

# Inklings Forever

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Volume 9 A Collection of Essays Presented at the Ninth  
Frances White Ewbank Colloquium on C.S. Lewis &  
Friends


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## Full Issue 2014 (Volume IX)

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# **INKLINGS FOREVER**

**Volume IX**

**2014**





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**INKLINGS FOREVER**  
**Volume IX**

A Collection of Essays presented at  
**THE NINTH FRANCES WHITE EWBANK COLLOQUIUM**  
**ON C.S. LEWIS & FRIENDS**

2014

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\*Student Essay Contest Winner

# A Day in the Life of a Hero: The Three Unities in C.S. Lewis's Neo-Classical Romance

Joe R. Christopher  
Tarleton State University

## Introduction: The Three Unities

The last two words of this essay's subtitle are a deliberate non-sequitur, of course. Originally considered, the romance is a medieval genre, reflecting a chivalric age (Holman and Harmon 283); it has come to mean a type of adventure story, often with fantasy, often with significant symbolism, sometimes involving love between a hero and heroine—still retaining some of the tone of the medieval romances. On the other hand, the neo-classical impulse is based on imitations or parodies of the Greek and Roman classics (cf. 314, 315). The argument here is that C. S. Lewis's "The Nameless Isle" shows the influence of the three unities as understood by the Italian critics of the sixteenth century, the French critics of seventeenth, and by such English critics as John Dryden in the later seventeenth. The classical source of this criticism is the *Poetics* by Aristotle. Thus, "The Nameless Isle" is, in its way, a neo-classical work, even though the three unities were understood to apply to dramas, not narrative poems.

Here is a basic statement of the three unities:

1. The *unity of action* [or plot]: a play should have one main action that it follows, with no or few subplots.
2. The *unity of place*: a play should cover a single physical space and

should not attempt to compress geography, nor should the stage represent more than one place.

[However, "{s}ome critics were content to have the action confined merely to the same town or city" (Holman and Harmon 489).]

3. The *unity of time*: the action in a play should take place over no more than 24 hours. ("Classical unities.")<sup>1</sup>

As said, the critics who established these three unities for dramas pointed to Aristotle's *Poetics* as the basis of these rules. Thus the *classicism* in *neo-classicism*. Actually, as is generally known among students, Aristotle only set up as a rule that a drama should have one unified plot (or "action"). He observed that plays normally are restricted in time to twenty-four hours ("a single revolution of the sun") or slightly more—but this was said only in contrast to the greater scope of an epic, not as a rule. And he said nothing about unity of place at all; that was developed by the Italian critics by analogy to the unity of time ("Classical unities"; Holman and Harmon 488-489). Thus the *neo* in *neo-classicism*.

A traditional contrast of British dramas to show (or not show) the unities is that between Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (probably written in 1606 or 1607) and John Dryden's *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost* (1677). Shakespeare's drama violates the unity of place, as E. K. Chambers

writes: "Rome, Misenum, Athens, Actium, Syria, Egypt are the localities, with much further subdivision in the Egyptian scenes" (qtd. Wilders 20). Shakespeare violates the unity of time, with his play spread over ten years (from actions by Antony in his forty-second year until his death [Wilders 87]). Shakespeare violates the unity of plot, with a political conflict over the rule of the Roman Empire; for example, "the battles in which this contest [is] fought out occupy much of the third and fourth acts" (Wilders 2); also, there is what may be called the tragedy of Enobarbus, ending with his suicide in Act 4, Scene 9. On the other hand, Dryden's play "occupies only the last day of [Antony and Cleopatra's] lives and is confined throughout to Alexandra" (Wilders 13). Thus, unity of time and place. The unity of plot is maintained in the focus on Antony and Cleopatra—for example, Enobarbus does not appear in Dryden's play (cf. Wilder 13).

The cultural difference that seventy years made in dramatic theory and practice makes it sound as if Shakespeare was entirely adverse to the unities, but two of his plays—*Comedy of Errors* and *The Tempest*—are often cited as observing the three unities. This is certainly true of Shakespeare's reworking of Plautus's *Menaechmi* as the *Comedy of Errors*, allowing for some casual shifts of place within Ephesus. Perhaps a strict Italian or French critic would have been upset by Shakespeare's first scene in *The Tempest* occurring off shore, not on the island upon which the rest of the action is placed; but, except for that possible violation of the unity of place, and again allowing for shifts of locale on the island, the rest of the play obeys the unities.<sup>2</sup>

With this background on the three unities, Lewis's "The Nameless Isle" may now be considered, to this degree as if it were a dramatic work and not a narrative.

### The Unity of Time

First, the unity of time will be elaborately traced. But, as an introduction, it must be admitted that Lewis's opening lines

must be omitted from the thesis. He has an opening (ll. 1-61a) about the mariner who is his protagonist, his ship and shipmates, and the storm which destroys the ship and drowns all the rest of the crew. All this is background to the mariner being the sole survivor, ending on the island, "The Nameless Isle" (as Walter Hooper chose to title the poem [Hooper xii]). The mariner is exhausted after safely reaching the shore, and falls asleep. After that opening, the present survey of the unity of time begins with the mariner waking from his sleep. Lewis writes in the voice of his protagonist:

Certainly when sleep left me  
There was calm and cool. No crashing  
of the sea,  
But darkness all about. Dim-shadowed  
leaves  
In mildest air moved above me,  
And, over all, earth-scented smell  
Sweetly stealing about the sea-worn  
man,<sup>3</sup>  
And faintly, as afar, fresh-water sounds,  
Runnings and rippings upon rock  
stairs  
Where moss grows most. (61b-69a)<sup>4</sup>

So the basic narrative begins in the **night**, with the "darkness" around the mariner. After a song is heard, a second description appears:

The clouds parted  
Suddenly. The seemly, slow-gliding  
moon  
Swam, as it were in shallows, of the  
silver cloud,  
Out into the open, and with orb'd  
splendor  
She gleamed upon the groves of a great  
forest. (83b-86)

The description of the forest continues. What follows that passage is the appearance of the Queen; shortly thereafter, in a vision she is seen as a type of earth-mother; next, she talks the mariner into going to rescue her daughter

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from the wizard, the enchanter, who has taken (she says) half of the island for his rule.

After the Queen leaves or vanishes comes the **dawn**:

Dawn was round me,  
Cool and coloured, and there came a  
breeze  
Brushing the grasses. Birds were  
chattering. (227b-29)

At this point, the narrator is still in the forest; with the sword the Queen has given him, he journeys out of the forest into a landscape of downs, with far hills.

The next temporal step occurs at **mid-morning**; the poem is specific:

Half-way in heav'n to his highest throne  
The gold sun glittering had gained  
above[.] (259-260)

In short, the sun is halfway to noontime. At this point, the mariner discovers the golden flute, lying in grasses beside a brook. The Queen earlier and the wizard later give different accounts of how the flute was lost; the mariner, after finding he is unable to play it, puts it in his pouch.

By **noon**, the narrator has gone further west. Again, the time is indicated by the sun:

Bright above me on the bridge of noon<sup>5</sup>  
Sun was standing, shadows dwindled,  
Heat was hovering in a haze that  
danced  
Upon rocks about my road. (284-87a)

At this point, the mariner discovers a group of statues of men and a living dwarf. The dwarf explains the statues are the wizard's heroic transformations of half the crew of a different ship (not the one the narrator was master mariner on), the other half of that crew having been transformed to animals by the Queen. During this conversation, the time is repeated: "Noon was burning / Bright about us" (368b-369a).

The mariner forces the dwarf to guide him to where the wizard may be found. They

reach the west coast of the island in the **evening**:

Day was dropping to the dazzling plain  
Of the waves westward. Winging  
homeward  
Came the flying flocks; flowers were  
closing,  
Level light over the land was poured.  
(383-87)

The mariner sees in a valley the statue of a maiden. The wizard is also there, and he argues for the mariner to drink his potion which will turn him to stone, just as has the maiden drunk, the maiden being the wizard's daughter. As the mariner is poised to drink, the time has advanced to **sunset**:

In the west, scarlet,  
Day was dying. Dark night apace  
Over earth's eastern edge towards us  
Came striding up. Stars, one or two,  
Had lit their lamps. (491b-95a)

At this point comes the turn in the action, that which Tolkien calls the eucatastrophe. The dwarf plays the flute that the mariner had found and kept. As he starts to play, the time sequence is reinforced: "light was waning" (517b) the poem says. The playing causes several transformations, changing the dwarf to an elf with angel-like wings, returning the statues to life, recalling the wizard inwardly to his old love for the Queen.

The wizard, the elf (still playing the flute), the former statues, and the mariner journey on foot eastward. They walk "On flowers folded" (595a). The **night-time** is described:

Earth-breathing scents  
On mildest breeze moved towards us.  
Cobwebs caught us. Clear-voiced, an  
owl  
To his kind calling clove the darkness,  
The fox, further, was faint barking.  
(598b-602)

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The description continues as they reach “the country of downs” (603b) that is evidently a halfway point:

Glory breaking  
Unclosed the clouds. Clear and golden  
Out into the open swam the orb’d  
splendor  
Of a moon, marvellous. (605b-08a)

Then, without more description of their walking, they are at the edge of the dark forest. From it come centaurs and the Queen, all also transformed, presumably by the flute playing—the mariners turned animals are now centaurs and the Queen is back in love with the magician.

A third description of the **night** is offered briefly, after the magician and the Queen are reconciled with a love song together:

The fields of air  
Beamed more brightly. About the  
moon  
More than a myriad mazy weavings  
Of fire flickered. Far off there rolled  
Summer thunder. (673b-77a)

This seems more a brighter moment in the night-time to reflect the love between the Queen and the magician than really time sequence. And in the last fifty lines of the poem half a dozen more references to the moonlight appear (694b, 696a, 710a, 719b, 724b-725, 729b), adding nothing to the temporal sequence. No positional shift in the sky by the moon is traced.

