and God are the same, all communicative acts are, at their core, responsive to the Person of God.

We speak with and to people, or more accurately, Personhood. From the beginning our existence, we have been relational, social creatures. Lewis argues that God, in Himself, is a “society”: the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity demonstrates how “within Him, the concrete reciprocities of love exist before all worlds and are thence derived to the creatures” (*The Problem of Pain* 20). God exists relationally, with three distinct persons constituting His essence in perfect unity. St. Augustine describes the relation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as each “a full substance, and at the same time all are one substance....All three have the same eternity, the same immutability, the same majesty, and the same power. In the Father is unity, in the Son equality, and in the Holy Spirit a concord of unity and equality” (*On Christian Doctrine* 1.5.5). Each Being of the Trinity has a particular role, yet they work as One in perfect responsiveness to the Other.

As creatures of God, we too exist relationally. Our personhood is never static—it is always dynamic, always respondent, always active. We are reminded of this dynamism in the face of the other. George MacDonald argues that “words for their full meaning depend upon their source, the person who speaks them. An utterance may even seem commonplace, till you are told that thus spoke one whom you know to be *always thinking, always feeling, always acting*” (*Unspoken Sermons* 32, emphasis added). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all act together perfectly in both unity and alterity. Human beings, on the other hand, think, feel, and act within finitude. We must because we live as temporal creatures. Yet MacDonald argues that we have access to Eternal

Truth, and we must speak to that Word if we want to speak that which is good and act faithfully toward the other: “Whatever a good word means, as used by a good man, it means just infinitely more as used by God. And the feeling or thought expressed by that word takes higher and higher forms in us as we become capable of understanding him,—that is, as we become like him” (*Unspoken Sermons* 32-33). Communicative action addresses the person before us as well as the Person among us.

How, then, are we to act toward others given the dynamic presence of the Personhood of God? We begin with the most universally human yet eternally significant act: love. “If there be any meaning in the Incarnation, it is through the Human that we must climb up to the Divine” (MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons* 33), and we are to respond to the other in love. St. Augustine describes the manners in which we can position the people and things of this world in relation to the eternal Person of God. He characterizes the distinction as either use or enjoyment. To “enjoy” someone is to love him for his own sake. To “use” someone is to love him for the sake of someone or something else (Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 1.22.20). It may seem contrary to our inclinations, but Augustine argues that we are called to “use” one another rather than “enjoy,” for a person “is better when he adheres to and is bound completely to the immutable good than when he lapses away from it, even toward himself” (1.22.21). The only Person to be enjoyed is God, for from Him and in Him all joy resides. When we love the other “for the sake of” (i.e., use), we love what is true, good, and perfect in that imperfect, fallen person before us. Loving “for the sake of” means recognizing the Personhood inside the other and loving *that*, responding in the hope and faith that all selves are worth loving because Love resides in us.

Consequently, faithfulness to our loves characterizes our discursive meetings.

Because of our relationally derivative nature, we recognize Love; it is always situated in immediacy to us. Love moves us in faithful meeting with others. Yet the *expectations* we hold of loving encounters do not always characterize the *actual* meetings we have with real persons in the world. Augustine explains that temporal things are always loved more *before* we meet them; when we do find ourselves in a space of meeting, we realize that all temporal relations are subject to flux, strain, imperfection, and eventually death (*On Christian Doctrine* 1.38.42). Now, his argument by no means challenges the significance of emergent, unexpected meaning in interpersonal relationships. In fact, he advocates for openness to such encounters (see, for example, Augustine's account in the *Confessions* of the influence his mother played in his conversion to Christianity). There can be real value in an interpersonal moment where our expectations are *not* met in with one another or our discursive practices are stretched and changed. What Augustine points to, however, is that *anything* beautiful, truthful, or good which emerges from our relationships is eternal. It endures beyond the relationship itself and enables us to love *more* (*On Christian Doctrine* 1.38.42). We not only love and attend to the particular person in front of us, we love the goodness and truthfulness in which their personhood participates. Thus, faith and hope are necessary when we meet particular others. We may not recognize them in their difference and, if we do, we have no assurance that our words will be understood or accepted by them. Faith and hope help us to be certain of at least one Who is immediately before us—the recognizable face of Love. In other words, faithful responsiveness allows us to place another in a space of recognition. We hope that as we respond to Love we will be heard and validated in our utterances (see Bakhtin's *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*). When we communicate faithfully and hopefully to Personhood, we glimpse what it is like to love charitably.

Charity is perfect responsiveness. The eternal is present in all loves, yet when we love charitably, we exercise the fullest capacity of human love. When we speak charitably, we speak to both the temporal and the eternal personhood in the face before us. We speak to who they *are*, who they are *to be*, and how we mean *together*. Charity is existentially, teleologically, and relationally driven. As such, charity is the characteristic of enduring love; it remains “more certain and more vigorous” than any other manifestation of human responsiveness (Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 1.39.43). Augustine argues that in eternity we will not need faith or hope to extend love to one another. We will love and know perfectly simply because we *are*; God makes it so. All those who enjoy Him will enjoy one another completely (*On Christian Doctrine* 1.32.35). In the meantime, however, we must exercise charity. We must be deliberate in our responsiveness to Love. We must seek the Personhood within all faces.

Consequently, a trinity of faith, hope, and charity characterize our communicative acts toward one another in this world. We have faith in the Personhood dwelling in each self. We hope that our responsiveness to the other “for the sake of” Love leads to the presence of truth and joy in relationships. We exercise charity toward the other, for charity fulfills all of our potentialities for loving. From these key thinkers of the Christian intellectual tradition, Lewis builds his understanding of what charity in intimate interpersonal communication looks like. He shares the conviction of human action as responsiveness to the call of Personhood. Particularly relevant to this project, however, is Lewis’s continued reference to the *feminine* nature of human responsiveness in the presence of the masculine Creator. Human action is subject to eternal order, and such order is characterized by particularity and loving submission. This holds significant implications for intimate interpersonal communication, especially within the study of

conflict management and gender communication. Lewis's writings suggest that charitable responsiveness becomes a necessary practice for understanding the forms of personhood which manifest themselves in intimacy—the male and the female, the masculine and the feminine, the Divine and the human.

5.5 The Femininity of Human Responsiveness: *That Hideous Strength*

As previous chapters of this project address, human beings are creatures; derivative and reflective of the Creator. Thus “our role must always be that of patient to agent, female to male, mirror to light, echo to voice. Our highest activity must be *response, not initiative*” (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* 44, emphasis added). God as the Word initiates all relations and all discourse. It is the proper function of human being to be responsive to the Word; we are to allow ourselves to be set within a space of receptivity. Just as a broken bone needs to be set in order to bear the weight of the body's work, so too human beings need to be set into proper relation to God and to others in order to allow the dynamic presence of Love to work in and for them. Lewis writes that God designs His creatures for participation in particular spaces of existence. When humans are able to realize their essential nature in knowledge and practice, then goodness and joy are attained. As Lewis claims, “God is the only good of all creatures: and by necessity, each must find its good in that kind and degree of the fruition of God which is proper to its nature” (*The Problem of Pain* 46-47). Primarily setting oneself in proper relation to one Being—God—by no means suggests that we forsake particularity of human action and relation. God is not a homogenizing force. On the contrary, all particularity is unified in Him. Living in responsiveness to Him, human being in general, as well as each person in particular, participates in distinct roles demanding particular work in both the temporal and eternal.

Lewis describes the work of human responsiveness as distinctly feminine. He describes the femininity of humanity specifically in his work of fiction, *That Hideous Strength*, a book which articulates important themes to the study of intimate interpersonal communication. The heroine Jane has much to learn about the masculine, the feminine, obedience, marriage, and love. The Director teaches her that the context of all human action is undeniably feminine:

You are offended by the masculine itself: the loud, irruptive, possessive thing—the gold lion, the bearded bull—which breaks through hedges and scatters the little kingdom of your primness as the dwarfs scattered the carefully made bed. The male you could have escaped, for it exists only on the biological level. But the masculine none of us can escape. What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it. (315-316)

Jane thought religion as “something civilized, or modern, or (of late) ‘spiritual’” (316) which allows her soul to aspire to “some neutral, or democratic, vacuum where differences disappeared, where sex and sense were not transcended but simply taken away” (315). Reality suggests no such thing. God, as Lewis describes Him, is Masculinity. As a Personhood, God is wisdom, strength, creativity, possession, and protection. As the Eternal Word, God is voice and volume, penetrating the flesh. Human beings are the flesh which receives the Word and the soul which God covets as His own.

What does it mean that Lewis characterizes human action as feminine responsiveness? First, it suggests that action is preceded by the will to obedience. We meet the penetrating presence of the Masculine. God would have that, as a response, our will be placed in His Hands. However, He has given us the capacity to choose otherwise. In *That Hideous Strength*, the Director and Jane are speaking of obedience in marriage. When Jane asks him what the Masters would say about the call to obedience from a wife who does not love her husband, the Director replies: “They would say...that you do not

fail in obedience through lack of love, but have lost love because you never attempted obedience” (Lewis 147). In intimate interpersonal relationships, obedience—the choice of turning one’s will into the Other’s hands—coincides with love. Both a husband and a wife must place one’s willfulness at the Other’s feet, an articulation of unity and submission. The submission is never “for submission’s sake.” It is always “for the sake of” welcoming the Person before us—both God and the other. In a like manner, our communicative actions are rightly submissive, or a “letting in” of the world at the same time that we affirm our ability to think, to will, to move. Our acts are not for their own sake, but “for the sake of” and responsive to that which is before us.

Second, the femininity of human responsiveness suggests that our communicative action is reflective of the other. The human soul in the presence of God, as well as in the presence of another, is an occasion for both beauty and celebration. In the last chapter of *That Hideous Strength* entitled “Venus at St. Anne’s,” the women of the house prepare for the feast prior to the ascent of the Director by adorning each other with rich and colorful robes. As the women dress, they delight that each one’s dress typifies and perfects the other’s character. The ritual harkens back to the beginning of the story, when Jane finds a book in the house with the following passage:

The beauty of the female is the root of joy to the female as well as to the male, and it is no accident that the goddess of Love is older and stronger than the god. To desire the desiring of her own beauty is the vanity of Lilith, but to desire the enjoying of her own beauty is the obedience of Eve, and to both it is in the loved that the beloved tastes her own delightfulness. (63)

Echoing the distinction between “enjoyment” and “use” articulated by St. Augustine in *On Christian Doctrine*, Lewis characterizes the inclination toward and appreciation of that which is beautiful, including the self, as an act of righteousness. All that is beautiful

is so because of God, and to recognize and to adorn oneself in beauty *for Him*, just as a bride dresses for the bridegroom, is a good and joyous occasion. From a communicative perspective, our responsiveness to the other adorns us and *the relationship*. We cloak each other in our words and, more importantly still, we see our own reflections in the face of the Other. When Mother Dimble distresses that there is no mirror in their dressing room, Jane replies: “I don’t believe we were meant to see ourselves...He said something about being mirrors enough to see another” (*That Hideous Strength* 362). Lewis claims that the feminine is responsive to and appreciates such reflection for we *are* reflections. The soul knows the importance of adorning the self and others not only properly but in a manner which gives delight. It is a gift which is given to us by the Creator; the care to participate in and celebrate the adornment of our relations.

Lastly, characterizing human responsiveness as feminine frames human action as purposeful work. Men and women alike are called to labor, yet the work of the feminine, according to Lewis, is primarily responsive and often ritualistic. Throughout *That Hideous Strength*, the women of St. Anne’s attend the others of the household in a busy yet directed matter. Needs like hunger and warmth are not only met, they are thoroughly satisfied in a proper manner, *or properly responsive to the moment before them*.

Depending on what time it is or who may be coming to visit, they know how to lay out the bed or when to put the kettle on. Their work becomes ritualistic to the point that their communication becomes concise yet fluid. MacPhee comments how women do not use nouns in the kitchen: “Put that in the other one in there” is substituted for “Put this bowl inside the bigger bowl which you’ll find on the top shelf of the green cupboard” (*That Hideous Strength* 167). The men are confused by such statements, but the women know. It is a ritual, and they move among and with one another with purpose. They work not

only because these things must be done, but because it is their nature to do so. In like manner, the human soul has a proper function, or a nature of responsiveness. In a way, our speech is an act of domestic labor—carrying, lifting, pulling, setting, and attending to the household of meaning.[5] The work is continuous and becomes ritual, yet it never loses its purpose, for a household is an institution of and for *people* exclusively. The others in the household compel the feminine to responsiveness. Thus, even though human beings are called “mirrors” to God’s light, Lewis does not reduce human activity to total passivity. His use of the metaphor of the household suggests that the response of human being is *present, willful, and dynamic*, just like the Personhood of God.

It is important to note that although he uses women characters in *That Hideous Strength* to convey his assumptions, Lewis regards feminine responsiveness as *human* responsiveness, not just the response of the female. In the chapter titled “Counting the Cost” in *Mere Christianity*, Lewis discusses God’s plan for those who love and follow Him. The plan is nothing less than absolute perfection. We may not expect or want complete perfection, but that is what Christ intends. Echoing Isaiah 64:8, Lewis writes “the question is not what we intended ourselves to be, but what He intended us to be when He made us. He is the inventor, we are only the machine. He is the painter, we are only the picture. How should we know what He means us to be like?” (*Mere Christianity* 175). God wants us—*all* of us—to be in perfect loving relation with Him. God continues to shape our personhood; He has a plan for our souls. Lewis states that God’s plan is to shape His creatures in extraordinary ways: “to shrink back from that plan is not humility; it is laziness and cowardice. To submit to it is not conceit or megalomania; it is obedience” (175). God wants to makes us “new men” in Christ, creatures who can obey the command “be ye perfect” (175-191). This calls for obedience. We are to see and

reflect the light and glory of the Divine. It is a labor indeed, akin to rebuilding a derelict house into a palace. It is not just a female task; it is a Divine task in concert with *all* persons. All persons obey, reflect, and labor in their responsiveness to God and the other.

In every human soul lies the ability to reflect the brilliant light of the Divine. In *That Hideous Strength*, charity is represented by the goddess of love, descending to Earth in brilliant light. Charitable love, according to Lewis, is a powerful force of God, a force “ready to kill, ready to die” (323). It is the Eternal’s deafening response to the cries of the world, an “outspeeding light” (323) which illuminates where Need does yet even exist. We are invited into this powerful responsiveness. Yet such responsiveness cannot overtake us, we have but to *willfully* act with charity in order to manifest it in our relations. To deny charity is to deny the fullest capacity of human communicative responsiveness.