This summarizes the unity of time in “The Nameless Isle.” It should be remembered that Aristotle observed that Greek plays normally covered a fictional period of twenty-four hours or slightly more. It was the later critics who said that a play should take place in no more than twenty-four hours. Lewis’s romance moves from night-time when the mariner awakes until he, the young woman (the daughter of the magician and the Queen), and the elf (formerly a dwarf) leave the island during the

next night. It is twenty-four hours and perhaps slightly more. Of course, the journey that took a whole daytime to make by the mariner is retraced in the reverse direction reversed during the night, before the next morning comes, and a ship is built from trees felled in the eastern forest during the same night—but those are aspects of this being a romance, not a classical play.

One passage in the poem needs to be considered some more, but not as part of the time sequence. This passage is the poem’s long introduction. This is not a defense of the opening in terms of the unity of time, but simply a conjecture of the influence of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* on Lewis’s poem. As has been pointed out before, Lewis’s poem began from his experience of the plot of Mozart’s *Magic Flute* (King 341 n16), so the basic content, as such, is not from Shakespeare. But certainly some parallels to *The Magic Flute* might have drawn Lewis’s attention to *The Tempest*: the young lovers, with the male having to undergo a trial; the young woman with a magician for mother or father; the emphasis on magic; the would-be-rapist assistant (Monostatos in the opera, Caliban in the play), for example. One suggestion that Lewis had Shakespeare in mind is the simple fact that he did not use the more-or-less Egyptian setting of *The Magic Flute*; the island suggests *The Tempest*. A second is that he shaped his central plot according the unities—one of these unities has been argued; the other two will be discussed after this Shakespearean consideration. And a third simple fact is that Lewis also begins his poem with a shipwreck and ends it with a leaving of the island, as Shakespeare does *The Tempest*. (King mentions the opening of both works with a storm [146].) Although Lewis spends the first sixteen lines of his poem on the voyage before the storm (1-16a), and Shakespeare begins with the ship in the storm, Lewis does develop the events of the storm fully in the following forty-one lines (16b-57). Shakespeare cannot show the actual results on stage, since all except the actual sailors leap into the sea and swim to shore, and Ariel



preserves the lives of all and their ship, without their knowing his aid (1.2.208-237); Lewis describes—or, rather, has his narrator describe—the powerful wave that lifts him alone over the rocks before the shore (41b-57). At the end of the last act, Prospero and most of the others are planning to return to Naples by ship the next morning; Lewis's three are on ship, leaving from the island in the night-time, steered by the elf. It is as if Ferdinand, Miranda, and Caliban-magically-turned-into-Ariel were all that returned to Naples, and they left in the late evening. Technically, the last thirty-two lines are not set on the island, so they, like the introduction, are not part of the unity of place, although still part of the unity of time (710b-742).

### The Unity of Place

The unity of place having been mentioned, it can next be considered. As was said with the unity of time, the maritime opening must be omitted from consideration—and in the case of the unity of place, the maritime conclusion also. But the basic fable, from the awakening on the island to the leaving of it, is all laid in a single setting, the island itself. As was said earlier, some, more rigid critics insisted on only one setting: they would demand one spot on the island for all the scenes. Other, more liberal critics—but still in the neo-classical tradition—allowed for any setting in the same town. Here, the same island is used. The protagonist crosses it twice, from the east coast to the west and then back. Of course, Lewis's poem being a narrative, the walking is narrated—unlike Shakespeare's play where scene designations are sometimes "Another part of the Island" (e.g. 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3), and the play, in production, is simply a matter of characters entering—at least, if it is produced simply, in something like the original production at the Globe. Thus, the previous discussion of the unity of time has basically shown that Lewis has, also, within his format

of the narrative work, observed the unity of place.

### The Unity of Plot

The third unity, that of plot or "action," takes more discussion than the unity of place. What does one mean by plot? A simple view will be offered here: a plot is based on some type of complication or conflict, and the resolution of the plot is merely the resolution of that complication or conflict in one way or another. A tragic work most often resolves the conflict by someone dying (Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* substitutes a blinding for a death). A romantic plot in the modern sense of *romantic* usually resolves the conflict by two people getting married (as in Jane Austen's novels). A religious plot may resolve its conflict by someone having a vision of God (both the Book of Job and Dante's *Divine Comedy* do this).

What is the conflict in "The Nameless Isle"? Unlike a realistic work in which the mariner would be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder over the loss of his ship and the loss of all his crewmates and his barely explainable survival, Lewis's poem is a romance (in fantasy sense as well as, and perhaps more than, in Jane Austen's sense). In the poem, the shipwreck is a means of getting the protagonist to the island, but it is soon forgotten as the events in the new setting occur. Perhaps, in some non-rational sense, the discovery of the enchanted sailors from a different ship is meant to satisfy the need for the rescue of the mariner's sailors from death; here, the island's crew are rescued from the deathlike state of being marble statues or from the reduction to being below the human level as animals).

Another way to consider the conflict is to contrast this poem with a detective story—with a problem over two differing accounts of a theft. The Queen says that the wizard stole her flute and has it in "a strange prison," where it is "unloved" (209b, 210a); presumably by "unloved" she means it is not

played. She claims the results of playing it are to increase the growth of plants (the whole passage, 201-212a). On the other hand, the wizard says the Queen stole the flute which had been made by the ancient ruler of the earth as a gift for the magician's daughter; the Queen could not get the flute to make music, so she threw it away (468b-474, 480-83a). The protagonist, as the detective, would have to discover if the Queen just assumed it was locked away because it was not being played, so the prison reference was not a deliberate lie. On the other hand, since the flute was found lying in the grasses by the stream, the protagonist must decide if the wizard's account is accurate about the throwing away, as it seems to be—but did the Queen actually throw it away or did the magician do it and say that she did it? Her description of the flowers responding to the flute suggests she played it, while the magician says she was not able to. But this is a fantasy romance: these differences in testimony are never resolved—instead, the resolution is in the playing of the flute.

The basic conflict in "The Nameless Isle," then, is an archetypal one: an earth goddess—the "earth goddess" is meant seriously because the Queen, in a vision, takes to her breasts and nurses the animals of the forest (113-141a)—vs. a man who is against nature and proclaims a type of timeless existence as statuary. As has been mentioned, after the dwarf produces music on the flute, the wizard and the Queen are reconciled in love, as husband and wife. Thus the conflict is ended. With the playing of the flute, hatred is turned—or re-turned—to love.

But along with this basic conflict, two others exist in the poem. An Italian critic might insist that Aristotle said only one plot was appropriate in a play—so here, a triple plot is a flaw. Actually, in the sixteenth century, at least, the neo-classical critics seemed mainly intent on outlawing a serious play with a comic subplot (Holdman and Harmon 488). One can see the obvious question of unity in such works. The definition of the unity of action that was given

earlier referred to "no *or few* subplots" (stress added), and that would allow "The Nameless Isle" within the rules.

Actually, the two other conflicts in Lewis's poem are echo plots of the main one, thus reinforcing the work's impact. First, the ship's crew being turned into statues or animals obviously echoes the views of the wizard, for a stony escape from life, and of the Queen, for a type of unity with nature. With the flute music, the resolution is a return to humanity, to a degree, but with aspects of the two views: humanlike but shaped like Greek heroic figures or half human and half horse. So their problem of being unfairly changed by the two polarities of the poem is resolved appropriately.

The other subplot is that of the mariner and the daughter of the archetypal couple. In theory, this is an echo of the wizard and the Queen, and their resolution in love. In actuality, it seems to be an account of a young man seeking to find love. After all, the "protagonist" of the poem—as he has been called in this essay, occasionally—should have his own plot. When he wakes and meets the Queen, he "Dreaming of druey, and with many a dear craving / Wooed the woman under the wild forest" (104-05); she laughs at his protestations and tells him she is too old for him—and suggests her daughter. Actually, his reaction to an archetypal nature goddess seems appropriately sexual, but a finding of an appropriate real woman as a substitute for some dream figure seems, though not archetypal, still an average experience for a young man. It is possible to read the magician's suggestion that the young man drink his potion and become a statue to reflect a protective father trying to cut down on a young man's sexual designs on his daughter—perhaps this is too mundane to fit the archetypal romance. At any rate, the poem suggests that the young woman has to be awakened to sexuality. In the poem, when the dwarf-turned-elf is playing the flute, one of the transformations is *after* he returns her from stone to human:

But the wing'd wonder [...]

[...]  
Danced to my dear one. Druery he  
taught her,  
Bent her, bowed her, bent never before,  
Brought her, blushing as it were a bride  
mortal,  
To hold to her heart my head as I  
kneeled,  
Faint in that ferly [...] (576a-582a)

So “[d]ruery he taught her.” A number of sources suggest that often middle-class young women in Victorian England went to their bridal beds knowing nothing about sexuality, such was the prudery of the time and the emphasis on chaperones (e.g., “Victorian morality” [under subsection “Description”]). The poem, with the woman turned to stone, suggests a late arousal to sexual impulses. The magician says that she, as a statue, is removed from the problems of the world: “Chaste, enchanted, till the change of the world, / In beauty she abides” (422-423a). The change of the world came sooner than he expected, with the playing of the flute, and Sigmund Freud would have understood the flute as a symbol of arousal to life and to passion. In short, the magical transformation caused in the case of the young couple seems wholly to have been on her side—but, as the magician and the Queen come to their love later in the poem, so here at least the young couple are together. After being “[f]aint in that ferly,” the young man says he was “frail, mortal man” *until* (he goes on) “I was love-learned both to learn and teach / Love with that lady” (582-83a). Does the poem suggest he was not long “[f]aint in that ferly” but responded, despite the audience of statues-turned-men, the dwarf-turned-elf, and the magician?<sup>6</sup> If so, perhaps they were gentlemen and turned away. Or one can assume he was a “frail, mortal man” until the honeymoon started, either on the boat at the end of the poem or in England. The “till” (until) in the poem is not a clear time indication (582a).

These three plots reflect the major conflicts in the poem: the estrangement of the magician and the Queen; the enchantment of

the crew, restricting their humanity; and the need for love by the young couple. As has been said above, this romance, besides being a romance in the fantasy sense, is also a romance in two of its plots in the Jane Austen sense. Perhaps a fourth plot should be added. In the most obvious terms, the dwarf-turned-elf, in his playing of the flute, is simply the mechanism for the resolutions in the poem. But he also has two thwarted desires that are resolved in the poem, both expressed while he is still in the form of the ugly dwarf. First, he laments for his crewmates turned to stone, although they mistreated him when they were alive (318b-332a, 339b). Clearly, this problem is resolved when he flutes them back to enobled life; they greet him with kisses and call him king (549b-550, 555b-56). His second conflict—a desired change—is his wish to return to Kent, the county in England. He says to the narrator,

['] [...] here I stay, hoping  
Always, if ever such an hour should  
come[,]  
To drink before I die out of the deep  
tankard,  
And to eat ham and eggs in my home  
country  
That is the weald of Kent. And I wish  
that I was there.’ (361b-65)

When he takes out the flute, he says to the wizard:

[']I trust even now [...]  
That I shall drink before I die out of a  
deep tankard  
In the weald of Kent, will you, nill you!  
(513a, 514-15)

After the transformations and the reconciliation of the wizard and the Queen, it is the wizard who says they should “send” the elf back to England (686a). This being a fantasy romance, one should not ask what the effect will be when a tall elf with angel-like wings strides into an inn and orders ham, eggs, and beer. But the elf does hold the wheel of the boat as he and the young couple

leave the nameless isle. Thus, his problems are also resolved, partly through his flute playing and partly through indebtedness due to his flute playing.

## Conclusion

Overall, Lewis's poem shows a basic planned adherence to the three unities, once one makes allowances for it being a narrative work, not a play. The main part of the poem has the unity of time, although—since this is a romance—the night-time seems a bit more elastic in its hours than does the day. The unity of place is obvious—one island for the main part of the poem. The unity of plot could be argued, but a primary plot with closely related subplots will get by.

This essay has not been a discussion of the meaning of the poem but rather an analysis of one aspect of its artistry.<sup>7</sup> One handbook on literature says, "The concentration and strength that result from efforts at attaining *unity of action, time, and place* may be regarded as dramatic virtues" (Holman and Harmon 489). The same concentration and strength may be seen in Lewis's romance.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Popular sources have been used for this discussion of the three unities to show that this is common knowledge in the study of literature. No need was felt to cite passages from Lodovico Castelvetro to show the Italian background, let alone from Aristotle in Greek.

<sup>2</sup> That *The Tempest* takes place in less than a day is clear, but the precise number of hours is not. The first specific time reference is in I.2.239-240, in a discussion between Prospero and Ariel. Ariel says it is past noon ("Past the mid season") and Prospero says it is at least 2:00 p.m. ("At least two glasses," measuring by hour-glasses). How long the storm lasted (depicted in I.1) is not certain, but at the start of I.2, Miranda indicates (in the opening speech) that the storm is still

going on (although the ship is no longer seen by her—she thinks it sank). Thus the storm may have lasted from about 1:00 p.m. to 2:00; perhaps it may be imagined to have started earlier. The next specific time reference is in V.1.4, again in a conversation between Prospero and Ariel, the latter saying the time is "On the sixth hour." Presumably that means the time is nearly 6:00 p.m. But at that point the difficulties begin: three references to a three-hour period occur later in Act V. In V.1.136-7, Alonso says that the Italian nobles "three hours since / Were wrack'd upon this shore[.]" In V.1.186, Alonso asks his son who the woman is he is playing chess with, saying "What is this maid with whom thou wast at play? / Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours[.]" This fits well enough with Alonso saying the shipwreck occurred three hours earlier. The third time reference is in V.i.2243, by the Boatswain, who says their ship is fine, despite the fact "but three glasses since, we gave out split[.]" The logical problem is that three hours before the six o'clock that Ariel announced is three in the afternoon, not before two o'clock, as the earlier references would place the seeming shipwreck. One strong possibility is that Shakespeare wanted in the three-hour references to suggest that everything had happened in the length of the time of the play on the stage, no matter what he had indicated earlier. (Of course, one could say that Alonso and the Boatwain have been enchanted and so have lost track of time, but that is a scholarly quibble, not part of the explanations on the stage.)

<sup>3</sup> The use of the third person ("man") for the narrator may be a sign of an earlier version of the poem written entirely in the third person, but it is not conclusive, for a rhetorical reference to oneself in the third person is possible.

<sup>4</sup> Quotations are given by line number, not page, so that when Don W. King's *The Complete Poems of C. S. Lewis: A Critical Edition* appears in the fall of 2014, this essay may be used with it as well as with the *Narrative Poems* edition.

<sup>5</sup> A googling of “bridge of noon” shows that this is a fairly common phrase, at least in poetry. Perhaps it comes from the “bridge” point at which ante-meridian becomes post-meridian; it does not appear under bridge<sup>1</sup> in the OED (as of 17 May 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Lewis never describes the statues as being with or without clothing, probably deliberately. The maiden holding the mariner’s head to her heart obviously becomes more erotic if she is naked.

<sup>7</sup> For one reading of the meaning, a reading in terms of Lewis’s early life, see this author’s essay listed in the Works Cited.

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# Once a Queen of Glome, Always a Queen of Narnia: Orual and Susan's Denial of the Divine and Redemption Through Grace

Kat Coffin

*"In the dream, the lion and the witch come down the hill together.*

*"She is standing on the battlefield, holding her sister's hand. She looks up at the golden lion, and the burning amber of his eyes. "He's not a tame lion, is he?" she whispers to her sister, and they shiver.*

*The witch looks at them all, then she turns to the lion, and says, coldly, "I am satisfied with the terms of our agreement. You take the girls for yourself, I shall have the boys..."*

*The lion eats all of her except her head, in her dream. He leaves the head, and one of her hands, just as a housecat leaves the parts of a mouse it has no desire for, for later; or as a gift." (Gaiman, 189)*

Neil Gaiman's short story, *The Problem of Susan*, explores what might have happened to Susan Pevensie after the events of C.S. Lewis' book *The Last Battle*, particularly in regards to Susan's penchant for lipstick and nylons and the death of her family. Gaiman's short story ends with the titular character's death, in both the real world, where she dies of old age, and in a disturbing fantasy sequence, where Aslan devours her. It is obvious from the graphic settings and explicit nature of the short story that Gaiman interprets Susan's exclusion from the final book of C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* as damnation, for succumbing to adulthood and, most

particularly, to sex. While it is up for debate whether Lewis' omission of Susan from the final book is due to her gender, the amount of controversy 'the problem of Susan' has generated is undeniable.

Writers Philip Pullman and J.K. Rowling have both denounced *The Chronicles of Narnia* as misogynistic, displaying C.S. Lewis' supposed fear of women and sexuality. Pullman states that Susan "was sent to hell because she was getting interested in clothes and boys." (Pullman, 1) Rowling, while acknowledging her childhood love for the series, sadly comments that Susan "is lost to Narnia because she becomes interested in lipstick. She's become irreligious basically because she found sex." (Grossman, 39)

And yet, while scholars have debated whether Susan's treatment is misogynistic, very little consideration has been given to Susan in regards to Orual, from Lewis' final work of fiction, *Till We Have Faces*. Without a doubt, Orual is one of the most complex characters in all of Lewis' vast works. Similarly to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Till We Have Faces* relates a complex theological narrative through the use of myth, mainly concentrating on the story of Cupid and Psyche—with the unique perspective of having the narrative be told in first person, from Psyche's sister, Orual's, point of view. Orual eventually becomes queen of Glome, despite Glome's heavily sexist culture. While Narnia may not be progressively feminist in

the modern sense of the word, there is no denying that Lewis intended for Glome to be entrenched in misogyny and for his heroine to rise above it.

But when we closely examine the characters of Susan and Orual, we find striking parallels between the two. It is through these parallels that I propose we might see an alternative approach to ‘the problem of Susan’—that through Orual, we might find Susan’s redemption.

At first glance, Orual and Susan seem deeply contrasting figures. Susan’s beauty is referenced multiple times in various texts: “Grown-ups thought her the pretty one of the family and she was no good at schoolwork (though otherwise very old for her age) and Mother said she ‘would get far more out of a trip to America than the youngsters.’” (Lewis, 426) When Susan becomes queen in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Lewis describes her, writing, “And Susan grew into a tall and gracious woman with black hair that fell almost to her feet and the kings of the countries beyond the sea began to send ambassadors asking for her hand in marriage.” (Lewis, 194) The Tisroc’s wicked son Rabadash’s desire for Susan frames the plot of *The Horse and His Boy*. Susan’s beauty is *impressed* upon the series.