5.6 The Communicative Work of Charitable Responsiveness

If charitable responsiveness is a necessity in interpersonal relationships, then what *work* does charity actually do for us and for our capacity to respond to others? In *The Four Loves*, Lewis describes the presence of charity among the natural loves (affection, eros, and friendship) as the love which works to “prune” all others. He uses the illustration of a garden:

When God planted a garden He set a man over it and set the man under Himself. When He planted the garden of our nature and caused the flowering, fruiting loves to grow there, He set our will to “dress” them. And unless His grace comes down, like the rain and the sunshine, we shall use this tool to little purpose. (117)

Charity, set apart from all other loves, works within affection, friendship, and romance in order to allow them to grow stronger, last longer, and be known more fully. The “outspeeding light” (*That Hideous Strength*, 323) of charity is ever-moving, ever-

responding; yet it allows us to situate the other loves firmly, just as “we cannot see light, though by light we can see things” (*The Four Loves* 126). Simply, charity draws all loving into itself, perfecting their focus, form, and practice. Lewis writes that charitable love reflects the perfection which Christ brought to humanity: “As God become Man ‘Not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God,’ so here; Charity does not dwindle into merely natural love but natural love is taken up into, made the tuned and obedient instrument of, Love Himself” (*The Four Loves* 134). Charity meets all other loves as they are, yet it works toward their beauty, health, and perfection.

Because charity works among and within all categories of relationship, its implications reach both need-love and gift-love. Lewis describes the gift of charity as simply this: we love that which is unlovable in others and ourselves. We are able to attend and to give to the other amidst unpleasant idiosyncratic behavior, wrong doings, cowardice, hurt, and exhaustion. We give that which is most difficult and most precious—ourselves, our will—to the other. Yet according to Lewis, this is not the only miracle of charity in human love. Charity also allows for the supernatural Need-love of God and of others. The presence of God’s charitable love creates in us a “natural receptivity of Charity from our fellow-men” (*The Four Loves* 129). As Lewis describes in the early chapters of *The Four Loves*, need is a given condition of our existence as temporal, fallen creatures. In the state we are born, we are unaware of need as a space for love to enter our lives—we only experience hunger, cold, or discomfort. As we grow in awareness, Grace allows that we learn about and accept Need for what it is: a manifestation of relation. Lewis argues that there is joy in such a realization: “From this tangled absurdity of a Need, even a Need-love, which never fully acknowledges its own

neediness, Grace substitutes a full, childlike and delighted acceptance of our Need, a joy in total dependence” (*The Four Loves* 131). We are born into relationships which call us into Love. By Grace, we learn that our loving relationships are dependent and needful, but they are never *simply* so. Through charitable responsiveness, we willfully accept the *personhood* of the self and the other *in relation*—the ultimate desire of all forms of lasting love.

We both need and desire personhood. It is what we seek, both in the face of the other and in our meeting with the world. Yet our search for personhood often is complicated by our selves and other selves. Practically, we cannot expect to practice obedience, respond perfectly, or labor well *always* with other people—especially within intimate relationships of the household. Further still, our own needs and desires become frustrated with our efforts at relation. We often have to compromise but do not want to do so. We try our hardest to make ourselves heard or to listen to the other, but exhaustion, misunderstanding, or disagreement gets in the way. We know what it is we need to do or to say but sometimes we just cannot (or will not) find the courage and confidence for the moment. Consequently, Lewis’s writings regarding responsiveness—and specifically charitable responsiveness—speaks to how we understand and manage relational expectations. Further still, he helps us to frame managing conflict in intimacy in a manner which gives validity to our choices and utterances, lending us the confidence to be properly assertive yet charitable. What results is a picture, or a form, of intimacy which complements our created and derivative personhood. The final section of the chapter discusses these implications for intimate interpersonal communication.

5.7 Implications for IPC: “The Trouble with ‘X’...”

Conflict in interpersonal relationships is one of the biggest obstacles to practicing

good responsiveness to and with the other. In the interpersonal communication literature, conflict is understood to be a transactional process between people who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, or disagreement and interference by the other (Wilmot and Hocker). In general, conflict management can be approached in a variety of ways; from avoidance or accommodation to competition or collaboration (see, for example, M. Afzalur Rahim and Nace R. Magner's "Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict: First-order Factor Models and its Invariance Across Groups"). A significant factor which influences our choices in approaching conflict management lies in our perceptions of *power* in relationships. Wilmot and Hocker suggest that power is always present in relationships—it is granted by persons or groups who allow others to exert influence or control over them. In order to acquire power in a relationship, a person has to possess some form of power currency, or a resource which others value. These currencies include the power of owning sought after resources, fostering strong social networks, possessing expert knowledge or skill in a given area, having desirable and attractive personal characteristics, and even holding intimate bonds with another (Wilmot and Hocker). We exercise a good deal of influence over one another in relationships, and our perceptions of such influence shape how we categorize and manage difficult interpersonal situations.

Questions of who holds what kind and how much influence over the other become particularly salient in intimate interpersonal communication contexts. Most conflicts occur between people involved in close relationships, especially marriage and relationships of the household (Benoit and Benoit). In fact, scholars who study conflict in marriages and families often regard the phenomenon as normative (Sillars, Canary, and Tafoya). If the prolonged proximity to one another is not enough to set the stage for

disagreements and conflicts, the intensity of care toward others in the household certainly suggests that we become more emotionally invested, protective of perceptions, and more resolute in our attempts to have the other understand and support us in difficult moments. Managing conflict in close relationships, then, presents its own unique challenges. Consequently, scholars who study the contexts and patterns of conflict in marriages and households often focus on *how* relational partners communicate in the midst of difficult moments, not necessarily on the source or the resolution of said conflict (Sillars, Canary, and Tafoya). Responsiveness within conflict situations matters—arguably even more so than resolution in conflict management.

Scholars who have studied verbal strategies toward conflict in intimate relationships have found that finding good approaches to conflict can be difficult, yet it can make all of the difference in the quality of the relationship over time. In those tough moments of relation, we often become frustrated in discerning the exact source of a conflict (see for example David Stiebel’s discussion of the difference between a disagreement or misunderstanding in *When Talking Makes Things Worse!: Resolving Problems When Communication Fails*). The verbal strategies which we choose in approaching conflict depend upon our understanding of the context, our abilities to be assertive in communicating our beliefs and the content of our messages, or the perceived behavioral or relational changes necessary for the resolution of the conflict.[6] The ability of romantic partners to choose well in response to conflict can be due in part to the condition of the relationship prior to the emergence of conflict. According to Alan Sillars and William Wilmot in “Communication Strategies in Conflict and Mediation,” strategies in conflict management by either distressed or non-distressed couples vary significantly; those couples in distress prior to the emergence of conflict do not generally take

constructive approaches to its management. Often what begins as particular conflict situations branches out into cyclical complaints and counter-complaints by both partners, or unwanted repetitive patterns (see Trenholm and Jensen) of unhealthy communicative responses. Consequently, how partners regard one another and the relationship *prior to* a conflict situation makes all of the difference in their responses once conflict arises.

Herein lies the significance of a couples' perceptions of one another's personhood within an intimate relationship. One's beliefs regarding their partner's personality, inclinations, and motivations *will* make a difference in how conflict is managed in a relationship. Consequently, attribution plays a major role in the conflict management of intimate partners. People attribute their success within difficult experiences through the lens of locus, stability, and control. Generally, we do so in order to maintain a positive self-image (B. Weiner). Thus in approaching conflict in intimacy, we struggle with the need to validate our own beliefs and interpretations while situating the cause of the conflict in controllable, stable contexts which can be "resolved." What often happens as a result is the shift of blame from the self toward others—from the internal to the external. Consequently, we tend to attribute the causes of conflict in intimate relationships to stable characteristics of our partners, such as their personalities and dispositions.[7] In general, most couples have a difficult time focusing on specific behaviors which perpetuate conflict; the inclination consistently is to describe the conflict by way of the negative dispositions of their partners (Kelley, *Personal Relationships: Their Structures and Processes*). Furthermore, those couples who are dissatisfied with their relationship prior to the emergence of conflict are more likely to attribute responsibility for negative interactions to the condition of their relationship as a whole (e.g., "You never ask me if its okay if you spend all that money!") and to their partners' selfishness or difficult

disposition in particular (e.g., “Because you only think about yourself!”). On the other hand, when positive events happen in a relationship, unhappy couples attribute the responsibility to short-lived conditions of the specific situation instead of recognizing a positive aspect of their partner’s character (e.g., “You only remembered our anniversary because my sister mentioned it over dinner last week.”) (Bradbury and Finchman). We have a tendency to attribute blame in conflict whether we begin with happy relationships or not; but the key is that we cannot manage conflict in a healthy way together if attribution is our only strategy in approach. Lewis would argue that human relationships are much more complicated than that.

Lewis situates conflict management in an attentiveness to and affirmation of personhood, not just blame-shifting between disparate personalities. He understands that attitudes of attribution are difficult to circumvent, because we do want to place the blame for conflict *somewhere*. Yet attributing conflict to a person’s character makes it all the more difficult to approach its management—more often than not, our partners’ personality will not change. More importantly still, Lewis argues that one’s essential *nature* does not change. We will remain broken and imperfect selves in relationships (*Mere Christianity; The Four Loves*). Yet we are willful creatures who are able to attend toward new and challenging contexts and ideas. Accordingly, the management of conflict is a complicated issue. One’s response must all at once attend to the nature of who we are as humans in relationships, the particularity of our unique personhood, and the demands of the relational context with our significant other. And all of our efforts will be frustrated by our own selves—our misunderstandings, disagreements, and defensive behaviors. Consequently, Lewis would agree with interpersonal scholars such as Wilmot and Hocker in that collaborative work in conflict management begins with a focus on the problematic

issues and behaviors of the relational contexts. Yet these problematic issues and behaviors begin with a proper understanding of the flaws of the *self*, not in one's focus on the other's fault in the matter. Real change begins with the self, but never the self in isolation. In the midst of relational struggle, we must work *together* toward the growth of personhood through our loving communicative practices.

Lewis outlines this approach to conflict management most clearly in his essay titled "The Trouble with 'X'...". He begins the essay with the statement: "I suppose I may assume that seven out of ten of those who read these lines are in some kind of difficulty about some other human being" either at work, at home, or otherwise (Lewis, "The Trouble with 'X'..." 107). Eventually, the topic of said conflict with another person will come up in the conversation with a third party, and it is at this point particularly we are tempted to say "Well, the trouble with X is...". We know X's character. We know that he will not listen to reason, nor will he change his attitude. We know that she is making things difficult by her incurable ill-temper or jealousy. For a while, we had the illusion that "some external stroke of good fortune—an improvement in health, a rise in salary, the end of the war—would solve [our] difficulty;" now, however, we "realize that even if the other things happened, 'X' would still be 'X,' and [we] would still be up against the same old problem" (108). Lewis claims that this recognition—the recognition that one cannot alter the character of another person—is a great step forward. It is a much better place to be than thinking you can *change* the other to the person who you would like him or her to be *for you*. Yet if we stop only at this step, we have an incomplete picture of the difficulty.

The trouble with "X" is that we are *all* an "X." We are all selves with seemingly incurable idiosyncrasies or flaws in personality. We all frustrate one another. We all

become jealous, bothersome, selfish, stubborn, or inclined toward quarreling at times. The “next great step in wisdom” is “to realize that you also are just that sort of person. You also have a fatal flaw in your character” (Lewis, “The Trouble with ‘X’...” 109). Often, we cannot see or fully admit our own flaws; it is difficult for us to recognize and acknowledge patterns of our own troublesome or embarrassing behavior. Our loved ones, however, see us as we really are in relationships from day to day. I may admit that “I lost my temper last night”; but every one else in the household knows that I am a bad-tempered person. Or I may admit “I did spend too much on that new painting”; but my spouse knows that I am a continual spendthrift. Lewis writes that “when we see how all our plans shipwreck on the characters of other people...we are ‘in one way’ seeing what it must be like for God” (109). God has provided a rich, beautiful world for us to enjoy, but His plans are continually spoiled by “the crookedness of the people themselves” (108). Yet we can only see as God does in *one* way. For God “sees all characters: I see all except my own” (109). Furthermore—and more importantly still—God “loves the people in spite of their faults” (109). He loves unceasingly, even when He sees the most embarrassing moments of our character and the most selfish, arrogant thoughts of our hearts.

Lewis claims that, unfortunately, human beings seem to enjoy thinking about other people’s faults. Yet we rarely think about our own faults and, if we do, we fail to situate them in their proper perspective (e.g., allowing an undue amount of guilt or shame to sink us into desperation). What he suggests is that we try to avoid thinking about the faults of others (unless we are a parent or a teacher and our duty is to help train the moral and relational characters of the young or ill-advised). Instead, we should think about our own faults, “for there, with God’s help, one *can* do something” (“The Trouble with ‘X’...”

110). Practically speaking, there is only one person in your household whom you can improve very much—yourself. Lewis argues: Why not start there? God, because He knows and loves us completely, is our mediator in difficult interpersonal situations. He will reveal the truthfulness of our intentions or perceptions and the flaws in our own characters, yet He will give us hope for change. We may not have the power to change the hearts of others, but we certainly can manage our *own* relational expectations and communicative practices. We can do so with the confidence that God *always* gives validity to what we say and do as a person, even when misunderstanding, disagreement, or frustration is immediately before us.[8] Thus, we need not become defensive when conflict arises; we need only be responsive to problematic interpretations, messages, and behaviors.

Lewis states that a wonderful result of the shift from “how others ought to be” to “how I really am” is that it gives us a fuller picture of charitable responsiveness in the household. One can begin to see that charity lies not only in the *giving*. It also lies in the *receiving*. We are all the recipients of charity, Lewis writes. Each one of us exhibits those problematic characteristics which lend our selves quite unlovable. Naturally speaking, we cannot blame others for not loving us when we are being selfish or foolish. Yet, “we can be forgiven, and pitied, and loved in spite of it, with Charity; *no other way*” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 133, emphasis added). Lewis argues that if we have good parents, spouses, children, or friends, we “may be sure that at some times—and perhaps at all times in respect of some one particular trait or habit—[we] are receiving Charity, are loved not because [we] are lovable but because Love Himself is in those who love them” (*The Four Loves* 133). The beauty of charity is that it should not come with the expectation of reciprocity. We should deem the self unworthy and that our only duty is to give—and that

is the end of it. Yet, God would not have this so. Since the moment we are born, we have already *received*. It is also our duty to keep on receiving charity, for it is in its reception we find the powerful alternative to egoistic relational expectations: being first loved and loving in return.

Both being loved and loving lends us a stronger framework for understanding and managing those difficult moments in intimate relationships. Lewis writes that experience in intimate interpersonal relationships tells us that “the invitation to turn our natural loves into Charity is never lacking” (*The Four Loves* 135). We can claim the “ifs” of our capacity to love in intimate relationships: “If only my husband was more considerate...” or “If only my wife was more sensible...,” then we could have loved more completely or more perfectly. Yet the fact of the matter is, we cannot. At least not on our own, in such a dyad. We need the triad, the presence of Grace Himself among and between us, to allow us to express our loves charitably. Grace always precedes forgiveness and restoration, for Grace makes charity possible. As George MacDonald writes:

But, looking upon forgiveness, then, as the perfecting of a work ever going on, as the contact of God’s heart and our, in spite and in destruction of the intervening wrong, we may say that God’s love is ever in front of his forgiveness. God’s love is the prime mover, ever seeking to perfect his forgiveness, which latter needs the human condition for its consummation. (*Unspoken Sermons*, 36)

Lewis writes that God “has been a party to, has made, sustained, and moved moment by moment within, all our earthly experiences of innocent love” (*The Four Loves* 139). God forms our personhood through grace, allowing us to see personhood (of both ourselves and of the other) more clearly with each moment of meeting.