Orual’s ugliness is similarly stressed in *Till We Have Faces*. One of Orual’s earliest memories is her father ordering her and her sister, Redival, to sing a wedding hymn for his new bride. The King further commands that the women be veiled—“Do you think I want my queen frightened out of her senses? Veils of course. And good thick veils too.’ One of the other girls tittered, and I think that was the first time I clearly understood that I am ugly.” (Lewis, 11) When Bardia, the captain of the guard, begins teaching her how to sword fight, Orual overhears him say, “Why, yes, it’s a pity about her face. But she’s a brave girl and honest. If a man was blind and she weren’t the King’s daughter, she’d make him a good wife.” (Lewis, 92)

Curiously enough, though Susan’s beauty and Orual’s ugliness are both equally emphasized, Lewis does not provide detailed

descriptions. He mentions the color of Susan’s hair and that Orual is ‘hard-featured’, like a man. The King calls her ‘hobgoblin’ or other such insults—but none of these vague descriptions provides an image for either character.

Beauty and ugliness provoke the interchangeable reactions in each text. Indeed, when Orual chooses to wear a veil permanently, some believe, “...that I wore a veil because I was of a beauty so dazzling that if I let it be seen all men in the world would run mad; or else that Ungit was jealous of my beauty...” (Lewis, 229) And of course, one of the many themes of *Till We Have Faces* involves how we are all faceless before the gods—Orual’s ugliness is a metaphor for humanity’s corruption before God. It is her facelessness that separates her from the gods—similarly, it is Susan’s shallow vanity that separates her from Aslan.

Another parallel between Orual and Susan is the relationship each fosters with her younger sister. There is clear love and affection, but both Orual and Susan evidently believe they have their sisters’ best interests at heart, and that Psyche and Lucy are too young or naïve to know what’s best for them.

Susan has always tried to maintain the role of the sensible, mature sibling towards her family. One of her first lines in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is her bossily telling her younger brother Edmund that it was time he was in bed—to which Edmund snaps back to stop ‘trying to talk like mother’.

This dangerous tendency to ‘act like a grownup’ expands into a genuine character flaw—a fatal flaw, as it turns out, as Susan excludes herself from the final Chronicle, laughing at her brothers and sister’s concern over Narnia, deeming it a silly little game they used to play. This is not an abrupt change, as her struggles with this flaw are particularly evident in the book, *Prince Caspian*—it could even be interpreted as foreshadowing.

One of the sharpest turning points in the text involves Lucy attempting to convince her brothers and sister that she has seen Aslan—and that Aslan wants them to follow

Him. None of the Pevensies are able to see Aslan, and they doubt Lucy, choosing to make their own decisions. No one is more guilty of this than Susan.

The first time Lucy sees Aslan and she tries to persuade them to follow Him, the others outvote her and proceed a different route. The second time, Lucy makes it clear that she will be following Aslan whether they come or not. Susan insists Lucy was dreaming and progressively gets nastier as the group reluctantly begins to follow her. Lewis writes, "Susan was the worst. 'Suppose I started behaving like Lucy,' she said. 'I might threaten to stay here whether the rest of you went on or not. I jolly well think I shall.'" (Lewis, 384) The loyal dwarf Trumpkin sternly rebukes her, and Susan grudgingly follows.

This scene draws a striking parallel to a conversation between Orual and Psyche in *Till We Have Faces*. Orual's younger sister, the beautiful and pure Psyche, is sacrificed to the god of the Grey Mountain. Orual goes to the mountain to gather her sister's remains for burial and is shocked to find her sister, alive and well, claiming that she is the bride of the god of the Grey Mountain and lives in a beautiful palace, invisible to Orual. Orual dismisses her younger sister's tale and allows herself to be convinced that Psyche is delusional—though Orual initially cannot find any reason as to why her sister looks so healthy and well-cared for, despite being left to die on the mountain. Orual commands Psyche, who has never seen her husband's face, to wait till he slumbers, light a lamp, and look upon his face—something the god has expressly forbidden.

Orual's threat is similar to Susan's, though more drastic. "Listen. You have driven me to desperate courses. I give you your choice. Swear on this edge, with my blood still wet on it, that you will this very night do as I have commanded you; or else I'll first kill you and then myself." (Lewis, 163) This is the adult version of Susan's threat. Psyche refuses to heed her sister, citing her husband as the new authority in her life, and Lucy will not obey Susan either—Aslan's

command takes priority. But there is no Trumpkin or Peter to reprove Orual's behavior. Her love has become a twisted, possessive love. Blackmailed by her sister, Psyche vows to light the lamp and look upon her husband.

It is in this moment that both Orual and Susan are 'acting like a grown-up', the fatal flaw that spoils their lives. Because of course, Lucy *did* see Aslan. Psyche *was* married to the god of the Grey Mountain. Susan is the last of the Pevensie siblings to finally see Aslan and admits it shamefacedly to Lucy.

"Lucy," said Susan in a very small voice.

"Yes?" said Lucy.

"I see him now. I'm sorry."

"That's all right."

"But I've been far worse than you know. I really believed it was him—he, I mean—yesterday. When he warned us not to go down to the fir wood. And I really believed it was him tonight, when you woke us up. I mean, deep down inside. Or I could have, if I'd let myself. But I just wanted to get out of the woods and—and—oh, I don't know. And whatever am I to say to him?" (Lewis, 385-386)

Similarly, Orual admits convincing herself not to believe in the gods, despite evidence to the contrary. Just as Susan did not see Aslan, Orual could not perceive Psyche's palace. But when night falls on the Grey Mountain, Orual glimpses the palace for a brief moment. "For when I lifted my head and looked once more into the mist across the water, I saw that which brought my heart into my throat. There stood the palace, grey—solid, motionless, wall within wall, pillar and arch and architrave, acres of it, a labyrinthine beauty. As she had said, it was like no house ever seen in our land or age." (Lewis, 132)

The moment passes and Orual sees nothing but fog. Her vision of the great house filled her with remorse for not believing in



her younger sister and a zeal to beg forgiveness, but when the fog sets in, she convinces herself it was a dream. When she returns home, she tries to forget that she saw the palace, choosing instead to believe her old tutor's theory, that Psyche had been kidnapped by a brigand and had lost her mind.

Like Susan, Orual realizes her mistake far too late. She returns to the Grey Mountain, threatens her sister into submission. That night, she sees Psyche's lamp from across the valley and all around her erupts in light. "The great voice, which rose up from somewhere close to the light, went through my whole body in such a swift wave of terror that it blotted out even the pain in my arm. It was no ugly sound; even in its implacable sternness it was golden." (Lewis, 171)

For Lewis, it was never becoming an adult that kept his characters from God, (or sex or femininity for that matter) it was the pride in *being* adult. Matthew 18:2-4 reads, "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said 'Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven.'" Susan, as Peter gravely states in *The Last Battle*, "is no longer a friend of Narnia". (Lewis, 741) Her dampening remarks about 'those silly games we used to play' convey this quite clearly—Susan has not humbled herself. So intent on growing up, she's forgotten that to see Aslan, she had to become like a little child again.

During the last days of Narnia, Susan is not present with her siblings to see night fall, to see Aslan end their secret world. It is the expanded mistake she made in *Prince Caspian*. The fog sets in on Susan's view of Narnia and she renounces divinity.

But while we are left to ponder the problem of Susan, Orual's fate is written quite clearly. The god of the Grey Mountain warned her, "You, woman, shall know yourself and your work. You also shall be

Psyche." (Lewis, 174) Orual seeks out her sister, who she hears weeping, but is unable to find her. For the rest of Orual's earthly life, throughout her reign in Glome (for she eventually becomes Queen), she is haunted by the sounds of chains rattling and Psyche's sobs.

The book chronicles Orual's worldly journey, where Orual, though a wise and just ruler, continually makes selfish choices to benefit only her. She loves her old tutor, a Greek slave called the Fox, but after her father's death, though she declares him a free man, her distress at the idea of him returning to his family, away from her, pressures him to remain. Orual spends most of her life resenting Ansit, Bardia's wife, because she possessed Bardia in a way Orual never had claim to. Ansit, accuses her of leaving 'what you had left of him'—of stealing most of his life, devouring it, in a way. She says bitterly to Orual, "Oh, I know well enough that you were not lovers. You left me that...You left me my share. When you had used him, you would let him steal home to me; until you needed him again...I'll not deny it; I had what you left of him." (Lewis, 262) Orual acknowledges this later in the text, bitterly comparing herself to the barbarian goddess Ungit: "It was I who was Ungit. That ruinous face was mine...that all-devouring womblake, yet barren, thing. Glome was a web—I the swollen spider, squat at its center, gorged with men's stolen lives." (Lewis, 276)

Susan's vague outcome is hinted upon, when Polly says in frustration, "I wish she *would* grow up. She wasted all her school time wanting to be the age she is now, and she'll waste all the rest of her life trying to stay that age." (Lewis, 741) Susan's struggles center more around vanity and a toxic desire to be 'act more grown up' than a craving to be loved. But nevertheless, the parallels between Susan and Orual are readily present. The climax of *Till We Have Faces* centers around Orual's redemption—could Susan have a similar redemption, despite the Chronicles' conclusion?

First, let's examine Susan's confrontation with Aslan in *Prince Caspian*.

"Then, after an awful pause, the deep voice said, 'Susan'. Susan made no answer but the others thought she was crying. 'You have listened to fears, child,' said Aslan. 'Come, let me breathe on you. Forget them. Are you brave again?'"

"A little, Aslan,' said Susan." (Lewis, 386)

Even after her fatal flaw nearly leads her to ruin, Aslan forgives her and welcomes her back—"Once a queen of Narnia, always a queen of Narnia." A taste of 'true reality', as Lewis would call it, a moment of the Lion's breath, and Susan is redeemed. But only because she has set aside her craving for a false maturity, her desire to have authority and control over her siblings' lives—only after she has become a child again.

This does not, however, resolve Susan's fate in *The Last Battle*. While her siblings join Aslan in his country and the new Narnia, she is left alone to live her frivolous, materialistic life on earth, presumably to make selfish choices that only benefit her. Lewis writes to one of his readers about Susan, saying, "She is left alive in this world at the end, having by then turned into a rather silly, conceited young woman. But there is plenty of time for her to mend, and perhaps she will get to Aslan's country in the end—in her own way." (Dorsett & Mead, 67)

Near the end of *Till We Have Faces*, Orual is summoned before the gods to put them on trial. She spent the majority of the text claiming that the gods cursed her life, took away her dear Psyche, and that there was "no creature (toad, scorpion, or serpent) so noxious to man as the gods." (Lewis, 249) She has lived a materialistic life, putting her glimpses of divinity, the fate of her sister, behind her.

When scholars claim that Susan was damned, we should look at Orual. We should consider the final passages of *Till We Have Faces*, when Orual falls before her sister,

begging her forgiveness for forcing Psyche's hand, for craving her sister's love possessively at the cost of everything else. We should recall Psyche's tender words to her lost, elder sister: "Did I not tell you, Maia,' she said, 'that a day was coming when you and I would meet in my house and no cloud between us?'" (Lewis, 306) For Orual, the fog has finally lifted.

"The Problem of Susan' has touched a nerve with children, writers, and scholars alike. Lewis told his troubled readers that Susan's story was not over. The striking parallels in Orual and Susan's journey, their relationship with their sisters, and their confrontation with God can only lead me to conclude that Susan's redemption, while unwritten, mirrors Orual's redemption—and perhaps that was one of Lewis' intentions in writing *Till We Have Faces*. Just as the god of the Grey Mountain said to Orual in the final passages, "You also are Psyche," (Lewis, 308), so Aslan said to Susan—"Once a king or queen of Narnia, always a king or queen of Narnia."

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# King Maker in *The Mind of The Maker*

Mark Eckel  
Capital Seminary & Graduate School

“The mind of the maker and the Mind of the Maker are formed on the same pattern, and all their works are made in their own image.”<sup>1</sup>

Dorothy Sayers would both revel in and revile television shows like *CSI*. Sayers, as a detective novelist, would marvel at the modern whodunit. But Dorothy would also berate the impact of detective dramas on culture. Sayers enumerates four problems with detective dramas: they are (1) always soluble, (2) completely soluble, (3) determined ahead of time to be soluble, and (4) soluble by definition—something solved is something finite.<sup>2</sup> The concern Sayers offers in her chapter “Problem Picture” remains today. We fallen, finite, fragile creatures have yet to submit to the inevitable truth: we don’t know it all. The novels we read, the movies we watch, suggest immediate solutions to problems.

“Houston, we have a problem” is not simply a catch phrase from *Apollo 13* seeking a pragmatic solution. Ingenuity is fueled by imagination. Imagination comes from imaging. Imaging comes from the image of God in His image-bearers. Sayers states, “The artist does not see life as a problem to be solved, but as a medium for creation . . . *mak[ing] a new thing.*”<sup>3</sup> Beauty can be created out of ugliness. Making humans in His image,

The Creator created creatures who creatively create from creation.

Creativity is not limited to painting, poetry, or prose but includes farming, tool and dye casting, as well as answers for astronauts. There is a reason we still refer to someone’s work as their “craft.” Dorothy Sayers goes to great lengths to expose a Trinitarian Christian view of creativity.

Seen from a First Testament perspective, Sayers’ ideas conform closely to human kingship<sup>4</sup> originally intended by God. The vestiges of our robes remain. Sayers’ views intersect with The Creator, the creature, creation, and creativity born from the biblical-cultural connections in Genesis 1. What does it mean to be made in God’s image in the ancient Near Eastern world? How does the answer to the question of image-bearing establish Sayers’ essential work *The Mind of the Maker*? Why must The Church return to the Hebraic viewpoint of creativity as surmised by Sayers and found in Genesis?

The historical act of Genesis 1 becomes poetry in Psalm 8 asking “What is man, What is the son of man?” The Psalmist identifies human weakness and frailty through the first word *enosh*. The second, *ben-adam*, indicates the limitation of one created by The Creator. The context is awe; the finite, fragile, fallen human contrasted with the presence of God and His creation. “That you are mindful of,

care for” actively brings to mind another person. Psalm 8 shows us The Creator of Genesis 1 driven by longing, caring, and seeking after humans. The Creator created creatures who creatively create from creation. Image-bearers image *The Mind of the Maker*. We are God’s representation, His representatives; royalty responsible for God’s realm.

We are God’s Representation Kings, in the ancient Near Eastern world, bore the image of the god they served. The king’s image was the god’s image. Only the king was made in the god’s image. The king represented or contained the deity’s essence. The biblical view, thrice stated in Genesis 1, proclaims all humanity was made in the image of God. Hebraic views challenged pagan views of authority. Not only did the Hebraic view upend dictators, but Genesis gave authority to all people. The work of Yahweh would be accomplished through people, all bearing the image of God.

We are God’s Representative Ancient Near Eastern statues showed the king as a small figurine next to the larger figure of a god. Wherever the image of the god appeared, the deity was present. The image of the god was manifest through the image of the king. Wherever people saw the image of the king, the god was present. The Hebraic view of God’s image is clear: wherever we see a person, God is present. Whereas the work of a pagan god was symbolically seen in an idol’s image, Yahweh’s work would actually be accomplished through the image of God in every human being.

We are Given Royalty Rulers in the ancient Near Eastern world wore crowns signifying their consecration to the gods. Psalm 8, poetry mirroring the history of Genesis 1, says all image-bearers of God, all people were crowned with glory. The crown was a wreath, woven with flowers, worn at banquets as a sign of royal authority. The person wearing the crown was honored and elevated. The exaltation of humans by Yahweh begins as an

inward essence; humans bear the weight (“glory”) of God, a show of uniqueness. Human significance begins with the character of Yahweh; a person’s worth, value, and dignity has intrinsic beginnings. Being crowned with honor is the extrinsic, public display of God. Every person displays God.

We are Given a Realm In ancient Near Eastern polytheism, the gods were always based on something people could see: from heaven, on earth, under the earth, or in the water. In a solely material universe, gods come from the creation. In a material universe, earthly things are worshipped. The earth is worshipped in a pagan view of the universe; so-called “environmentalism.” The Hebraic view reversed the view of the surrounding culture. The image-bearers are given authority for and over the earth. The earth was created by Yahweh for all people who bore His image.

We are Given Responsibilities Humans bear derivative authority from their Creator. There is a difference between *autocracy* and *authority*. The first indicates what was spawned in the ancient pagan world: despotism, totalitarianism, and dictatorship. The second limits control since humans still must answer to Another. Because *authority* was given by Yahweh to all His image-bearers, they bore responsibility for creation from The Creator. Genesis 1 words “subdue” and “rule” are the basis for every Department of Natural Resources demand: management and conservation. We are concerned for creation not based on governmental edict but internal duty.

All people are image-bearers. We are God’s representation, His representatives; royalty responsible for God’s realm. Genesis image-bearers image Sayers’ work *The Mind of the Maker*.

The image of the Maker now makes images. The only difference “between the mind of the maker and the Mind of his Maker [is], a difference, not of category, but only of quality

and degree.”<sup>5</sup> If, as Genesis dictates, humans are representatives of God, we should not find it odd that God’s image bearers are all creators in their own right. Creatively creating from creation is founded on universal principles; Sayers’ “major premise.”<sup>6</sup>

For all people, places, times, and cultures: “the religious experience of Christianity is no isolated phenomenon; it has, to say the least of it, parallels elsewhere within the universe.”<sup>7</sup> What Sayers refers to as a “spiritual structure” is resident within “every man and woman.” Creativity is not limited to those who “work in stone, or paint, or music, or letters” but is displayed in “every man and woman.”<sup>8</sup> Sayers bears witness to the Hebraic mindset: we all bear the representation of God on earth.

Sayers takes issue with “mastering one’s material” and suggests the creative mind “co-operate with” not “dominate” over the material world.<sup>9</sup> Hebraic concerns for image bearers are the same. Humans bear responsibility for the world. One cannot truly be concerned for the creation if people or the earth are the chief benefactors. If we care for creation only for ourselves or our progeny, our motives are selfish. If we care for creation only for creation’s sake, humans should take a purely hands-off approach. But if image bearers are charged with responsibility, universal standards and conduct are possible. Every Department of Natural Resources depends on the last premise. Naturalistic-materialism can only create creation-care by *fiat*. The Hebraic-Christian view of creation alone gives genuine reason to care.

Our realm given by God to us focuses not on we who live here but on He who made it. Our worship is reserved for God, not His world. Sayers’ concern for a “problem-solution” mentality removes us from the focus. We tend to think that we can come up with answers for every question. Something is still missing. As Dorothy suggests, “The

murderer’s motive has been detected, but nothing at all has been said about the healing of his murderous soul.”<sup>10</sup> Our tendency toward worshipping the creation over The Creator includes our methods. If we think all things can be understood through quantitative analysis we become consumed by pragmatism. If, however, we creatively apply Sayers’ “way of grace” we begin to see problems in this realm not as soluble but an opportunity to “make something of them.”<sup>11</sup>

As royalty in this realm, we serve as benevolent shepherds. We provide for and protect the creation. We who have been “crowned with glory” now give God glory by “throwing God’s weight around.”<sup>12</sup> Creative creators know, Sayers says, “that the passion of making will seize him again the following day and drive him to construct a fresh world.”<sup>13</sup> “The vocation of the creative mind in man”<sup>14</sup>, Sayers continues, is the discovery of what is in God’s world. According to Solomon, this is the “glory of kings,”<sup>15</sup> hence, the glory of all people as vice-regents.