Our *efforts* at charity will cease when the temporal world ceases. Only then, in eternity, will charity constitute perfect responsiveness; human mirrors as perfect

reflections of the Divine Grace. “Natural loves can hope for eternity only in so far as they have allowed themselves to be taken into the eternity of Charity; have at least allowed the process to begin here on earth, before the night comes *when no man can work*” (Lewis, *The Four Loves* 137, emphasis added). Only in perfect Charity will our relationships cease to be constrained by a contingent understanding of “ought” (“I ought to say this right now...” or “You ought not to do that to that person...”). In its place will be an ontological “ought”; a new creature in Christ who just *does because it is*, fulfilling its proper function effortlessly in Love. In the meantime, however, we continue to work toward responsive intimacy. In the presence and with the practice of Grace in both difficult and everyday relational moments, we are better able to labor well with one another, see each other more clearly, and submit to the other while maintaining the validity of our own interpretations, inclinations, need, and desires. This is our duty of responsiveness in relationships—to meet challenging moments of a flawed existence with the fullness of our essential natures. The final section of this chapter describes how Lewis suggests we meet our essential natures in a form of intimacy worth pursuing.

5.8 Implications for IPC: A Complementary Form of Intimacy

How do we practice good responsiveness in conflict management when intimacy itself seems so inherently complicated and our expectations and inclinations so seemingly different from others? As will be discussed briefly below, within the literature on intimate interpersonal communication, many scholars recognize gender differences as one of the most significant challenges to intimacy development. These differences often seem to lead to unresolvable issues of miscommunication, misinterpretation, or mismetings between romantic partners. Yet gender is a significant form of personhood—it shapes our expectations for responsiveness in intimacy. How are we to approach issues of sex and

gender in a manner which remains true to our natures yet remains attentive to their cultural and contextual manifestations? As it was intimated above in the discussion regarding the femininity of human responsiveness, Lewis's answer is the *complementarity* of the male and female—we are created to complement one another in all manifestations of our unique personhood, not to compete with or to debunk one another's particularity. By taking this perspective, Lewis by no means disagrees that men and women have a difficult time relating within interpersonal contexts, especially intimate ones. Lewis reflects on the problem of gender differences in intimacy development in both his nonfiction and fiction.[9] Yet his writings point to the fact that, because of the Fall, the complementarity of the male and the female and the masculine and feminine is subject to disorder and corruption. Conflict emerges from the Fall, *not* from the complementarity. Thus, Lewis argues that we are able to see the shadows of our true personhood together in intimacy, but we must work together toward their faithful manifestation in our discourse and practices. Consequently, this project argues that the idea of complementarity is well worth pursuing in the study of intimate interpersonal communication.

In interpersonal studies, gender and sex are complex topics. It recently has been established in wide disciplinary circles that “gender” and “sex” merit distinct definitions. One's sex is biological, while gender constitutes a composite of social, cultural and psychological attributes that characterize a person as masculine or feminine (Canary, Emmers-Sommer, and Faulker). In other words, one is socialized into a gender role by learning from family, friends, and other external influences concerning what it means to be masculine or feminine. Cognitively speaking, there are distinct differences between men and women. For example, scientists have shown that the cerebral cortex of the brain

varies between men and women. The difference accounts for evidence which suggests that men perceive time, speed, and three-dimensionality more accurately than women. Likewise, the difference in women's cerebral cortex structure allows them to easily understand and manipulate spatial relationships as well as to more accurately identify the emotions of others. Women also have a greater ability to process information related to language simultaneously in both of the brain's frontal lobes, resulting in higher average scores on tests of language competence than most men.[10] There are documented cases of biological differences between the cognitive and linguistic functioning of men and women.

Yet, whether differences in brain structure and corresponding abilities translate into substantial differences between men and women's communication patterns is an issue of perennial debate among communication scholars. The continual recollection of the "nature vs. nurture" discussion suggests that scholars take a vested interest in how (i.e., to what extent) human nature is shaped by discourse. For example, one of the most prominent scholars of gender studies in the context of interpersonal communication is Julia Wood. In *Communication Theories in Action*, Wood argues that "the social groups within which we are located powerfully shape what we experience and know as well as how we understand and communicate with ourselves, others, and the world" (250). Simply put, one's social, cultural, and even gender standpoint determines one's view of the world. Women, as a culturally marginalized group, experience unique perspectives on language, relationships, power, and intimacy. Consequently, Wood's work advocates for a certain level of cultural determinism from a symbolic interactionist frame: "gender is a system of meanings that sculpts individuals' standpoint by positioning most males and females in disparate material, social and symbolic circumstances" ("Feminist

Scholarship,” 111). Yet, standpoint theory also recognizes that knowledge is situated. Conditions of human discursive practices, such as self-other relationships, prevent our discursive knowledge from being completely relative. Although we meet others in the world and are shaped by our communicative interactions, we still remain selves with distinct perceptions and abilities. Much of the gender communication scholarship aims to find this balance between the complexity of the particular self meeting generalized roles, relational expectations, and agreed-upon patterns of behavior for both men and women.

A compelling avenue of gender communication research—one which lends validity to the argument for the complex nature of gender in general—is in ethics and care. Ethicists such as Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings speak about the distinctly feminine communication patterns in caring communication. Gilligan, in *In a Different Voice*, identifies a unique ethic inherent in the discourse of women. Feminine morality is one focused on consequences, value caring, mutual responsibility, and collaboration. She encourages women to extend their voices into the world and to care for the other only in the way in which feminine subjectivity can perceive and feminine discourse can allow. Noddings suggests that the ethic of caring is a feminine perspective as well. The moral attitude of “natural care” may take much physical and emotional effort, but it often comes natural to the experience of women in relationships. Such experiences show that receptivity and relatedness are embedded in our natural experiences with others, and, thus, should hold significant import for our moral and intellectual education.

Yet, as referenced above in Lewis’s understanding of human communicative action as characterized by feminine responsiveness, care need not be a task reserved for women alone. In fact, scholars argue this perspective at any point on a variable plane of biological and cultural assumptions: from the necessity of men to learn the civilizing

force of feminine sexuality and consequent nurturing of communities (see Gilder's *Men and Marriage*) to the questioning of cultural assumptions which devalue caregiving and, consequently, feminine caregivers (see Wood's *Who Cares? Women, Care, and Culture*). There is something about the distinctiveness of care which lends mystery to gendered roles in communication. What does it mean to care for each other as a man, as a woman, and as a human being? And how do we care for each other differently based on how we are formed, both biologically and discursively?

The scholarly conversations regarding gender differences from both biological and discursive perspectives may seem chaotic. Which holds more weight in the formation of our personalities, inclinations, expectations, needs, and desires—nature or nurture? More important still, even if the two are not regarded as mutually exclusive, which one merits more of our disciplinary attention in this historical moment? Some scholars working contrary to hegemonic masculine trends in social scientific and humanities research, such as Wood, Harding, Gilligan, and Noddings, emphasize the discursive implications of gender formation from the perspective of power and epistemology. These women suggest that gender communication is much more complicated than biological research alone would suggest. Further still, perspectives of the masculine and feminine shift dramatically given historical, cultural, and familial influences. The masculine and the feminine are not as simple as they may seem and we as communication scholars should attend to this complexity. Yet the current scholarly conversation regarding gender differences remains loyal to the nomenclature of masculine and feminine, not necessarily the male and female. Simply, scholarship in gender communication seems to favor the pulling of “gender” from “sex” in order to examine them each more closely. In the process, however, Lewis would argue that contemporary perspectives exhibit a truncated

version of our own personhood.

Lewis by no means discredits the cultural and discursive significance of gender formation. In fact, he addresses this clearly in his discussion regarding friendship between the sexes and its cultural constraints in *The Four Loves*. Yet what Lewis is unwilling to do is to pull gender and sex apart. They must remain whole in one's personhood. In intimacy, there is a complexity that is made up of both the essential realities of male and female as well as the culturally located manifestations of the masculine and the feminine. His writings suggest that we are endowed with *complementary* forms of personhood in intimacy—manhood and womanhood. As Sam Keen claims in his chapter titled “Men and Women: Becoming Together” in *Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man*, if we are to peel away the complex layers of gender socialization, there still remains “the prime fact of the duality of men and women. Throughout the eons of history we move toward becoming fully human only through a sexual dance of men and women. Each sex is one side of a Möbius strip, a fragment necessary to create a whole” (389). The idea of complementarity often becomes lost in the contemporary literature concerning gender and sex—we as communication scholars find ourselves enamored with issues of alterity and conflict in and, at best, management of gendered discourse. Yet according to both Keen and Lewis, we cannot ignore the *essential*. Further still, the essential and the discursive cannot exist without the other. We cannot separate the natural from the symbolic—our capacity for discourse and symbolicity *is* natural. Thus, both manhood and womanhood are *essential* to the fullness of the human form—both eternally and temporally. We exhibit a derivative personhood in the face of God; we exercise our particular personhood in existence with others. The forms of male and female are created and derived, and the forms of masculinity and femininity are

discursively participatory.

Yet what work do forms do for us, rhetorically and practically speaking? According to Aristotle, one only has proper knowledge of an object if one is familiar with the causes of its existence. In the *Metaphysics*, he determines the four causes of a creation: the material, the efficient, the final, and the formal. The formal cause is perhaps the most difficult to ascertain, for it is the account of what something *is to be*, or the recognizable character of it. Rhetorically speaking, the formal cause marries the intentions of creator of the object (such as an artist) with the interpretation and expectations of the other (or the audience). Aristotle argues, then, that if a silversmith creates an object which is totally unrecognizable as a distinct form, than the audience cannot have any knowledge about it—they cannot know what it is to be. On the other hand, if the smith fashions a fork-like object—and the audience recognizes it as such a tool—then it is useful for eating and, perhaps, pleasurable in its use. While this discussion of Aristotle’s formal cause may seem simplistic, the crux of the argument is relevant here; all creations must maintain distinct forms if they *are to be* at all, both intrapersonally and interpersonally speaking. Forms unite interpretations, expectations, responses, and practices.

In like manner to Aristotle, Lewis sees the necessity of forms for communicative action. The forms of male and female shape the discursive manifestations of the masculine and the feminine. Simply, Lewis argues that we are derived with templates for expectations and practices in intimacy, and we carry these into our interpretive and discursive powers of relation. No where is this most evident in his writings on intimacy and love than in his dealings with Christian marriage. Lewis asserts that the Christian idea of marriage is based on Christ’s teaching that man and wife are to be regarded as a

single organism, or body.[11] Christians believe that this constitutes an undeniable fact of human intimacy—that man and woman “become one” just as “a lock and its key are one mechanism, or that a violin and a bow are one musical instrument” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 96). Lewis writes that, by creating manhood and womanhood as distinct, “the inventor of the human machine was telling us that its two halves, the male and the female, were made to be combined together in pairs, not simply on a sexual level, but totally combined” (*Mere Christianity* 96). Thus, for Lewis, the forms of human gender are ontological, and their significance carries into the rhetorical. The male and female not only fit together, they *function* together. Lewis argues that we are meant to work with and for one another in intimacy. Such a perspective can make all of the difference when approaching questions of and forming expectations for intimate relationships.

Rather than framing it simply as a “nature vs. nurture” debate, Lewis suggests that one’s very personhood is at stake based on how one understands the conditions of one’s responsiveness. In *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape writes this statement to Wormwood concerning sexuality and the sexes: “the whole philosophy of Hell rests on recognition of the axiom that one thing is not another thing, and, specially, that one self is not another self. My good is my good and your good yours. What one gains another loses. ...‘To be’ means ‘to be in competition’” (Lewis 94, emphasis original). Lewis’s understanding of gendered relations is not an “either/or”; “either/or,” he argues, breeds a competitive duality. Instead, we live in a duality of “both/and”—we are *both* particular persons *and* united by our forms. We are *both* men and women *and* brides to our Bridegroom. As Aristotle argues in the *Metaphysics*, a form unites both the creator and the audience in significance. In the same manner, we are both the recipient (i.e., the creation) and the audience of our own forms of personhood—God as creator holds our forms ontologically

secure while allowing us to grow into them. Consequently, in relationships marked by intimacy, we are able to ask both these questions: What is my ontological duty toward and with the other in intimacy? What are the existential constraints of my ability to see and exercise my own personhood while developing an intimate relationship with another person?

When it comes to sustaining intimacy, especially during those difficult moments of marriage, Lewis suggests that we let these questions of both essence and existence inform our practices. To dissolve a marriage in divorce, he claims, is more akin to “cutting up a living body” rather than “a simple readjustment of partners” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 97), and it should be regarded with the utmost sobriety. Divorce under the conditions of “feelings”—that is, when partners feel as if they are no longer in love with one another or when either of them feels as if they have fallen in love with someone else—most likely results from a relationship unmarked by the practical power of forms. When one’s essence, one’s personhood, within a marriage relationship is ontologically secure, then we are liberated from simply *feeling* unified to *being* unified in intimacy. Now, Lewis admits that forms do not offer a panacea for all relational ills. In fact, one will still feel lonely, angry, and unloved often throughout the course of a marriage. So, in those moments when the essential selves of manhood and womanhood must meet the difficult spaces of real relationships in the everyday, he suggests that we work on our practices—our *responsiveness* to our personhood together. Lewis writes about the promise of lovers to remain “in love”: “A promise must be about things that I can do, about actions: no one can promise to go on feeling in a certain way.” (*Mere Christianity* 98) Consequently, real love (as distinct from the feeling of “being in love”) constitutes “a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by

(in Christian marriages) the grace which both partners ask, and receive” (100). What Lewis points to is the fact that human forms of personhood in marriage are participatory. We interpret them in our discourse together, we enact them in our relational spaces, and we turn to them in difficult moments of meeting, asking recurrent questions such as “What does it mean to be a wife/husband?” and “How can I be that person with and for my partner?” Married couples continually ask these questions and strengthen their habits as they face new moments in their relationship together.

As discussed above, God extends the forms of personhood to us through grace, allowing us to see both ourselves and of the other more clearly with each moment of meeting. Because of the Incarnation of Christ, Grace is present in human form—we live in the presence of grace simply by being human. Yet we also are asked to practice grace toward one another based on the forms of personhood. When we respond to the other, we are responding to a Person; that is, the unity of the Personhood behind all persons *and* the particular person herself. Our responsiveness in intimacy should take note of such forms before us; the other holds an ontological significance both as a creature and a man which demands our reverence. Lewis writes that *every* person one meets is immortal—either an glorious or a diabolical being who meets you in the everyday—and we must respond with this always in mind (“The Weight of Glory”). What, then, is to be the focus and quality of responsiveness with one’s husband or wife; not just a “neighbor” but a person unified with you in form? It is a challenge indeed. As Lewis suggests, the “weight” of your partner’s glory “should be laid on [your] back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it” (“The Weight of Glory” 45). Furthermore, “our charity must be a real and costly love” (46) as we willfully obey, reflect the other’s glory, and labor well with one another.