As kings, benevolent shepherds with God-given giftings, The Church glorifies God by providing solutions through the artistry of life. Established in Genesis, reflected through Dorothy Sayers, The Church retains its responsibility for artistry, beauty, and creativity. Sayers says there is a “disastrous and widening cleavage between the Church and the Arts.”<sup>16</sup> If The Creator created creatures who creatively create from creation such a chasm needs a bridge. Hear Dorothy Sayers again; her words 75 years ago are just as true today:

“We cannot deal with industrialism or unemployment unless we lift work out of the economic, political and social spheres and consider it also in terms of the work’s worth and the love of the work, as being in itself a sacrament and manifestation of man’s creative energy.”<sup>17</sup>

I offer five ideas for creative praxis, ideals on which The Church can stand; in the repository of Hebraic thought, promoted by Dorothy Sayers. Hebraic-Christian distinctions include:

1. Discovering biblical grids for Hebraic-Christian thinking. God is Truth; all truth is His, united in Himself.<sup>18</sup> God is Good; He sets the standard for both expression and evaluation.<sup>19</sup> God is Beauty; balance, harmony, symmetry, order, design, and proportion have their source in Him.<sup>20</sup>

2. Discerning biblical responses for counter-cultural responses. There are no brute facts; every color, musical note, or word has its source in God; there is nothing amoral in life.<sup>21</sup> “Beauty” strikes at the very heart of Gnostic dualism. The separation between utility and aesthetics is owed to the dismal failure of so-called “enlightened thinking” spawned during the Renaissance. There are no innate abilities; God’s likeness in humanity imbues creativity, intelligence, willfulness, design, purpose, planning, imagination, appreciation.<sup>22</sup> There is no “artistic voice”; creative knowledge, intelligence, craftsmanship, and skill originates from God, not solely the inner experience of the artist.<sup>23</sup>

3. Delighting in the multifaceted Truth-dimensions of God’s world. The first creative acts of God include the connection of artistry with utility, “He made the trees good for food and also pleasing to the eye.”<sup>24</sup> The first creative act by humans recorded in Scripture was the creation of musical instruments by the unbelieving line of Cain, instruments later commanded by God through the Psalmist to be used for community worship.<sup>25</sup> The first people indwelt by The Holy Spirit in the First Testament were artists. Bezalel was specifically anointed to create tabernacle accoutrements.<sup>26</sup>

4. Demonstrating creational vice-regency for immediate God-given roles. Unbelievers contribute excellence in their artwork, pleasing God.<sup>27</sup> All humans explore, refashion,

rework, or re-create using the abilities, skills, tools, materials, and languages they have been given by God.<sup>28</sup>

5. Designing plans with linkage of biblical theology with vocational ministry. We celebrate image-bearing creativity as a gift from God wherever it is found. We enjoy, appreciate, and delight in the beauty created by image-bearers. We value image-bearers and their works since they reflect God’s image.

*CSI, Law & Order, Bones, Psych, Criminal Minds, NCIS*, all detective dramas and movies have one thing in common: if there is a problem, there must be a solution. Dorothy Sayers believes image-bearers bring much more to life than materialistic pragmatism. Sayers ends her book where Genesis begins. *The Mind of the Maker* shows God as human king maker.

“That the eyes of all workers should behold the integrity of the work is the sole means to make that work good in itself and so good for mankind. This is only another way of saying that the work must be measured by the standard of eternity . . . done for God first and foremost.”<sup>29</sup>

Dr. Mark Eckel ([meckel@lbc.edu](mailto:meckel@lbc.edu)) is Professor of Leadership, Education & Discipleship at Capital Seminary & Graduate School, Washington, D.C. He resides in Fishers, Indiana. Mark is the author of numerous articles, curricula, and books including *I Just Need Time to Think: Reflective Study as Christian Practice* and *When the Lights Go Down: Movie Review as Christian Practice*. He blogs weekly at [www.warpandwoof.org](http://www.warpandwoof.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Dorothy L. Sayers, *Mind of the Maker*, introduction by Madeleine L’Engle, reprint. San Francisco: HarperCollins (1987), from the chapter “Problem Picture,” pp. 179-216.

<sup>2</sup> Sayers references her four problem-solutions on pages 194-207.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 188, 192, emphasis hers.

<sup>4</sup> Theologians refer to human kingship as “vice-regency.”

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 182.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 212.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 183.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 185.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 186.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 189.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 192-93.

<sup>12</sup> The definition comes from Larry Renoe, teaching pastor of Waterstone Community Church.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 207.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 211.

<sup>15</sup> Proverbs 25:2.

<sup>16</sup> Sayers, *Mind*, 214.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 218.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Kings 17:24; Psalm 25:5; Isaiah 45:18, 19.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:17-18.

<sup>20</sup> Genesis 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18, “He separated”; Psalm 27:4; 90:16, 17; 96:6-9.

<sup>21</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:14, 15; James 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:17.

<sup>22</sup> Psalm 111:2 and Psalm 145:3-13.

<sup>23</sup> Exodus 28:3; 31:1-11; 35:30, 31; 36:2; Isaiah 28:23-28.

<sup>24</sup> Genesis 2:9.

<sup>25</sup> Genesis 4:19-21; Psalm 148, 149.

<sup>26</sup> Exodus 26:2, 35:32, 35:31, 35:34; 36:2.

<sup>27</sup> 1 Kings 5:6; 2 Chronicles 2:17-18, 2 Chronicles 7:12-16.

<sup>28</sup> Genesis 4:21-22; 1 Kings 4:29-34; Psalm 148, 150.

<sup>29</sup> Sayers, *Maker*, 225.

# C.S. Lewis, Thomas Wolfe, and the Transatlantic Expression of *Sehnsucht*

Jedidiah Evans  
University of Sydney

The complex notion of *Sehnsucht* is today frequently discussed in relation to the work of C. S. Lewis. Indeed, when *Sehnsucht* is evoked by English-speaking critics, it is often the particular *Sehnsucht* Lewis described and reimagined as a form of spiritual longing: what Lewis referred to as “spilled religion.”<sup>1</sup> However, years before Lewis came to describe the *Sehnsucht* evoked by the “low line of the Castlereagh hills”—not far off but “quite unattainable”—in *Surprised by Joy* (1955), the American novelist Thomas Wolfe filled his own gargantuan novels with *Sehnsucht*, producing an ontology of longing that grappled with alienation in a world where insatiable desires haunted his romantic protagonists.<sup>2</sup> These figures, thinly discussed *doppelgängers* for Wolfe himself, were forever yearning for something unnameable and unattainable, captured in Wolfe’s symbolic refrain from *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929): “a stone, a leaf, an unfound door.”<sup>3</sup>

This brief essay stems from a much broader project where I employ the interpretative lens of *Sehnsucht* in order to explore Wolfe’s career-long preoccupation with longing, linking his expression of *Sehnsucht* with the transatlantic exchange of ideas surrounding homesickness, nostalgia, and longing. As such, this comparative analysis of Wolfe and Lewis is necessarily limited: even a cursory introduction to the nearly forgotten work of Wolfe, or a proper

theorization of *Sehnsucht*, is impossible within the confines of this short piece. Instead, I will provide a short introduction to the German conception of *Sehnsucht*, stressing the fact that both Wolfe and Lewis offer different, transatlantic visions of a distinctly Romantic clarion call of insatiable desire. Turning to Joy Davidman’s essay “The Longest Way Round” (1951), I will end with a discussion of the sole instance where the *Sehnsucht* of Lewis and Wolfe has been directly compared, arguing that both authors offer significant perspectives on the nature and purpose of longing.

## An Excess of *Sehnsucht*

In the world of academia, Thomas Wolfe amounts to little more than a footnote in many contemporary works of literary history. This is despite the fact that he was once favorably compared with his three more enduring contemporaries—F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner—and that today his influence lingers in the works of novelists as varied as Ray Bradbury, William H. Gass, Philip Roth, and Stephen King. What was compelling for contemporary readers of Wolfe’s fiction—as well as for those writers for whom Wolfe’s specter is still present—was his romantic and effusive prose: Wolfe’s attempt to articulate what he called the “impossible, hopeless, incurable and unutterable homesickness of the American, who is maddened by a longing



for return, and does not know to what he can return.”<sup>4</sup> What critics have identified merely as rhetorical excess in Wolfe’s fiction was actually his own attempt to capture something of this insatiable desire. In an exemplary passage of Wolfe’s writing on longing, he describes his vision of Americans as people who “do not know to what [they] can return” and are thus “maddened” by a “smothering and incurable ache” for something they cannot identify.<sup>5</sup> Here we might recall Lewis’s own articulation of desire without a finite object, explored in his sermon “The Weight of Glory” (1942): “The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not *in* them, it only came *through* them, and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers.”<sup>6</sup>

Lewis’s reconfiguration of *Sehnsucht* as spiritual desire effectively solves the problem of Wolfe’s own protagonists, who yearned for something unidentifiable, unutterable, and finally unreachable. For Lewis, these desires were “spilled religion,” evidence of an eternal reality. While Lewis’s vision of *Sehnsucht* is compelling, it is problematic that *Sehnsucht* only be conceptualized as evidence of a spiritual reality, or indeed that the word always implied that for those who used it. The notion has a long and important heritage in German thought; for the philosopher Martin Heidegger, a contemporary of Wolfe’s, *Sehnsucht* was a “fundamental attunement of philosophizing,” an extension of the Romantic preoccupation with unsatisfiable longing that Heidegger described as “coming to be at home in one’s own self.”<sup>7</sup> In articulating his understanding of *Sehnsucht*, Heidegger frequently turned to the work of Friedrich Schelling, particularly *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), in which Schelling had

stressed the centrality of *Sehnsucht* to human identity: “We must imagine the original yearning [*Sehnsucht*] as it directs itself to the understanding, though still not recognizing it, just as we in our yearning [*Sehnsucht*] seek out unknown and nameless good, and as it moves, divining itself, like a wave-wound, whirling sea, akin to Plato’s matter, following dark, uncertain law, incapable of constructing for itself anything enduring.”<sup>8</sup>