Lewis’s understanding of human responsiveness to personhood in intimacy holds

significant implications for its practice in contemporary society. Some of these implications have been discussed here; however, the subject of the forms and practices of intimacy in our current historical moment merits more attention. The final chapter of this project unites the three major metaphors of sentiment, will, and responsiveness in a form of intimacy based in the presence and practice of loving grace—an alternative to contemporary relational expectations, discourse, and practices concerning intimacy development in young adults.

CHAPTER SIX
BUILDING INTIMACY WITH GRACE IN
CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

6.1 Introduction

The sixth and final chapter addresses the practices of intimacy in our current historical moment. The chapter frames intimacy as the ongoing growth of shared relational choices, labors, and forms for living together by romantic partners. Intimacy includes but does not refer exclusively to sexual encounters nor to a static end of a relationship. Intimacy is something which is built continually throughout the course of a relationship.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the status quo for sexual practices and relationship building in contemporary society. Utilizing the work of Anthony Giddens in *The Transformation of Intimacy* as an entry point, the discussion begins with the changing sexual practices and relational expectations of young adults due to emergent reproductive technologies in the contemporary age. These shifts in practices are juxtaposed with changing contemporary discourse concerning intimacy development in young adults. The research discussed below indicates that there is an incongruence between the beliefs and practices of young adults when it comes to intimacy-building. In fact, various scholarly perspectives seem to suggest that young adults' default practices actually hinder the formation of the meaningful intimate relationships which they hope to develop later in their lives.

Healthy intimate relationships are not directed by personal preferences of isolated individuals and furthermore, unlike the myth "love at first sight," real human intimacy takes a long time to cultivate and much labor of love to sustain. In a culmination of the

major metaphors of this project, intimacy can be regarded as enduring attentiveness to the intonation of our hearts and the hearts of the other, participation in a shared habitude of love, and mutual maintenance of relational structures over time. The project concludes with implications which the trinity of choice, labor, and form in intimacy, tempered by the presence and practice of grace, hold for the study and practice of intimate interpersonal communication.

6.2 The Status Quo for Sexual Practices and Intimacy Development in Contemporary Society

As discussed in Chapter Two, our current age faces difficult questions of human relationships and decision-making in intimacy. We are in a moment of narrative decline with untethered personal stories. Without narratives, stories become fragmented from traditional sources of ontological security such as religion, institutions, nations, communities and even families, and the practices of our lives are at risk of becoming limited and superficial. Consequently, our actions, habits, and patterns of behavior, as described by Anthony Giddens in *The Transformation of Intimacy*, are becoming framed by the contemporary project of self reflexivity:

Where large areas of a person's life are no longer set by pre-existing patterns and habits, the individual is continually obliged to negotiate life-style options. Moreover – and this is crucial – such choices are not just “external” or marginal aspects of the individual's attitudes, but define who the individual “is.” In other words, life-style choices are constitutive of the reflexive narrative of the self. (74-75)

The emphasis on narrative and identity formation brings a distinctly communicative framework to understanding the sociological, cultural, and historical issues at work within human sexuality. Giddens's work points to the fact that the way in which we *talk* about sex and relationships in our age influences the way we *practice* intimacy. While it

may seem like a simple connection, the interplay of discourse and practices holds significant implications for understanding the role that human sentiment, will, and responsiveness play in our relational identity. Giddens's work, along with that of other scholars who are concerned with questions of interpersonal relationships and sexual practices, are describing a society of individuals fighting for identity through personal decisions about intimacy. Thus, like Giddens, this chapter discusses the changing face of intimacy in our age through two frames: the practical and the discursive.

6.2.1 Sexual Practices and Reproductive Technology

Theoretical trends of intimacy in a postmodern age, as discussed in Chapter Two, are due in large part to advancements in reproductive technologies which have changed cultural and ethical mores concerning intimacy, marriage, and parenthood. While certain reproductive technologies (such as condoms and oral contraceptives) have been in use for several decades, it has only been within the most recent generation that public discourse concerning sexuality and the marketing and distribution of reproductive technologies has had unprecedented influences on the sexual practices of teenagers and young adults. According to reports of the National Center for Health Statistics from 2002-2008 as well as information from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, although only 13% of teens have had sex by age 15, most initiate sex in their later teen years. By their 19th birthday, seven in 10 female and male teens have had intercourse. On average, young people have sex for the first time at about age 17, but they do not marry until their mid-20s. Consequently, young adults may be at increased risk for unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases for nearly a decade or longer, and the use of contraceptives during premarital sex has become a volatile issue in public discourse about sexual health and family planning.[1]

Increased accessibility and distribution of condoms and oral contraceptives by schools, health clinics, and family planning centers significantly influences rates of contraceptive use and sexual activity among teenagers and young adults. National institutions such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American School Health Association, and the National Medical Association have all adopted policies recommending that condoms be made available to adolescents as part of comprehensive school health programs. As of January 1995, at least 431 public schools in 50 U.S. school districts made condoms available—2.2% of all public high schools and 0.3% of high school districts (Kirby and Brown). In 2005, nearly two million women younger than 20 obtained services at publicly supported family planning centers; these teens represented one-quarter of the centers' contraceptive clients (Jones, Purcell, Singh, and Finer). Teenagers and young adults are taught that they now have more opportunities than ever to enjoy “safer” or “more responsible” sexual activity, meaning sex with fewer risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases as well as greater freedom of personal choice and control over their future.

One of the most controversial medical developments and marketing of reproductive technology in the most recent generation is that of emergency contraceptive (EC).[2] Giving young women even more opportunities to prevent unwanted pregnancies, emergency contraceptives gained greater interest in both scientific and layperson communities in the late 1990s. By 2001, over 60 medical and women's groups, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, petitioned the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and declared their support for making emergency contraceptive pills available over the counter. Later in 2004, the Feminist Majority Foundation organized a petition urging the FDA to “stop playing politics with women's lives”; more

than 70,000 Americans sent an e-mail to the FDA in support of making emergency contraceptives available over-the-counter, without a prescription and without an age restriction (The Emergency Contraception Website). On August 24th, 2006, the emergency contraceptive called “Plan B” was approved by the FDA for nonprescription sale to those 18 and older in the United States.

As a result, protocol in the distribution, advertising, and accessibility of emergency contraceptives for young women in the United States is increasing—especially for those on college campuses. The 2006 to 2008 National Survey of Family Growth indicated that use of emergency contraception in the United States has increased after changes in its prescription status, and by 2011, more than 43% of university and college health clinics were distributing emergency contraceptives. Studies indicate that most women consider emergency contraceptives to be safe (92%) and effective (98%). In fact, young women who have advance provision or convenient access to emergency contraceptives, as long as they are effective users of the medication and have not contracted sexual transmitted diseases, show increased occurrence of contraceptive use in the future.[3] Sexual health promotion strategies within environments aimed at young adult audiences, such as college campuses, low-cost public health clinics, and even high schools, seem to be experiencing success in the distribution of contraceptives.

The question remains regarding the impact which educational and marketing strategies of reproductive technologies has on the behaviors, attitudes, and expectations of sexual activity of young adults. On average, the use of contraceptives has steadily increased within the past generation. For example, in 1985, 56% of young women used a contraceptive during their first occurrence of premarital sex. The percentage rose to 76% among those who first had sex in 2000–2004 and to 84% among those whose first sex

occurred in 2005–2008 (Mosher and Jones). When it comes to sexual behavior in teenagers, increased contraceptive availability does not necessarily correlate to increased sexual activity; yet some studies show that it does correlate to *increased concerned attitudes* toward sex. While most adolescents and young adults may accept the *efficacy* of contraceptives, most still voice concerns or are misinformed about the implications which their sexual practices have on their overall physical, emotional, and relational health.[4] It has been argued that sexual health promotion strategies primarily through the distribution of contraception does not address adequately the broad range of anxieties held by teenagers and young adults about their sexuality, such as reputation management, power issues in intimate relationships, and dealing with issues of arousal and desire (Hillier, Harrison, and Warr). Thus, instead of increasing adolescent and young adult comfort and confidence in their sexual practices, public initiatives in sexual health education and contraceptive distribution seems to have made young people even *more* concerned and confused about sex and its consequences. From a communicative standpoint, then, while the marketed goals of practicing safer sex, preventing pregnancy, and exercising more freedom of personal choice for young adults are all *practices* which can be achieved by the proper use of contraceptives, these goals nonetheless overlook how young people are *talking* about intimacy. To consider the public discourse surrounding the nature and formation of intimate relationships introduces an entirely new dynamic to what the practice of sexual and relational health really means to young adults today.

6.2.2 Discourse and the Formation of Intimate Relationships

The status quo for the formation of intimate relationships has shifted significantly in the past few decades. The Center for Marriage and Families at the Institute for American Values and the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia reports

that cohabitation, rather than divorce, is now on the upward trend of intimacy. For the current generation of young adults who are dating, to ask the question of their romantic partner “should we live together?” seems to be an almost unavoidable question. David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead write that today’s young adults are “the first generation to come of age in the divorce revolution” (*Should We Live Together* 1), a term which refers to the period from 1960 to 1980 and specifically the years after 1969 when the first no-fault divorce bill was passed in California. Changing cultural and social mores, including the sexual revolution, anti-institutionalism, and psychological revolutions concerning personal fulfillment and growth, presented divorce as a more acceptable option for any married couple. During this time, “the divorce rate more than doubled—from 9.2 divorces per 1,000 married women to 22.6 divorces per 1,000 married women. This meant that while less than 20% of couples who married in 1950 ended up divorced, about 50% of couples who married in 1970 did” (Wilcox 81). Consequently, “approximately half of the children born to married parents in the 1970s saw their parents part, compared to only about 11% of those born in the 1950s” (Wilcox 81). While the divorce rate in America declined in the 1980s and marital happiness became more stabilized, the implications for intimacy and marital trends are significant. Children who saw their parents’ marriage dissolve during the divorce boom of the 1970s began thinking about marriage themselves in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Increasingly aware of the fragility of marriage, these young couples wait longer to get married, engage in cohabitation before marriage, or choose not to get married at all. Thus by the year 2000, the total number of unmarried couples in America was almost 4.75 million, an increase of over eight-fold from 1960. Furthermore, it is estimated that over a quarter of unmarried women ages 25 to 39 are currently cohabiting with their partner. Consequently, over half

of all first marriages are preceded by cohabitation (Bumpass and Lu). For the first generation to come of age after the divorce revolution as well as for all preceding generations, cohabitation has emerged as a powerful alternative to marriage.

Consequently, the most current generation learns cohabitation as the status quo for intimacy formation. According to a report of the National Marriage Project titled, “Why Marriage Matters,” in 2011, 24% of children in the U.S. were born into cohabiting households, while another 20% spend time in a cohabiting household with an unrelated adult (such as a girlfriend or boyfriend after the parents’ marriage dissolves) at some point during their childhood. In addition, a study by Sheela Kennedy and Larry Bumpass for *Demographic Research* shows that currently, around 42% of children are exposed to a cohabiting relationship at some point in their formative relational years of childhood (by age 12). Living with a partner prior to marriage has become “the norm” in the eyes of many adolescents and young adults, and the long-term alternative to cohabitation (mainly marriage) increasingly holds perceived risks, especially for young men (see Whitehead and Popenoe, “Why Men Won’t Commit”). These changing practices in the formation of relationships hold significant implications for how the current generation of young adults think and talk about intimacy and marriage.

The expectations and attitudes which adolescents and young adults hold toward long-term committed relationships and marriage is in the midst of transformation. In *The Transformation of Intimacy*, Giddens cites a 1989 study by Lillian Rubin of the sexual histories of a thousand heterosexual people in the U.S. aged 18 to 48. The findings suggest that the current generation experiences an expanded variety of sexual activity and changing relational expectations—especially concerning marriage—at most age groups. Yet Rubin’s work shows, and the thesis of Giddens’ book suggests, that the

“transformation of intimacy” in the modern age primarily concerns the sexual activity of teenage girls and young women, and it is this demographic which has seen the most dramatic changes in sexual expectations and practices from previous generations.

Although female virginity prior to marriage continues to be acknowledged by both sexes as ideal, teenage girls now are much less likely to make decisions concerning their sexuality based on expectations of marriage or even lasting commitment. Instead, “girls feel they have an entitlement to engage in sexual activity, including sexual intercourse, at whatever age seems appropriate to them” (Giddens 10). Giddens argues that, in our current historical moment, young adults especially are experiencing a radical reframing of interpersonal expectations and identities:

if the teenage girls do not speak much about marriage, it’s not because they have successfully made a transition to a non-domestic future, but because they are participants in, and contributors to, a major reorganisation in what marriage, and other forms of close personal ties, actually are. They talk of *relationships* rather than *marriage* as such, and they are right to do so. (57-58, emphasis added)

To “be in a relationship,” not to be married, is what young adults (especially women) expect when it comes to goals of intimacy. These relationships may seem relatively long-lasting, but they are more often than not subject to termination at any time based on as little as one partner’s relational dissatisfaction. Giddens’ argument is not that the current generation is moving from traditional patterns and expectations of intimacy to *no* patterns or expectations. Instead, the transformation is away from practices of long-term commitment and sexual fidelity to patterns of interpersonal intimacy that are untethered and incongruous with beliefs.

Teenagers and young adults are being socialized into a dating culture which emphasizes personal preference when it comes to sexual encounters and intimacy

development. The current generation of teens and young adults experiences a good deal of transparency in public discourse concerning their sexual practices. By the age of 18, the majority of teens are presented with information regarding contraceptives, abstinence, or sexuality in general, a trend which decisively has reduced the rates of teen pregnancy within the past decade.[5] Yet, there is a significant lack of public discourse concerning how to create and to maintain healthy relationships within the formative years of young adulthood and into the future. As a result, “teens are street-savvy about the attractions of sex and school-smart about its perils” but are increasingly faced with a “knowledge deficit” concerning individual behaviors and strategies which lead to healthy marriages and families (Whitehead and Pearson 11, 14). Thus, in the “prolonged transition from adolescence into adulthood,” (Whitehead and Pearson) teenagers and young adults are losing the connection between sexuality, love, marriage, and parenthood.

Sex is now considered as a separate activity from intimacy-building in teenage years. According to the University of Michigan’s *Monitoring the Future* survey, “more than half of high school seniors agree with the statement ‘having a child out of wedlock is experimenting with a worthwhile lifestyle or not affecting anyone else’” (qtd. in Whitehead and Pearson 16). While many teenagers and young adults may not *want* to have a child out of wedlock themselves, they are increasingly *approving* of such choices because most teenagers today see sexual activity and the consequences thereof (including childbirth) primarily to be a personal choice and expression of identity. A young woman’s choice to have sex and birth a baby prior to marriage, many teenage girls argue, will not influence their chances of being married in the future: a goal which still remains important to many teenagers (83 percent of senior girls and 70 percent of senior boys agree that a good marriage is important to them, according to the University of

Michigan's *Monitoring the Future* survey). Sadly, popular expectations of marriage after teen pregnancy are misinformed. Daniel Lichter and Deborah Roempke Graefe's study "Finding a Mate?: The Marriage and Cohabitation Histories of Unwed Mothers" suggests that the chances of a young unwed mother ever marrying is reduced by 40 percent for those who have their first child outside of marriage. The percentage decreases by 51 percent for women who do not marry the biological father of their child within six months of the birth. In popular discourse, sexual activity is now considered separate from (and even in some cases contrary to) the development of stable households, a script which becomes increasingly more difficult for teenage women to manage as they grow into adulthood.

This is due in part to the changing trends in sexual activity to favor the inclinations of young men rather than women. While female sexuality is still endowed with value (virginity and chastity as being highly regarded), the social mores surrounding male sexuality continues to be descriptive (i.e, young men sustain fewer social pressures concerning the ethical responsibilities of their sexual activity). In a dating culture of young professionals not only where women outnumber men but also where opportunities for casual sex saturate "the market," women must learn to adjust their expectations and patterns of sexual behavior to young men's appetites and interests (Baumeister and Vohs). Consequently, young women admit that "their sex lives are following a male script" (Whitehead and Popenoe, "Sex without Strings" 15). In addition to engaging in more frequent sexual encounters as well as taking on numerous partners, the "male script" of sexuality leads young women to perceive a double standard of male and female roles in intimate relationships. Young professional women "complain bitterly" that "men expect them to be submissive *and* strong, faithful *and* independent, while 'he's doing what he

wants to do” (“Sex without Strings” 15). Changing relational expectations for patterns of intimacy and commitment often leave young women relationally unsatisfied and compromising of their natural inclinations for sexual modesty (see Shalit’s *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue* for one account of a natural female inclination for modesty).

Public scripts for intimacy development are in the midst of a major transition due in part to changing relationships between young adults and economic, political, academic, and cultural institutions. For many, traditional scripts for personal, professional, and relational development are no longer perceived as viable options. Pew research on the Millennial generation (those born after 1983) indicates that the current generation of young adults has a much lower level of social trust and a higher aversion to risk than previous generations. Paul Taylor, Executive Vice President of Pew Research, makes the following comment in a panel discussion titled “Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next”: “this is a generation that I think by all empirical evidence has been dealt a lousy hand. They’ve got a bad economy. Their family situations started broken, become broken, got recombined, whatever. Their political system is looking pretty dysfunctional these days. There are mountains of debt that we’re piling on this generation” (np). The Millennials feel compelled to look to families and institutions for “shelter” or safety-nets during these difficult economic and political times, leaving them in relational spaces complicated by the presence of both dependence and apprehension. Consequently, “they value marriage; they are not rushing to the altar” (P. Taylor np). We live in a challenging historical moment where risk is a real issue for the next generation—it is understandable that their discourse should reflect their apprehension in making any significant decisions in professional or personal contexts. Young adults may *want* successful marriages

eventually, yet how they talk about developing and nourishing long-lasting intimate relationships can be misled by the popular discursive environment concerned with risk and self-protection.

Thus for the current generation of teenagers and young adults, the purpose of marriage has shifted dramatically. In “Marriage Today: Exploring the Incongruence of Between American’s Beliefs and Practices,” Kelly Campbell and David W. Wright suggest that although Americans continue to marry in large numbers (85% of the U.S. adult population will marry at some point in their lives) and expect lifelong monogamous relationships, the rates of infidelity and divorce remain high. Approximately 20-25% of partners engage in extramarital sex during the course of their marriage, while 50% of first marriages end in divorce (Campbell and Wright). According to their research, there appears to be an incongruence between how Americans *conceptualize* marriage and how they actually *behave* in marriage relationships. In Stephanie Coontz’s *Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*, she suggests that entering into a marriage relationship “for love” is a phenomenon which is unique our current historical moment. Historically, the majority of people married for reasons of familial, social, economic, religious, or political significance. With the shift toward love and personal fulfillment as being the primary motivation for marriage in the past few generations, the structure of American marriages has become unstable and marriage itself is being deinstitutionalized (see Andrew Cherlin, “The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage”). When personal preference and security becomes the driving force of intimacy-development, infidelity and divorce are a viable option.

Young adults are well aware of the prevalence of infidelity in marriages and intimate relationships. Not surprisingly, then, current attitudes concerning intimacy from

both young male and female perspectives are marked by apprehension. Young adults are caught in a complicated dating culture in which they desire fidelity and commitment yet continually caution themselves against the perceived risks of marital life. By the time teenagers arrive at their twenties, they already may be participants in the culture of “sex without strings, relationships without rings” (Whitehead and Popenoe). In a national study of young professional men and women in their twenties conducted in 2000, the relational expectations of non-college twentysomethings were described as falling into two dominant spheres: casual sexual activity and loyal relationships outside of marriage. Casual “no-strings-attached” sex “requires no commitments beyond the sexual encounter itself, no ethical obligation beyond mutual consent,” while relationships demand trust, honesty, and sexual fidelity (Whitehead and Popenoe, “Sex without Strings” 9). Social indicators of trust and loyalty are often characterized by “sex without protection” (in which both partners are assured of the other’s honesty in disclosing all risk factors of sexually transmitted diseases) and cohabitation. According to this demographic, cohabitation allows for each person to learn more about the habits, character, and fidelity of a partner as well as their compatibility for long-term commitment. As a result, “these young men and women reject traditional courtship as a way of finding out about a person’s character. They see dating as a ‘game,’ full of artifice and role-playing, while living together is more natural, honest and revealing” (12). Young adults now are evaluating the fitness of prospective romantic partners from almost exclusively private standards.

Cohabitation provides an enticing alternative to marriage for young adults since it promises the enjoyment all of the sexual, domestic, and financial benefits of marriage without the legal risk and consequences of separation. For example, many young men

argue that “their financial assets are better protected if they cohabit rather than marry. They fear that an ex-wife will ‘Take you for all you’ve got’” (Whitehead and Popenoe, “Why Men Won’t Commit” 12). Young adults still are highly critical of divorce. They desire monogamous, lifelong commitments (Campbell and Wright). Yet it has become “too easy” to divorce as young men and women both are entrenched in societal trends of consumerism (i.e, “too many choices” of potential partners), increased perceptions of independence in sexual practices, and a misrepresentative public discourse concerning expectations in intimacy development. Despite their criticisms, young adults approve of divorce if the couple “falls out of love” or experiences marital problems. Young adults are likely to see marriage as the end result of a long process of “growing up,” and, once achieved, marriage functions as the final stage of many years of sexual and relational encounters.[6]

Ensuring personal, financial, and professional success and stability are understandable and worthwhile goals for all young adults. However, this project argues that as the current generation of young adults grow professionally and personally, their popular discourse may be sending misleading information regarding successful intimacy development. The result is a culture of prolonged dating, more numerous sexual encounters as abstinence becomes a more difficult choice, increased apprehension of marriage, and most significantly, *incongruent beliefs and practices concerning the focus and purpose of healthy marriages*. The studies mentioned above suggest that there seem to be two metaphors which describe the discourse of marriage and intimacy in the current dating culture: *sexual economics* and *soul-mate unions*. Representing two extremes of human relational perspectives, intimacy is now perceived as a “marketplace of exchange” while an individual may or may not be waiting for “the one.” According to recent studies

by Roy F. Baumeister and Kathleen D. Vohs, “a heterosexual community can be analyzed as a marketplace in which men seek to acquire sex from women by offering other resources in exchange. Societies will therefore define gender roles as if women are sellers and men buyers of sex” (339). Young women are thus encouraged to flaunt their “erotic capital” in all contexts, from professional to dating (Hakim), while young men remain happy consumers of the trend. Yet the myriad of social science perspectives, from economic to sociological to psychological, still show that deep in the heart of most young adults is a desire for a satisfying and long-lasting union with another person. Men and women are still holding on to the dream of finding a “soul mate”—“the one”—who will fulfill their lives with love and companionship.[7] With changing standards of intimacy, “a relationship, and especially, marriage is idealized as a soul-mate union” and, consequently, “there must be extensive round-the-clock testing to evaluate the emotional fitness and capacities of a mate for this special kind of intimate friendship” (Whitehead and Popenoe, “Sex without Strings” 12). At first glance, these two metaphors seem to be at odds with one another. On the one hand, young men and women are encouraged to “consume” sexual activity and relationships, indicating numerous, short-lived encounters. On the other hand, the constant testing of compatibility and “fit” for a soul mate suggests significant commitments of personal time and energy. However, the juxtaposition of these two metaphors in the current dating culture show how these trends emerge from the same central assumptions; mainly, men and women now perceive that the core of intimacy lies in personal attitudes, inclinations, and preferences.

Contemporary society would have young men and women believe that intimacy is solely something you *feel*. One either feels like having a sexual encounter, or he doesn't. One either feels she is “the one,” or that there is “someone better out there.” Practices of

intimacy are addressed in the vast majority of public discourse only insofar as the avoidance of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are concerned. From a communicative perspective, this creates a problematic dynamic for understanding intimacy in a postmodern age. Globally, the practices of intimacy are less likely tied to larger public narratives which shape identity and guide relational behaviors. Colloquially speaking, sexuality and dating are “free-floating”—divorced from communicative structures such as marriages, families, religious organizations, or communities which give intimacy a home. More specifically, however, young men and women are less likely to regard intimacy as *a practice in itself*, or something that requires work, lasting promises, and a habitude of love. When intimacy is considered nothing more than a “fair exchange” or even “something which will make me happy forever,” there is no room for true love and grace in such a context. Herein lies a significant additive perspective which the Christian intellectual tradition framing this project brings to the contemporary dating culture: the conviction that *intimacy is something you build*, like a household, and is not just something you stumble upon. To regard intimacy as a communicative household brings issues of order, restraint, work, and, most significantly, grace to bear when thinking about marriage. A Christian philosophical standpoint asks the question, as the subtitle of Gary Thomas’s book *Sacred Marriage* articulates, “What if God designed marriage to make us *holy* more than to make us *happy*?” Consequently, the chapter now moves into Lewis’s response to contemporary dating culture and how he presents the metaphors of promise and practices as communicative correctives.

6.3 Sexuality and Intimacy in the Public Sphere according to Lewis

Lewis admits that we live in a difficult historical moment when it comes to trends of human sexuality and intimacy. Before Giddens (*The Transformation of Intimacy*),

Lewis posits technological advancements in contraceptives as changing the practices of human intimacy in unprecedented ways. He also points to how the media encourages sexual encounters outside of marriage by promoting the pursuit of individual sexual indulgence. His generation is being told lies about sex, Lewis argues; the lie that the Victorian notion of “hushing it up” has perverted our sexual understanding. On the contrary, Lewis writes that “for the last twenty years it has not been hushed up. It has been chattered about all day long. Yet it is still a mess” (*Mere Christianity* 92). He writes that there is no problem with the *nature* of sex. That has remained the same. The problem for the current generation, he argues, is one of *practices*. The difficulty originally stems from the Fall, an event which distorts all human instincts, needs, knowledge, and acts. While Lewis does not excuse this, he certainly takes the Fall into proper consideration in discussion of human instincts and relationships: “I do not say that you and I are individually responsible for the present situation. Our ancestor have handed over to us organisms which are warped in this respect” (*Mere Christianity* 93). Yet the problem has become compounded in recent generations by public discourse concerning expectations of sexuality and intimacy.

Lewis contends that such narratives are the product of the modern thrust toward economic and scientific progress, a narrative which has detrimental consequences for human relationships. As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the modern theoretical trends is scientism and the abstraction of the natural from issues of human interest and relation. That which is descriptive becomes primary, while issues of prescription are deemed antiquated or myopic. Thus, the modern narrative of scientism, under the guise of “the natural” describes human sexual activity devoid of issues of *ought*. Lewis argues that our warped natures as fallen human beings inclines us toward lustfulness; we all struggle to

practice sexual morality. We then add to the mix “the contemporary propaganda for lust,” which makes us feel that “the desires we are resisting are so ‘natural,’ so ‘healthy,’ and so reasonable, that it is almost perverse and abnormal to resist them. Poster after poster, film after film, novel after novel, associate the idea of sexual indulgence with the ideas of health, normality, youth, frankness, and good humor” (*Mere Christianity* 93). Science observes human sexual instincts and deem the promotion and progression of these instincts as “normal” and “healthy”; more and freer practices of these kind *must* be even healthier. Lewis argues that the powerful lie of contemporary propaganda, like all powerful lies, is based on a fundamental truth about sex—the truth that sex, apart from its perversions and obsessions, is healthy in itself. The lie, Lewis suggests, “consists in *the suggestion that any sexual act to which you are tempted at the moment is also healthy and normal*” (93, emphasis added). What is lost is all sense of moderation, restraint, or purpose in public discourse concerning sexual practices. Thus, we are submerged in narratives which promote unrestraint and indulgence of impulses. It sounds very much like commercial consumption from Lewis’s standpoint: “there are people who want to keep our sex instinct inflamed in order to make money out of us. Because, of course, a man with an obsession is a man who has very little sales-resistance” (93). In contemporary Western society, we have become conditioned to consume sex in the same manner as we are encouraged to consume most ordinary goods or services. Thus, it has become a *communicative* problem.

By contrast, the Christian intellectual tradition framing this project promotes restraint in human practices, especially sexuality. Augustine recognizes the “quarrel between will and lust” that results from the Fall (*City of God* 14.23). If it were not for Adam and Eve’s disobedience in Paradise, all humans would have complete control over

our bodies. While we indeed maintain some level of self-command over our bodies, we learn that many of our actions must be restrained, much like an artisan restrains his movement for the sake of his craft. Thus, “weakness and clumsiness of nature become, through industrious exercise, wonderfully dexterous” (14.23). Restraint is “for the sake of” health, creativity, and goodness in human relationships (Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 1.22.20-21), and it grounds practices in a purpose *beyond the act itself*. In this frame, the phenomenological becomes married to the teleological, for both the present act and the future end have poignancy in our decisions. What happens in the present *matters* in the context of our ultimate end.

Contrary to contemporary discourse concerning sexuality which favors satisfaction in the present almost exclusively, Lewis argues that, from a Christian standpoint, indulgence ultimately does not bring happiness. He writes “for any happiness, even in this world, quite a lot of restraint is going to be necessary; so the claim made by every desire, when it is strong, to be healthy and reasonable, counts for nothing. Every sane and civilized man must have some set of principles by which he chooses to reject some of his desires and to permit others” (*Mere Christianity* 93-94). Restraint indicates order of prioritization; order emerges from moral principles and beliefs. We practice restraint in human discourse and relationships not because it may be what we *immediately* want to do, but because we recognize that our acts call for responsiveness to that which is beyond ourselves—an act for and with others.

However, restraint may be considered a pejorative term by many in contemporary society. That which suggests lack of personal license or boundaries on personal acts and inclinations runs contrary to postmodern interpersonal presuppositions and trends (see Chapter Two). Indeed, the denial of human freedom and action is contrary to Lewis’s

assumptions as well. The significance of restraint does not lie in *denial*; it lies in *purpose*. A Christian philosophical perspective such as is promoted by Augustine, MacDonald, Lewis, and others brings the additive components of relation and purpose to all human action. With the relational in mind, restraint becomes an issue of interpersonal and social *promise*, a promise primarily built upon the “yes” of freedom of willful choice and not the “no” of constraint.