### Defining *Sehnsucht*

*Sehnsucht* exactly captures the intermingled nature of longing in Wolfe’s fiction, which is not simply homesickness, nostalgia, or nihilism, but instead, an addiction to the very act of longing. According to the *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, the verb *Sehen* approximates the English “to long,” or, more strongly, “to crave,” and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm use a number of quotations from Romantic poets to gesture toward the insatiable nature of the longing.<sup>9</sup> The noun *Sucht*—which is combined with *Sehen* to produce *Sehnsucht*—implied “physical illness” in its early usage, but most nearly translates as “addiction.” *Sucht* entered the English lexicon briefly in the nineteenth century as part of a curious mental disease named *Grübelnsucht*, which one psychiatrist described as “metaphysical insanity.”<sup>10</sup> *Sehnsucht*, the composite of these two concepts, is thus virtually untranslatable, but its suggestion of both an infinite and inarticulate yearning, as well as a compulsive addiction to the very experience of longing, provides a productive theoretical lens through which to perceive Wolfe’s ontology of longing.

Importantly, *Sehnsucht* was a fundamental concept in the development of German Romantic thought; William O’Brien suggests that *Sehnsucht* demonstrated “the failure of signification,” incessantly pointing to “an Absolute that hovers right there or right here, always transcendently and tantalizingly out of reach,” while for German philosophers of Romanticism—like Schelling,

Schlegel and Novalis—yearning is always tempered by the impossibility of satisfaction.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, John M. Baker identifies the earlier significance of *Sehnsucht* for the understanding of consciousness in German Idealism, pointing to Fichte’s “typification of consciousness” as a yearning that “feels itself wanting, an activity without object.”<sup>12</sup> In “The Musicality of the Past” (2007), Kiene Wurth links *Sehnsucht* to an eighteenth-century occupation with the sublime, pointing out the subsequent Romantic preoccupation with the infinite, and arguing that it performed a “simultaneity of pain and pleasure,” unable to transcend the “double-bind that the infinite for which it longs is, so to speak, included in a past that it irrevocably lost.”<sup>13</sup>

Recently, Sean Gaston has explored the meaning of *Sehnsucht* in his book *The Impossible Mourning of Jacques Derrida* (2006). “*Sehnsucht*,” Gaston suggests, is “a yearning sickness, a longing addiction that *displaces* any present, definite object and always leaves a gap [. . .]. Elusive, mercurial, always beyond one’s grasp, *Sehnsucht* describes an *infinite* yearning for the *infinite*.”<sup>14</sup> Gaston identifies the term’s Romantic heritage, arguing that *Sehnsucht* is integral to Romanticism’s central project, its “longing for *something* in the external world that only reveals a *deeper* yearning for a *hidden* internal world.”<sup>15</sup> For Gaston, *Sehnsucht* provides both the “genesis” and “structure” of Romantic transcendence, as an expression of both a yearning for “a hidden inner world” and a “longing for something outside” that provides the “possibility” for transcendence.<sup>16</sup> Hence, *Sehnsucht* is at once creative and destructive, a yearning sickness: in Gaston’s phrasing it is both a “torment *and* a marvel.”<sup>17</sup>

### Lewis’s Reconceptualization of *Sehnsucht*

As early as 1933, Lewis began to work out his theme of *Sehnsucht* in *The Pilgrim’s Regress* (1933), his revision of Bunyan that follows

the character John—a young man brought up in a rigorous, rules-based tradition of faith—through the philosophical landscape of the early twentieth century, and whose quest begins when he is awakened to “Sweet Desire.” Lewis’s explanation of this desire, in a preface written ten years later, constitutes his most precise definition of *Sehnsucht*: “The experience is one of intense longing. It is distinguished from other longings by two things. In the first place, though the sense of want is acute and even painful, yet the mere wanting is felt to be somehow a delight. Other desires are felt as pleasures only if satisfaction is expected in the near future: hunger is pleasant only while we know (or believe) that we are soon going to eat. But this desire, even when there is no hope of possible satisfaction, continues to be prized, and even to be preferred to anything else in the world, by those who have once felt it. This hunger is better than any other fullness; this poverty better than all other wealth. And thus it comes about, that if the desire is long absent, it may itself be desired, and that new desiring becomes a new instance of the original desire, though the subject may not at once recognise the fact and thus cries out for his lost youth of soul at the very moment in which he is being rejuvenated [. . .]. For this sweet Desire cuts across our ordinary distinctions between wanting and having. To have it is, by definition, a want: to want it, we find, is to have it.”<sup>18</sup>

Lewis defended the significance of this experience of longing; in an essay titled “Christianity and Culture” (1940), where he uses the term *Sehnsucht* to describe his early experiences of joy in longing, he writes that “the dangers of romantic *Sehnsucht* are very great. Eroticism and even occultism lie in wait for it. On this subject I can only give my own experience for what it is worth [. . .] in this process I have not (or not yet) reached a point at which I can honestly repent of my early experiences of romantic *Sehnsucht*.”<sup>19</sup> In a revision of this statement he adds: “I am quite ready to describe *Sehnsucht* as ‘spilled religion,’ provided it is not forgotten that the

spilled drops may be full of blessing to the unconverted man who licks them up, and therefore begins to search for the cup whence they were spilled.”<sup>20</sup>

The expression of *Sehnsucht* in the work of C. S. Lewis as an acute and painful longing for the infinite—where “to want it, we find, is to have it”—articulates the same character of desire that was prevalent in the works of Thomas Wolfe: longing for the sake of longing. Like Wolfe, Lewis was also interested in German Romanticism, and he admits in *Surprised by Joy* that he was “a votary of the Blue Flower,” pointing to the *blaue Blume* that Frederick Burwick has noted is among the most readily identifiable symbols of Romantic *Sehnsucht*, most famously found in the opening of Novalis’s *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802): “The youth lay restless on his bed and thought about the stranger and his stories. ‘There is no greed in my heart; but I yearn to get a glimpse of the blue flower.’”<sup>21</sup>

The German influence on Lewis’s understanding of *Sehnsucht*, particularly in light of a spiritual longing, can be seen through the impact of the Scottish writer George MacDonald. MacDonald’s impact on Lewis is well-documented; Lewis recalls purchasing a copy of MacDonald’s fantasy romance *Phantastes* (1858), noting that having already been “waste-deep in Romanticism,” *Phantastes* was “romantic enough in all conscience; but there was a difference [. . .]. What it actually did to me was to convert, even to baptize [. . .] my imagination.”<sup>22</sup> MacDonald’s romantic vision, anchored to a spiritual reality, enabled Lewis to see that “the quality which had enchanted me in his imaginative works turned out to be the quality of the real universe, the divine, magical, terrifying, and ecstatic reality in which we all live [. . .] that elusive Form which if once seen must inevitably be desired with all but sensuous desire—the thing (in Sappho’s phrase) ‘more gold than gold.’”<sup>23</sup> For MacDonald, the German Romantic Novalis was a formative influence on his own

romantic vision, particularly evident in the *bildungsroman* of Anodos in *Phantastes*, whose journey through Fairy Land traces the young man’s quest to locate the true source and fulfillment of Romantic *Sehnsucht*. MacDonald scatters a number of quotations from Novalis throughout *Phantastes*, and Kerry Dearborn argues that Novalis’s “passionate hunger and thirst for God, and for meaning beyond this life,” was instrumental in MacDonald’s deep appreciation for the romantic author.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, MacDonald eventually translated Novalis’s *Hymns to the Night* and *Spiritual Songs* in his anthology of European poems and hymns titled *Rampolli* (1897), in which he discovered that Novalis’s proclamation of “the fleeting, extinguished life” of “endless longing [*Sehnsucht*]” has been turned finally to “the beloved Jesus”:

A dream will dash our chains apart,  
And lay us on the Father’s heart.<sup>25</sup>

In 1930, Lewis reflected on his reading of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, writing that it was a “very Macdonaldy book,” full of “‘holiness,’ gloriously German-romantic,” and this reading prompted Lewis to conclude that “Novalis is perhaps the greatest single influence on Macdonald.”<sup>26</sup> The vital difference between Wolfe and Lewis in their expression of *Sehnsucht* can be traced back to the influence of MacDonald; in *Phantastes*, after Anodos dies, MacDonald noted that “if my passions were dead, the souls of those passions, those essential mysteries of the spirit which had embodied themselves in the passions, and had given to them all their glory and wonderment, yet lived, yet glowed, with a pure, undying fire. They rose above their vanishing earthly garments.”<sup>27</sup> For Lewis, *Sehnsucht* ultimately pointed to a theological solution to insatiable hunger, observing in *Mere Christianity* (1952) that: “If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”<sup>28</sup>

## The Longest Way Round

Though Lewis and Wolfe were both in Oxford in 1926—while Wolfe was working on the first version of *Look Homeward, Angel*—there is no indication the two authors met. Lewis himself never visited the United States, though in response to a letter from Mary Van Deusen—a regular correspondent from Hendersonville, North Carolina, who would often include photos of the local American landscape—Lewis wrote that “the new photos raise extreme *Sehnsucht*: each a landscape as fulfils my dreams. *That* is the America I wd. like to see.”<sup>29</sup> It was Joy Davidman—the American poet and writer who later married C. S. Lewis—who noted the connection between Wolfe’s unutterable longing and Lewis’s spiritual yearning. Davidman recorded her conversion experience in 1949, published two years later as the essay “The Longest Way Round” (1951), in which she invokes Wolfe as a writer of “the undiscovered country”: “There is a myth that has always haunted mankind, the legend of the Way Out. ‘A stone, a leaf, an unfound door,’ wrote Thomas Wolfe—the door leading out of time and space into Somewhere Else [. . .]. The symbol varies with different men; for some, the door itself is important; for others, the undiscovered country beyond it—the never-never land, Saint Brendan’s Island, the Land of Heart’s Desire.”<sup>30</sup>

Davidman goes on to write that it was C. S. Lewis and *The Pilgrim’s Regress* that taught her the meaning of this “never-never land,” contending that the myth of Wolfe’s unfound door actually pointed to a broader spiritual need for a home “more our home than any earthly country.”<sup>31</sup> In the same way that Lewis identified the object of his *Sehnsucht* as having a spiritual source, Davidman sees the clues of a spiritual reality in Wolfe’s “legend of the Way Out,” and just as MacDonald’s romances helped clarify for Lewis that what he desired was “goodness,” Lewis in turn provides the spiritual meaning for Davidman’s own indefinable yearning.