6.4 Promise and Practices

From a communicative standpoint, promises hold relationships together by tethering them to larger narratives guiding expectations for human discourse and action in public and private spheres. Specifically in the ancient and Christian intellectual traditions, many philosophers work from the presupposition that the very nexus where private promises meet societal health is in the household. Aristotle argues that the fundamental relations are the relations of the household—that of man and wife and master and slave. From these relations arises the village and then the state (*The Politics and Economics of Aristotle* 6). As Augustine claims in *City of God*, the Christian narrative points to how the City of God manifests itself through human households and promises made by God and in His presence. Augustine references the story of Abraham and the birth of his sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Although the birth of Ishmael “according to the common law of human generation, by sexual intercourse” (*City of God* 15.3) was certainly a blessing, it is the birth of Isaac which demonstrates how God’s promises are weaved into the fabric of creation. The birth of Isaac typifies: “the children of grace, the citizens of a free city, who dwell together in everlasting peace” in the kingdom of God (15.2). God’s promises are of an eternal *kingdom*, and a kingdom denotes communicative acts and bonds of loyalty among the ruler and subjects. Thus promises should not be identified solely as a response

to sin or a safeguard against wrongdoing. A promise refers to an order which is *a priori* to our actions. In colloquial terms, the premodern understanding of promise is a “yes,” not a “no.” Both Aristotle and Augustine point to how promises are commitments to faithfulness in deed and discourse which sustain an ordered bond.

Consequently, Lewis recognizes the virtue of justice as significant to our understanding of intimacy and marriage. He argues that marriage is a public promise of fidelity and commitment. What the promise of marriage functions to do is to frame our loves by charitable willfulness. Such a framing is especially significant for sexuality. Were our sexual impulses just like any other inclination, Lewis claims, then these promises more easily could be kept. However, “if, as I think, it is not like all our other impulses, but is morbidly inflamed, then we should be especially careful not to let it lead us into dishonesty” (*Mere Christianity* 97). Lewis points to the fact that, of all other impulses, our sexual inclinations carry the most significant *public* implications. At its basic level, procreation sustains or constrains societal health. That is, the most private of acts carries the most public of ramifications. Because of the presence of sexuality in intimate relationships, promises made in these interpersonal contexts are an issue of justice. Infidelity and sexual immorality in marriage are not just private violations; they are *public* ones. Those who violate this public promise not only are unchaste but are guilty of perjury. If an individual or couple never intends to keep the promises of marriage, Lewis argues, they are much better off simply living together unmarried in exclusively private relationships. That way, they cannot be a strain upon (nor reap the benefits of) public support of their relationship.

As a matter of justice, the metaphor of promise unifies word and deed. Lewis argues that within the Christian narrative, God’s infallible promises of mercy, salvation,

and glory for His people are about what He can and will *do* for them should they accept His Word. It is a covenant which guides how He meets us in the everyday. Thus, when it comes to *human* practices from day-to-day, Lewis writes that the words of our promises, like God's, must be anchored in our *will* and *actions*: "a promise must be about things I can do, about actions: no one can promise to go on feeling in a certain way" (*Mere Christianity* 98). Should we base our promises solely on feelings and inclinations, we would all surely fail again and again. Sentiments will swell and subside in us because we are creatures with heart; yet sentiment absent of purpose of will is chaotic. Never denying or diminishing the power of human sentiment, we must choose at times to act "for the sake of" someone or something *other than* how we feel. Thus, the promise of "I will always love you" made by a wife to her husband is a promise of willful responsiveness—to choose to *act in charitable love* even when anger, hurt, or sadness are present. As Augustine suggests, when action is framed "for the sake of" the other, the appropriateness of such action is judged not only by the person before us but also by the third Other in discourse (*On Christian Doctrine* 1.22.20-21). Human beings rely on one another in interpersonal as well as communal relationships; living in intimacy "for the sake of" recognizes that a person dwells in an order of relations which extends well beyond—yet at the same time addresses and completes—the self.

The presence of the public within intimate relationships by no means diminishes a couple's private significance. The public promise between two people in marriage is a natural extension of their feelings of love for one another. People who truly love each other really do claim loyalty and consistency toward the other. Accordingly, Lewis writes that "the Christian law is not forcing upon the passion of love something which is foreign to that passion's own nature: it is demanding that lovers should take seriously something

which their passion of itself compels them to do” (*Mere Christianity* 98). Being in love is a glorious state. We recognize and appreciate beauty, and we open our hearts to the sweetness of care and vulnerability toward the other. Love is much better than lust, Lewis argues. Yet, although “being in love” is a good thing, it is not the best thing: “There are many things below it, but there also things above it. You cannot make it the basis of a whole life. It is a noble feeling, but it is still a feeling” (99). Sentiments must be tethered to our will, and the will frames our action. Therefore, there will be times in the life of a marriage when each individual must choose to pursue quieter, persistent *acts of love* prior to the explosive, passionate feeling of *being in love*.

Such a choice is made available to a couple when Eros is sustained by Charity. To this end, the following sections reflect on general practices of intimacy guided by charitable responsiveness. The practices briefly mentioned here are descriptive of intimate relationships sustained by a framework of interpersonal grace according to Lewis and his grounding in the Christian intellectual tradition. In response to the status quo of practices and discourse of intimacy in a contemporary age as described above, a theory of the presence and practice of grace in intimacy may function to answer many concerns and challenges which young adults face in the formation of intimate relationships today. Each of these practices reflect an understanding of human nature as characterized by sentiment, will, and responsiveness as well as the need for grace in intimate relations.

The framework is pedagogical, focusing on the education of adolescents and young adults in alternatives informed by a Christian philosophical alternative to the status quo of intimacy. Although public discourse may be misleading or misrepresentative of expectations and practices of intimacy development, this project argues that the teaching

must not start there. It must start in the home. Young adults who grew up in households marked by healthy marriages are more likely to develop their own successful intimate relationships.[8] This project suggests that a “healthy” marriage, like any relationship, is by no means one devoid of conflict and difficulty; however, it is in the very least one which tempers relational maintenance with congruency of communicative beliefs, practices, and the demands of living together. More important still, healthier marriages emerge from shared beliefs concerning the nature of personhood, one’s ability to choose and participate within the relationship, and purpose and function of intimate relationships in the household.

From Lewis’s perspective, the presence and practice of grace in marriages and households creates a space for relationships to matter *always*—what is now, then, and yet to be. Simply, only grace can beget graciousness. In *The Four Loves*, Lewis characterizes charity as the only love which turns what is natural into the supernatural, or that which is *more than* our own capacities and abilities of responsiveness. We see this perspective echoed by other Christian thinkers, such as Reinhold Niebuhr. Grace, Niebuhr states, is a power to extend human capacity: “it represents an accession of resources, which man does not have of himself, enabling him to become what he truly ought to be” (99). From Lewis’s perspective, if we want young adults to live for and with one another joyfully and purposefully, we need to teach and practice an attentiveness to the conditions of our ontological and existential significance which only grace can afford. We need to show our children that Grace *is* completion; that which literally incarnates our relational beings (as in his description of persons living in glory in *The Great Divorce*). Intimacy is so much more than personal preference—it is a matter of choice, labor, and responsiveness to forms of personhood.

6.5 Sentiment: Attentiveness to the Intonation of the Heart

To begin, we need to regain an understanding of the necessary relationship between human sentiment, discourse, and action. In much of today's popular discourse concerning intimacy and relationships, teenagers and young adults learn the misguided assumption that their feelings are isolated from relational purposes. Simply, our current generation is taught that one's *own* happiness and comfort are the solitary or primary goals of intimate relations. Lewis, led by the belief in the Incarnation of Christ and the consequent implications for embodied relations, does not deny personal happiness and pleasure as an important element of intimacy. On the contrary, as Chapter Three articulates, all that which is pleasurable and joyful comes only from God Himself, and He wants His children to love, to laugh, and to be blessed. Yet our sentiments emerge from and should be grounded in willful attentiveness to relational purposes. From Lewis's perspective, these purposes emerge from our ontological derivation from God and the significance of existential life together. All of human relation and human history suggests that we cannot complete ourselves. We cannot find meaning, truth, fulfillment, and joy in isolation. Only in derivation, community, and love. As Lewis's intellectual mentor George MacDonald suggests, we live in "the mystery of individuality and consequent relation" (*Unspoken Sermons* 76).[9] Our relational purpose is to reflect and relate to the Other in good ways—only in this will we enjoy our true selfhood.

Thus to the contemporary mantra of "do what makes you happy" in intimate interpersonal relationships, Lewis's work begs the question: "Yes, but wherein does happiness lie?" While the impulses of contemporary discourse concerning intimacy, pleasure, and happiness carry validity, the *tone* is skewed. In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis argues that one's tone functions either to associate or disassociate one's words to the

condition of their soul and what they know to be true (53). A major challenge for young adults, then, is learning how to intonate their sentiments in fruitful ways concerning intimacy. Relational happiness and success are a very real possibility, but one *cannot* be happy by oneself, for it is our nature to think, feel, and act relationally. The very intonations of our hearts presuppose that it is the Other whom we are speaking with, to, and about continually. Such a framework brings real persons to bear in the consideration of how love and happiness are connected.

Because we are attracted to and fall in love with *real* people, our sentiments should be grounded in good, *purposeful* attention toward the other person. Purposeful attention suggests discernible boundaries for discourse; boundaries which never “box in” but instead identify and clarify the truthful perceptions and expectations of our own hearts and the hearts of others. Both discursive and nonverbal expressions of intimacy carry consequences for others and thus maintain an ethical dimension. Lewis argues that we always have the choice of how our sentiments are expressed, not only among others but within ourselves. For example, he counters the idea that “falling in love” is something irresistible beyond control. He admits that “when we meet someone beautiful and clever and sympathetic, of course we ought, in one sense, to admire and love these good qualities. But is it not very largely our own choice whether this love shall, or shall not, turn into what we call ‘being in love’?” (*Mere Christianity* 101). It is a good thing to be attracted to admirable qualities in the other; by doing so we attend to standards of conduct and character which inform good relational practices. Yet we must be careful to *name* such goodness in proper ways. In other words, we must be keenly aware of the object or subject of our interests, for misplaced attention can lead to misnomers, especially when it comes to affection, desire, and other sentiments which lend us quite vulnerable.

Unfortunately, the name of love often has been used in attempts to propagate questionable impulses and actions.

Thus, the intonation of our hearts should be situated in a space which calls for grace in intimate interpersonal relationships. *How* we talk about questions of relational happiness and love will make all the difference when it comes to seeing those sentiments realized in intimacy. The other is not there solely to create or prolong particular feelings or experiences in and for us. We may *feel* love, but it is never to be named merely a *feeling*. Love denotes choice, action, and, above all, real knowledge of the other (Augustine's *On the Trinity; Confessions*, Tillich, "Knowledge through Love;" "Doing the Truth"). That is why Lewis advises young lovers to let the "thrill" of being in love die away, to "go on through that period of death into the quieter interest and happiness that follow" (*Mere Christianity* 101). Attempts to make "thrills" and relational bliss the status quo for intimacy soon find the wooers exhausted and jaded: "if you decide to make thrills your regular diet and try to prolong them artificially, they will all get weaker, and fewer and fewer, and you will be a bored, disillusioned old man for the rest of your life" (101). Grace presupposes that something must be sacrificed—in a sense, must die—for the sake of relational health. We must talk of intimacy in a manner which allows for considerations of sacrifice. According to Lewis, the Christian narrative of grace suggests that such a sacrifice is never a *giving up* on our heart's desires, but instead a *giving to* the Other whom our heart desires to be with. Thus the focus of attention in intimate relationships shifts from articulations of "you make me happy" to "happiness is here."

From a practical standpoint, discourse and practices in the household concerning sexuality and intimacy should prepare young lovers for the complexity of sentiments, choices, practices, and sacrifices which they are about to face in real relationships. To

address intimate interpersonal communication as an issue of heart—and consequently those issues of heart as grounded in relational purposes of reflecting and relating to the Other—will draw attention to the importance of how we name “love,” “desire,” “happiness,” and “health” in our lives with intimate others. Partners who not only articulate similar relational expectations but also speak about love in the same *tone* are better able to unite their hearts through discourse. Simply put, relational satisfaction should be a shared sentiment, and each person must work to assure that the Other is well-pleased with the purpose and attention of the intimacy.

6.6 Will: Participation in a Habitude of Love

Purposeful naming of sentiments brings necessary but difficult work to bear on those who are in an intimate relationship. One of the roadblocks which young adults often face is the recognition of intimacy as a continual labor of participatory and reciprocal love. From a phenomenological perspective, participation characterizes human understanding and activity. In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis writes “to participate is to be truly human” (74). In fact, Lewis’s writings suggest that truth and practices are united. Jesus *is* the Truth; He *does* the Truth (John 14.6). Truth *happens*—it is something which is done by God in history and thus done continually by persons derivative of Him (Tillich, “Doing the Truth”; see also MacDonald’s *Unspoken Sermons* and Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*). Thus there is an urgent need to regain an understanding of participation in intimacy and the fruitfulness of labor in such a context. One of the primary ways of characterizing human relationships as participatory labor is by way of the present popular discourse concerning choices and habits of intimacy.

Contemporary discourse concerning sexual practices and intimacy would have young adults believe that personal choices and habits are isolated phenomenon. However,

such articulations lead the current generation to work from truncated versions of what it really means to act as a self in the present moment. First, contemporary discourse allows many young adults to believe that their choices in intimacy hold consequences primarily in the context of freedom and expression of *self*. Issues of gratification and pleasure play a major part in such discussions. While Lewis's understanding of sexuality and intimacy does not exclude pleasure (see his chapter on Eros in *The Four Loves*), it nevertheless teaches that all things pleasurable emerge from relational purposes. As the work of Giddens suggests, the radical self-reflexivity of the contemporary age leaves little room for habitues and choice in intimacy as being relationally driven. However, as described in Chapter Four, the work of St. Augustine and Lewis articulates an understanding of human will as a movement of our attention toward someone or something. At its core, then, an act of will is a relational phenomenon—it necessarily involves others. A choice of intimacy never concerns the self solely; in the very least, there is another person who bears the burden of one's choices and actions.

While most contemporary discourse concerning intimacy would not and does not deny the presence of other people as bearing upon one's personal choices in sexuality and relationship development, there is little understanding of the *need* one has for the other. By communicating and practicing need for the other, young adults can work toward loving in its fullest complexity. In the *The Four Loves*, Lewis claims that all forms of love—both need-love and gift-love—inform one another. A person does not need others *less* as their loves become more sophisticated. On the contrary, it is the continual presence of need we have for otherness which serves as an indicator that grace is manifested in all relationships: George MacDonald in fact calls it “the needful grace” (*Unspoken Sermons* 75). Lewis writes: “What Grace gives is the full recognition, the

sensible awareness, the complete acceptance—even, with certain reservations, the glad acceptance—of this Need. For, without Grace, our wishes and our necessities are in conflict” (*The Four Loves* 130). Grace allows for the translation of needs into pleasures, desires, and gifts.

This holds significant implications for the understanding of unity in the context of intimacy and marriage. Lewis argues that while their particular doctrines may differ slightly regarding practices, all churches of the Historic Christian Faith work from the metaphor of marriage as a body. That is, divorce is regarded “as something like cutting up a living body, as a kind of surgical operation...it is more like having both your legs cut off than it is like dissolving a business partnership or ever deserting a regiment” (*Mere Christianity* 97). Contemporary discourse concerning the formation of intimate relationships persuades young adults that the termination of intimacy or marriage is much like “a simple readjustment of partners, to be made whenever people feel they are no longer in love with one another, or when either of them falls in love with someone else” (97). Just like needs of our bodies, our need of others compels our choices. To omit the question of need from discourse concerning intimacy and marriage gives a skewed understanding of what indeed guides the choices of young adults. In addition, without recognition of need, there is no room for grace in love.

Further still, the self primarily chooses within a *truncated version of the present*. Within most popular discourse concerning intimacy, the utilization of terms which address the future, such as “family planning,” often connote the *deferment* of particular choices and habits until *later*. There is very little understanding of how one can live *purposefully in the present* while at the same time creating habitudes which will bring the self to fullness in the future. When Lewis quotes George MacDonald in naming this

moment “the holy present” (“Historicism” 224), he means that we must exercise our wills with the conviction that the fullness of time and eternity bears upon this very moment. It is not fruitful to think about our choices and habits as segmented into “now” and “later,” for both the past and future are present within *this moment*, shaping our discourse and actions (Augustine, *Confessions* 11.11.13). When we speak and act in the world, we must remember that truth emerges in particular places, in particular times, and within particular personalities (Tillich, “Doing the Truth”). One never holds an “alibi” within existence—one is always accountable for what one says and does right now (Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*).

Current trends of sexuality and cohabitation work from the assumption that young adults *should* defer particular choices and commitments until *later*—until they feel it is “safe” or “right” to do so. While discretion in intimacy formation is well advised, the challenge to such thinking is that it undermines the ability of young adults to exercise their will in sexuality. The nomenclature of “choices” may be rampant in contemporary discourse concerning sex and intimacy, but when alternatives to “having so many choices” begin to fade away, then young adults are really left with no choice at all. Commercial images of youthful sexuality as well as ready access to contraceptives for adolescents and young adults create the expectation that they *will* be sexually active prior to marriage. Popular discourse surrounding the necessity of cohabitation lend apprehension toward traditional paths toward marriage, such as courtship. These conversations limit a young adult’s understanding of the fullness and capacity of their will; that they can indeed choose for the sake of “now” *and* “later.” Such choices are not meant to compromise the self’s desires, pleasure, or health. Instead, true exercise of the will attends to the fullness of who you are and are meant to be.

Further still, contemporary discourse which segments “now” and “later” in intimacy-building compromises the ability of young adults to equip themselves for such relationships. Teenagers and young adults may desire monogamous, intimate relationships “some day,” yet they lack the compulsion and direction to work faithfully and steadily toward that goal due to deficiencies in contemporary discourse concerning choices and practices of intimacy. Once the moment arrives for intimacy, their relational expectations and communicative practices may still be immature, lending even more difficulty to a challenging turn in a young adult’s personhood. That is why Lewis’s emphasis on the continual participation of the self within the world is so important to understanding intimacy. The development of willful habits of loving is crucial to all manifestations of healthy selves and relationships.

Lewis contends that the “habits of the soul” (*Mere Christianity* 94) are more important than any isolated decision. That is ultimately what the exercise of one’s will means—to reveal and develop purposeful habits of the soul which reveal the truth of one’s nature. Will unites our discourse and practices: when we act truthfully, we “prove existentially that our words are honest” (Boros, *Meeting God in Man* 71). Given such a framework, the practices of intimacy should be understood as a continual labor of love. Grace allows us to undertake difficult decisions with faithful confidence, for not only are we working from habitudes that lay a groundwork for willful action in the everyday, but we can more often than not depend upon the chance to try again. “Very often what God first helps us towards is not the virtue itself but just this power of always trying again,” writes Lewis (*Mere Christianity* 94). Thus with the encouragement to develop purposeful habitudes in sexuality and intimacy, young adults will be better able to decide quickly, confidently, and with integrity in those difficult relational moments. If they are

participating in a relationship characterized by reciprocal love and grace with the other, then they can be rest assured that, even when they make a mistake, choice is always present, for there is still more work to be done.

6.7 Responsiveness: Maintaining Relational Roles and Structures

Developing habitudes of love allows one to participate in relational responsiveness grounded by a sense of order and purpose. As mentioned above, young men and women are struggling with making choices in intimacy which speak to differences in gender, relational expectations, and sexuality. In their own practice and discourse, young women are struggling even as they attempt to adhere to the “male script” of sexuality (“Sex without Strings” 15). The sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, in addition to more recent technological developments in reproductive technology, has created a public discourse in which gender differences in intimacy are being obscured or transformed (Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*). In popular conversation, there seems to be a dichotomy. On the one hand, discussion of differences in relational expectations between men and women is viewed as sexist. On the other hand, when gender differences *are* addressed, conversation is dominated by metaphors of the “battle of the sexes” or overly simplistic sketches of relationships between men and women.

It would be fruitful for young adults to understand the complexity of otherness in gender relations in a different framework than what contemporary discourse posits. A helpful starting point would be in addressing expectations and understandings of equality in romantic relationships. In *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis sums up the contemporary notion of gender equality through the character of Jane. She tells the Director that she always thought that to love someone means to engage in a companionship of freedom and equality. Equality is the most essential human characteristic, Jane argues, for it is in our

souls that we are the same. The Director tells her that she is mistaken, for:

That is the last place where they are equal. Equality before the law, equality of incomes—that is very well. Equality guards life; it doesn't make it. It is medicine, not food. ...Courtship knows nothing of it; nor does fruition. What does free companionship have to do with that? Those who are enjoying something, or suffering something together, are companions. Those who enjoy or suffer one another, are not. ...No one has ever told you that obedience—humility—is an erotic necessity. You are putting equality just where it ought not to be. (148)

According to Lewis, the notion of equality—especially the modern understanding of equality which is more akin to sameness—is a necessity due to the social consequences of the Fall, much like clothes have become necessary to cover our naked bodies. True *Eros* does not speak of equality because the lover is too concerned with attending to the other in loving submission. The Director points to the fact that if one has ever seen a young man seeking the hand of a young woman one would know that humility, not equality, is the driving force of romantic love. The desire to identify and commune with the other brings her alterity to bear in every moment of relation. All orders of relation are characterized by the mystery of alterity and union, for there are “differences and contrasts all the way up, richer, sharper, even fiercer, at every rung of the ascent” (315). We respond to real people with real differences in our loves.

We must recognize that we respond to both a person and a role in intimate relationships. The fact that we are *able* to respond to others, even in the midst of radical difference, is the real essence of freedom in intimate relationships. In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis writes "the very possibility of our loving is [God's] gift to us, and...our freedom is only a freedom of better or worse response" (45). Simply, our freedom lies in *ability*, not in status. Thus better (and perhaps freest) responsiveness means better understanding toward whom and what we are responding. Truly intimate love makes it

possible for one's partner to be who he is—better still, it “sees in him the person that he will become” (Boros, *Meeting God in Man* 78). In intimate relationships, partners “enjoy or suffer one another” (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 148) in a twofold manner: as responsive to the person before them and to the role which that person plays in larger orders of relation. A husband lives with and loves a unique human being with particular idiosyncrasies *as well as a wife*. A young woman cares for her lover because he is a good person *and also a good man*. While the particulars of role may take on many practical and discursive forms, it is nonetheless persistently present in all human relationships. Thus contrary to popular inclination, issues of role in intimacy and households are not constraining. In good responsive intimacy one never *limits* her partner by denying him the fullest capacity for responsibility in existence (Boros, *Meeting God in Man*). Roles matter too much. The presence of role in intimate responsiveness creates relational standards and expectations which emerge from a textured understanding of the many dimensions of what it means to be a human being. Partners *complement* each others' roles, not debunk them.

In teaching adolescents and young adults about fruitful responsiveness in intimacy, the goal should be to strive for the union and complementarity of relational expectations and roles, not mere sameness. Lewis argues that God “caused things to be other than Himself that, being distinct, they might learn to love Him, and achieve union instead of mere sameness” (*The Problem of Pain* 156). Lewis does not put undue emphasis on either the individual nor the collective, for his belief is that each person maintains particularity while being unified participants of God's world.[10] All persons work for the greater purpose that is in Him, and because of this, men and women can be regarded as complementary in body and soul.[11] By creating men and women distinctly,

“the inventor of the human machine was telling us that its two halves, the male and the female, were made to be combined together in pairs, not simply on the sexual level, but totally combined” (*Mere Christianity* 96). There is a form to all phenomena in this created world, and intimacy and marriage are no exception.

The task within intimate relationships is to work within particular forms for the sake of One Form of Personhood—one Truth, one Love, one Will, and one Action. Dallas Willard, in his book *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*, describes how we respond to the structure of created order by way of our words. We work with certain “ingredients” in life, and “we must adapt ourselves and our actions” to “the structure already within the substances with which we must work” (123). Thus the order of things limits our responsiveness, but it limits us in a way that gives us freedom to work with particular boundaries of experience *purposefully*. Boundaries make the One and the many possible—without them, we find ourselves in an amorphous existence. Men and women, then, find freedom of intimate responsiveness by recognizing, accepting, and working within the boundaries of both created and discursive existence. What if, instead of trying to assimilate to inauthentic communication and behavior patterns, young women accept and take pride in the particularity of their sexual and gendered perspectives? What if young men carefully and joyfully considered all of the discursive and practical manifestations of what personhood means in real relational encounters? When each partner comes to a relationship with a better understanding of how the particularity of the self is enhanced by the complementarity of others, intimacy begins on fruitful ground indeed.

6.8 Intimacy and Grace: Where Does This Leave Us as Scholars and Practitioners?

Together, these approaches toward the development of healthy discourse and

practices of intimacy by young adults point to the necessity of tethering *Eros* to Grace. The metaphor of grace presupposes the following manifestations of love in intimate interpersonal communication: (1) love as a heartfelt *choice*, (2) love as a loving *labor*, and (3) love as a responsiveness to *form*. In both popular and disciplinary discourse concerning intimacy and relationship development, the essence of these metaphors is present. We already talk about and study human choices in the building of intimate relationships in all of their forms. However, these metaphors are often not *named* as such. Thus, Lewis's writings, grounded in a Christian philosophical perspective, bring an additive component to these conversations by way of expanding the vocabulary we use when discussing human practices and experiences in love. At the very core of this vocabulary is Grace or the incarnation of Grace Himself into human experience. Lewis works from the assumption that the Word is already present and already working in our condition—we need only intonate its truth through *our* words. With that conviction in mind, we can reflect on just how properly we can name our loves.

The first—love as a choice—situates the discussion of intimate interpersonal communication as an issue of heart. The literature in intimate interpersonal communication studies has done well in addressing communicative activities and strategies for “intimate behaviors,” “relational satisfaction,” “bonding,” or “relational quality.”[12] However, what these studies reveal is the need to address the metaphor of heart as philosophical sentiment. Sentiment is more than just nonverbal communication; there is a “phenomenology of intimacy” (Register and Henley) which involves the meeting of embodied selves. Lewis argues how the development of intimacy—indeed the very *opportunity* to communicate with other selves in time and space—is a condition graciously extended to us by the Incarnate Word (*The Problem of Pain*). Given the radical

alterity of our embodiment and our consciousness (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*), we have no course to *expect* identification and communion with others; existential thinkers speak particularly of the loneliness to be found in alterity. Yet, somehow, we *do* find each other. We do relate. We do form intimate unions through body and discourse. Lewis regards this possibility as a consequence of God's grace toward human beings in temporality. We are not banished from communion with God or one another completely. We may not see clearly or comprehensively, but we are not alone. We share a common center, a heart, which inspires all subsequent particularities of human being. Thus by grace we can *choose* the Other and the possibility of intimate relationships, and any measure of relational satisfaction or quality resultant of that choice affirms our ability to translate our sentiments into practices of love.

Consequently, the second—love as labor—characterizes choices in intimate interpersonal communication as working toward the creation of purposeful habitudes. Within the study of intimate interpersonal communication, the “work” of the relationship has been characterized in a variety of ways by scholars in the discipline. Knapp and Vangelisti describe the stages of “coming together” and “coming apart” of a romantic couple based on the patterns of communicative behaviors. The work of Stafford and Canary observes the range of strategies that satisfied couples use in relationship maintenance, such as positivity, openness, assurances, and sharing activities and tasks.[13] Baxter and Montgomery view the creation and sustenance of relationships as a complex interplay of dialectal tensions and dialogic responsiveness between partners. However it may be characterized, interpersonal scholars recognize that communicative work is a necessary component of intimacy, and the work is complex. Yet this labor is often framed in ways which limit the scope of human attention and communicative potential.

In Chapter Four, the issues of purpose and potential was discussed in relation to a person's exercise of the will. Relational purposes and potentiality are ontologically grounded yet existentially significant. Much of the contemporary interpersonal scholarship concerning the scope of relational participation by romantic partners may focus on communicative expectations and patterns, but the vocabulary of *purpose* or *potentiality* are rarely used.[14] An existential phenomenological rendering of love as labor, such as is articulated by the Christian thinkers in this project, lends an understanding of both the historical and eternal dimensions to our attention and purpose. Each relational moment is fully “now.” We are secured as ontologically significant because of our derivation from God. This inheritance focuses our habitudes in existence. Yet we can become unfocused, inattentive, or misdirected in the pursuit of relational *telos*. Thus, men and women must labor together *purposefully* if we are to labor well.

The actual utterances of such work will vary from relationship to relationship—from moment to moment. That is why love's labor must focus on the multi-dimensional components of intimacy. As Lewis writes, Christianity situates the personal as well as the super-personal in every willful action, creating a multi-faceted, purposeful life in which “you advance to more real and more complicated levels” of understanding human existence (*Mere Christianity* 142). The Trinity illustrates how multiple purposes and functions permeate God's personhood and reflect into our own. The habitudes which we propagate must attend to the complexity of love as all at once ordering, maintaining, creating, inspiring, and serving our relational purposes in real life with real people. With a multitude of work to be done in intimacy, the necessity of grace is more fully evident. Should our work in intimate relationships be limited primarily to “relational maintenance” or “negotiating dialectical tensions” or “coming together and coming

apart,” we would have many opportunities to fail and disappoint one another. Yet when the task at hand reflects the fullness of God’s purposes for human love in its many forms, the habits of our souls become tethered to a potentiality which drives us beyond the relationship itself, compelling us to labor well, attend deliberately, and forgive often. We can then approach the work of intimacy in proper perspective as husbands, wives, and lovers who work for and with each other, but not themselves only.

Finally, the third—love as a form—frames intimate interpersonal communication as characterized by responsiveness to ontological and existential structures. One of the most fruitful avenues for discussing such structures within the literature on intimate interpersonal communication is in the area of gender studies. As discussed on Chapter Five, scholars such as Nel Noddings, Carol Gilligan, Julia Wood, and Sandra Harding already speak to the particularity of standpoint and role which women bring to communicative interactions, and gender communication theorists such as Deborah Tannen have translated these frameworks into studies of the everyday discourse of intimacy. The writings of these women are important within the discipline because they have and continue to call our attention to the cultural, historical, and discursive manifestations of gender. We cannot sketch issues of femininity or masculinity in simple ways in our scholarship, for gendered relations encompass the complexities of alterity, power, and epistemology in public and private discourse. The cultural and discursive experiences of women are of particular concern from the standpoint of scholars such as Wood, Harding, Noddings, and Gilligan. Thus, discussion of gender at times overshadows the serious consideration of biological sex—to the point where scholars in our discipline may argue that such conversations are antagonizing, anachronistic, unfruitful, or limiting.

Lewis can contribute to this scholarly conversation concerning the tensions between gender and sex. From his standpoint, both sex and gender are significant—moreover, they are complementary. Lewis’s Christian framework assists in the understanding of gender relations as responsiveness to a unique form of human relationships which carries both ontological *and* existential weight. Men and women are created within a distinct structure of human relations, and the freedom of our responsiveness emerges from the recognition and appropriation of the particularity of our roles. Thus, in bringing the element of ontological significance to contemporary disciplinary discourse concerning gender roles, Lewis places a standard of relations at the forefront of discussion; that is, the relationship between Christ and His Church as the structure of intimacy and marriage (Lewis, *Mere Christianity; The Four Loves*). With the establishment of a standard—a form—of intimacy, interlocutors are thus able to move freely within the established ground, rather than speculating how and to whom they should be responsive.

The revelation of a form is a gift of grace as well as an avenue which allows us to practice grace toward others. For example, a man who appropriates his role as a husband is free to attend to his wife with disinterest toward the self, for his self is ontologically secure in the role. Further still, he is able to be gracious toward the wife, woman, and human being in front of him because it is the structure of the relationship as well as the particularity of the person which matters existentially. When it is just one person standing in front of him, without the support of a standard of relation, practicing grace toward the other becomes difficult indeed. In a triadic form of intimacy as it is framed in this project, the relationship becomes mediated by Love Himself. Thus, when it comes to men and women developing intimate relationships with one another, it is a true grace to recognize

that this is a relation worthy of the very best of forms.

The three metaphors of choice, labor, and form characterize intimate love as a condition and a practice of grace. Many of the scholarly conversations within the discipline already address these metaphors in one manner or another. How humans choose based on the perception and interpretation of needs and desires is not a novel question in interpersonal communication studies. The communicative work of interpersonal relationships is articulated from a variety of perspectives. The structures and shapes of our discursive lives together touches upon a multitude of theories of interpersonal communication. Yet, few perspectives outside of Christianity consider these three metaphors as a *trinity*—working together in a unified theory of intimate relationships. This project works from the presupposition that the inclinations of our hearts are misrepresented if we do not recognize toward whom we move. Our labor is useless without the willful engagement of purpose. Form is empty without existential choice and participation. A philosophical rendering of sentiments, will, and action in human relationships, grounded in a Christian philosophical perspective informed by the writings of C.S. Lewis, situates gracious love at the forefront of questions of who we are as human beings and how we relate to one another. Thus, conversations regarding the presence and practice of grace in intimate communicative relationships are evident in the literature—we as scholars need only properly name and more fully articulate them as such.

Endnotes

Chapter One

1. Note that communication scholars such as Kathryn A. Dindia and Daniel J. Canary dispute the degree to which masculine and feminine approaches to communication may differ. See, for example, Dindia's chapter titled "Men are from North Dakota, Women are from South Dakota" in Dindia and Canary's *Sex Differences and Similarities in Communication*.
2. For more information on behavioral approaches to learning, see seminal theorists such as B. F. Skinner (*Freedom and Dignity*) and Edward Thorndike (*Educational Psychology: The Original Nature of Man*). Cognitive learning theorists include Jean Piaget's work on child psychology (*The Child's Conception of the World; Origins of Intelligence in Children*), Robert Gagné's models on forms of learning (*The Conditions of Learning*), and Kurt Lewin's work on group dynamics (*A Dynamic Theory on Personality; Resolving Social Conflicts: Selected Papers on Group Dynamics*).

Chapter Two

1. As discussed later in the chapter, Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre, for example, work from a Catholic narrative perspective. In addition, Hannah Arendt works from the Jewish intellectual tradition which, although not guided by the belief in the Incarnate Christ, nonetheless lends ontological significance to human relationships. In addition, her philosophical writings are framed by the existentialism of St. Augustine.
2. See his essay "Transposition" or his novel *The Great Divorce* for two such examples. The light of God in each of these works is understood to illuminate all that is but yet be so unfathomably bright for this temporal world that it is necessarily obscured. That is why, in many of his allegories of the temporal world and the eternal, Lewis uses the metaphor of shadows to describe all creation outside of the heavenly realm (an idea stemming from George MacDonald's works of fiction such as *The Golden Key*).
3. Chapter Four will expand more fully on the trinitarian relation between knowing, willing, and loving according to the works of St. Augustine and Lewis's grounding in this theory.

Chapter Three

1. For more on epistemology, phenomenological reduction, and transcendental epochē, see works of Edmund Husserl such as *Cartesian Meditations* or *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*.
2. For another philosophical approach on love and the "training of the heart," see Caroline J. Simon's *The Disciplined Heart: Love, Destiny, and Imagination*. Simon treats self-knowledge and interpersonal experiences from a Christian philosophical perspective on love in the everyday. She draws from examples in literature to frame the complexity of sentiments in relational encounters.

3. See also Charles Taylor's discussion of the sources of moral reasoning, identity, and development in *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*.
4. See Lewis's chapter on "The Rival Conceptions of God" in *Mere Christianity*. He admits that many theories of human existence, especially in relation to the supernatural, are valid and contain elements of truth, and we must be attentive to their theoretical manifestations. Yet, according to Lewis, Christians *must* believe that all belief systems other than Christianity may be "almost right"—but are always "not quite."
5. Thibault and Kelley's work is an early example. Later, Michael Roloff, in *Interpersonal Communication: A Social Exchange Approach*, offers a review of communication theories through the lens of social exchange.

Chapter Four

1. A quick survey of introductory interpersonal communication textbooks shows that questions of "self" and "self-competence" are often the subjects of the first chapters of the text, indicating that a better understanding of the self is essential for interpersonal communication studies as a whole. See Sarah Trenholm and Arthur Jensen's model of communication competence in *Interpersonal Communication* (6th edition) for a specific example of the centrality of self-competence in interpersonal theory and practice.
2. Note Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of a Goffmanesque perspective in *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*.
3. As discussed in Chapter Two, see "The Poison of Subjectivism" for an example of his critique of the modern metaphor of "vision" in contrast to the Christian understanding of reflection and light. Also see his use of the metaphors of light and shadows in *The Great Divorce*.
4. See Stafford and Canary's essays on relationship maintenance such as "Relational Maintenance Strategies and Equity in Marriage," "Maintaining Relationships Through Strategic and Routine Interaction," "Maintaining Romantic Relationships: A Summary and Analysis of One Research Program," and "Maintenance Strategies and Romantic Relationship Type, Gender and Relational Characteristics."
5. The Johari window (Luft and Ingham) speaks to self and relational awareness and management from the perspective of disclosed or revealed information between the self and others. One of the four quadrants is the "blind spot," or those characteristics of the self evident to others but unknown to the self.

Chapter Five

1. See elements of communication competence models such as is described by Trenholm and Jensen in *Interpersonal Communication*, which describe the interpretive, verbal, nonverbal, role, goal, message, and relational dynamics at play in communicative acts.
2. See "Dialogue as 'Enlarged Communicative Mentality': Review, Assessment, and Ongoing Difference" by Arnett, Grayson, and McDowell in *Communication Research Trends* for an historical and interpretive review of the philosophical

- foundations of dialogic studies in the discipline of communication.
3. The reference here is to seminal books and essays published in the 1960s and 1970s such as Howe's *The Miracle of Dialogue*, Floyd Matson and Ashley Montagu's *The Human Dialogue: Perspectives on Communication*, Richard Johannesen's "The Emerging Concept of Communication as Dialogue," and John Poulakos's "The Components of Dialogue."
 4. See foundational texts such as John Stewart's *Bridges, Not Walls: A Book about Interpersonal Communication*, Charles Brown and Paul Keller's *Monologue to Dialogue*, Rob Anderson, Leslie Baxter and Ken Cissna's *Dialogue: Theorizing Difference in Communication Studies*, and Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery's (*Relating: Dialogue and Dialectics*).
 5. See Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* for a philosophical account of language as the "house of Being."
 6. For a relevant study on strategies for conflict resolution by married couples who exhibit content-validation, self-assertion, and relational accusations, see "The Use and Consequences of Verbal Influence Strategies During Interpersonal Disagreements" by Deborah A. Newton and Judee K. Burgoon. Also see John Gottman's *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail* for an account of how particular verbal strategies contribute to the health or decline of marriage relationships.
 7. For example studies regarding attribution in marriage, see Thomas Bradbury and Frank Finchman's "Attribution in Marriage: Review and Critique," John Harvey, Gary Wells, and Marlene Alvarez's "Attribution in the Context of Conflict and Separation in Close Relationships," Harold Kelley's *Personal Relationships: Their Structures and Processes*, Bruce Orvis, Harold Kelley, and Deborah Butler's "Attributional Conflict in Young Couples," and Alan L. Sillars' "Attributions and Interpersonal Conflicts" and "Interpersonal Perception in Relationships."
 8. As discussed previously in the project, Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the super addressee in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. The Third acts as a witness and a judge to our utterances and lends validity to our communicative practices.
 9. For examples in nonfiction, see the discussion of Eros in *The Four Loves* and Christian marriage in *Mere Christianity*. Also, *That Hideous Strength*, *The Great Divorce*, and *Till We Have Faces* include just a few examples of fictional relationships between men and women marked by challenging communicative and relational aspects.
 10. For example studies, see Melissa Frederikse, Angela Lu, Elizabeth Aylward, Patrick Barta, and Godfrey Pearlson's "Sex Differences in the Inferior Parietal Lobule" in *Cerebral Cortex* and Thomas Schlaepfer, Gordon Harris, Allen Tien, Luon Peng, Seong Lee, and Godfrey Pearlson's "Structural Differences in the Cerebral Cortex of Healthy Female and Male Subjects: A Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study" in *Psychiatry Research*.
 11. Lewis's understanding of marriage in the Christian tradition emerges from his interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-32. In this particular Biblical passage, the relationship between a man and his wife is compared to the relationship between Christ and His Church, or the body of believers. In addition to its implications for understanding complementarity of the male and female in intimacy, Lewis's interpretation of the Ephesians passage lends particular significance to questions of role, obedience, and responsiveness of the masculine and feminine within

intimate relational contexts.

Chapter Six

1. See Joyce Abma, Gladys Martinez, and Casey Copen, “Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing: Data from the National Survey of Family Growth 2006-2008,” Anjani Chandra et al., “Fertility, Family Planning, and Reproductive Health of U.S. Women: Data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth,” Gladys Martinez et al., “Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women from Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth,” and U.S. Bureau of Census, *America’s Families and Living Arrangement*.
2. It should be noted that the use of the term “emergency contraception” is itself a highly contested issue in popular discourse. Different ideological perspectives use different labels (e.g., “contraceptive” versus “abortive”) for the same medicinal formula.
3. See Megan Kavanaugh, Sanithia Williams, and E. Bimla Schwarz, “Emergency Contraception Use and Counseling After Changes in United States Prescription Status,” Laura Miller, “Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) Use and Experiences at College Health Centers in the Mid-Atlantic United States: Changes Since ECP Went Over-the-Counter,” Corrine Rocca et. al, “Beyond Access: Acceptability, Use and Nonuse of Emergency Contraception among Young Women,” and Petra Sander, Elizabeth Raymond, and Mark Weaver, “Emergency Contraceptive Use as a Marker of Future Risky Sex, Pregnancy, and Sexually Transmitted Infection.”
4. National surveys published by the Center for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation support these correlations between contraceptive use, sexual activity, and knowledge and attitudes toward sex by adolescents and young adults.
5. For more information, see Jacqueline Darroch, David Landry, and Susheela Singh “Changing Emphases in Sexuality Education in U.S. Public Secondary Schools, 1988-99” and Joyce Abma, Gladys Martinez, William Mosher, and Brittany Dawson, “Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing, 2002.”
6. See the National Marriage Project’s State of the Union Reports from 2001 and 2002 concerning commitment and relational expectations of young adults.
7. See Campbell and Wright’s “Marriage Today: Exploring the Incongruence Between Americans’ Beliefs and Practices” for interpersonal indicators of higher risks of divorce. One indicator is “high expectations,” or romantic ideals typical of individualistic cultures which incline young adults to seek passionate, exciting marriages.
8. For just a few examples, see Paul Amato and Danielle DoBoer’s “The Transmission of Marital Instability Across Generations: Relationships Skills or Commitment to Marriage,” Irving Tallman, Thomas Rotolo, and Louis Gray’s “Continuity or Change?: The Impact of Parents’ Divorce on Newly Married Couples,” and Sharon Sassler, Anna Cunningham, and Daniel Licther’s “Intergenerational Patterns of Union Formation and Relationship Quality.”
9. For other examples of Christian thinkers who proclaim derivation and otherness

- as necessary conditions of human self-identity, see Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man* and Paul Tillich's "Knowledge Through Love."
10. See also MacDonald's *Unspoken Sermons*, Boros *Meeting God in Man*, G. K. Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* for evidence of other Christian thinkers who support Lewis's convictions concerning particularity within the unified body of believers.
 11. There is much theological and ideological debate concerning issues of equality and responsibility of men and women before God in light of the Genesis story of Creation (Genesis 1-3). Such conversations are not ignored nor invalidated by this project. Working from the perspective of Lewis, who himself is informed and influenced by St. Augustine, George MacDonald, and G. K. Chesterton, this project supports the theory of the created complementarity of the sexes as a reflection of God's purposes for the world. For example, see Augustine's treatment of sexuality and divine promise in the story of Abraham and Sarah in *The City of God* or Chesterton's discussion of the trinity of man, woman, and child in *The Everlasting Man*.
 12. Just a few examples of the work being done in the discipline concerning nonverbal communication and "intimate behaviors" are by Kory Floyd and Judee Burgoon, Kory Floyd and Mark Morman, and Mark Palmer and Karl Simmons. For relational "satisfaction," see theories based in assumptions of social exchange emergent from the work of Thibault and Kelley in *The Social Psychology of Groups*. For "bonding," see Stages of Relational Development as articulated by Knapp and Vangelisti in *Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships*. For "relational quality," see works emergent from interactive systems in family and marital communication, such as the works of Rogers, Millar and Rogers, and Gottman.
 13. See Stafford and Canary's essays on relationship maintenance such as "Relational Maintenance Strategies and Equity in Marriage," "Maintaining Relationships Through Strategic and Routine Interaction," "Maintaining Romantic Relationships: A Summary and Analysis of One Research Program," and "Maintenance Strategies and Romantic Relationship Type, Gender and Relational Characteristics."
 14. A notable exception is the work of Marie Baker-Oehler and Annette Holba in *The Communicative Relationship Between Dialogue and Care*.

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