Davidman completed this essay before having ever contacted Lewis and it stands as the earliest instance of connection between Lewis’s and Wolfe’s expressions of *Sehnsucht*. While Lewis would eventually give a theological inflection to his reading of *Sehnsucht*, Wolfe never provided a way out for his yearning protagonists, instead remaining committed to what both Schelling and Heidegger perceived in *Sehnsucht*: that in longing we *are*.

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<sup>1</sup> C. S. Lewis, “Christianity and Culture,” in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1967), 23.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955), 14.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel: A Story of the Buried Life* (1929; repr. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Wolfe, *Of Time and the River* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1935), 857.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> C. S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory,” in *Essay Collection: Faith, Christianity and the Church*, ed. Lesley Walmsley (London: HarperCollins, 2000), 98–99.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 5; Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister”* trans. William McNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 49.

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 29–30.

<sup>9</sup> *Deutsches Wörterbuch Online*, s.v. “Sehen,” accessed November 26, 2013, <http://woerterbuchnetz.de>.

<sup>10</sup> Conolly Norman, “A Rare form of Mental Disease (Grübelsucht),” *Transactions of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland* 6, no. 1 (December 1888): 62.

<sup>11</sup> William Arctander O'Brien, *Novalis: Signs of Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 111. In *The Romantic Imperative* (2003), Frederick C. Beiser notes that "[o]ne of the most remarkable traits of [. . .] German romantics was their belief in the metaphysical stature of art." See Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 73.

<sup>12</sup> John M. Baker Jr., "Loss and Expectation: Temporal Entwinement as Theme and Figure in Novalis, Wordsworth, Nerval, and Leopardi" in *Romantic Poetry*, ed. Angela Esterhammer (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002), 64.

<sup>13</sup> Kiene Wurth, "The Musicality of the Past: *Sehnsucht*, Trauma, and the Sublime," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 1, no. 2 (2007): 222.

<sup>14</sup> Sean Gaston, *The Impossible Mourning of Jacques Derrida* (London: Continuum, 2006), 66.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-68.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>18</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason, and Romanticism*, rev. ed. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943), 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis, "Christianity and Culture," 23.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 23n1.

<sup>21</sup> Frederick Burwick, *The Damnation of Newton: Goethe's Color Theory and Romantic Perception* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 109; Novalis, *Henry von Ofterdingen: A Novel*, trans. Palmer Hilty (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1964), 1.

<sup>22</sup> C. S. Lewis, preface to *George MacDonald: An Anthology*, ed. C. S. Lewis (1946; repr. London: Collins, 1983), 33-34.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>24</sup> Kerry Dearborn, *Baptized Imagination: The Theology of George MacDonald* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 40.

<sup>25</sup> Novalis, *Hymns to the Night*, in Rampolli, ed. and trans. George MacDonald (London: Longmans, Green, 1897).

<sup>26</sup> C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves, 13 August 1930 in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume I:*

*Family Letters, 1905–1931*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 922.

<sup>27</sup> George MacDonald, *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women* (London: Smith, Elder, 1858), 313.

<sup>28</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1952), 106.

<sup>29</sup> C. S. Lewis to Mary Van Deusen, 6 June 1952 in *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume III: Narnia, Cambridge and Joy*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 199. In an earlier letter to Mary from May 5, 1952, Lewis wrote that: "The landscape lures one into it. I long to be tramping over those wooded – or, what is better, half wooded hills. I'm as sensitive as a German to the spell of *das Ferne* and all that." See *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume III*, 186.

<sup>30</sup> Joy Davidman, "The Longest Way Round" in *Out of My Bone: The Letters of Joy Davidman*, Don W. King (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 88.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

# The Wars We Sing of: Modern and Medieval Warfare in Tolkien's Middle-earth

Alethea Gaarden  
Mercyhurst University

As a species, war is arguably our most complex, costly and destructive undertaking; General Patton once famously observed that "Compared to war, all other forms of human endeavor shrink to insignificance." It is only by placing war in the context of narrative, by saying "The Battle of Britain had an enduring impact on the country," or "this is what the Battle of the Somme meant to our family," or "fighting in the Pacific changed me forever" that the experience of war becomes comprehensible, and throughout history these narratives have been expressed as stories. Certainly, J.R.R. Tolkien was no stranger to war. As a medievalist, he studied texts such as *Beowulf*, *The Song of Roland*, and *The Nibelungenlied*, all of which focus on violence, conflict, and heroism in combat. Tolkien was also a veteran of World War I; he served at the Somme, and as he notes in the foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*, "By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead" (*The Fellowship of the Ring* xi). Particularly given Tolkien's own combat experience, one could easily take issue with Tolkien's decision to tell stories of war in a medieval, mythological, and heroic setting. In the wake of the World Wars that devastated Europe, is *The Lord of the Rings* indeed a return to an outdated and horrifically misguided vision of warfare? In what way could a novel about kings, cavalry charges and valiant deeds on the field of battle communicate truth about the mechanized, impersonal meat grinder of 20<sup>th</sup> century combat?

In this paper, I will suggest that Tolkien unifies modern and medieval visions of warfare by presenting war as a narrative experience; in Middle-earth, as in the real world, war can only be processed and communicated as story. Examined in this way, *The Lord of the Rings* is not a story of either modern or medieval warfare, though Tolkien certainly employs elements of both. Instead, it is in large part a story *about* war stories: an examination of the ways in which cultural narrative of war are constructed and maintained.

The individual experience of war always takes place in a specific cultural context. A French knight in Charlemagne's service who fought the Saracens at the Battle of Roncevaux Pass would have a very different perspective on wartime experience than a French soldier who served under Pétain at the Battle of Verdun. Even if by some miracle these two hypothetical soldiers were to fight in precisely the same battle under precisely the same conditions, they would not perceive the battle or their place within it in the same way. As the military historian John Keegan observes in his book *The Face of Battle*, the deafening noise of a World War I battlefield would likely be enough to disable a medieval soldier, never mind the howitzers, machine guns, and poison gas (324). Even more significantly, soldiers from very different cultures and time periods do not necessarily see themselves or their place within society in the same way.

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Yuval Noah Harari notes that soldiers in the Renaissance and earlier eras were often willing to endure great hardship because they believed that it gave their lives meaning and purpose: winning glory in combat was a means of advancing their own honor and, by extension, that of their families (67). But in post-Enlightenment cultures like those in Europe and the United States, the goal of life is no longer the accumulation of personal and familial honor but the development of the self. Harari suggests that the trauma of modern warfare is caused at least in part because it poses a threat to “[soldiers’] understanding of life as the continuous process of developing and improving an enduring entity called ‘self’” (68). In other words, the differences between modern and medieval war narratives are not simply a function of the changed nature of combat. Instead, they are a product of the changing paradigms of participant individuals and cultures, and war narratives are therefore dependent on the *culture* in which they are constructed. Because Tolkien develops Middle-earth as a secondary world of significant depth and complexity, his characters have the opportunity to inhabit their own cultures, and to engage with elements of other cultures. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien uses important cultural features including [1] geography and a sense of place, [2] a sense of lost glory and past greatness, [3] literature, poetry, and song, and [4] distinct differences between cultures, in order to shape and express his characters’ war narratives.

It is significant that many, if not all, copies of *The Lord of the Rings* include a map of Middle-earth. These maps, like the ones that Frodo and Merry pour over during their time in Rivendell, are simultaneously history, myth, and geography. In her paper “Archaeology and the Sense of History in J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth,” Deborah Sabo notes that “Tolkien was clearly sensitive to the fact that the life of a people, their beliefs and all events that go to make up their history, are intimately bound up with place” (91-92). Throughout his legendarium,

Tolkien develops Middle-earth as a world every bit as ancient, complex, and deeply-rooted as medieval England. One consequence of this rich history is that characters in Middle-earth can react to places that are important to their own cultures in much the same way than an Englishman of Tolkien’s day might react to the fields of Agincourt, Waterloo, or—should he wish to revisit old stomping grounds—the battered, desolate plains of the Somme. John Keegan, in his book *The Second World War*, frequently points out the significance that historic and mythic place-names could hold. Bazeilles, for example, a small town near Ardennes in northern France, “was a place of legend in French military history; it was there in 1870 that the elite *colonials* had fought to the death against the Germans in ‘the house of the last cartridge’” (73), but by 1940 the Germans had occupied the town at last. Similarly, during the abortive battle for Greece in 1941, “the British made their last stand at Thermopylae, where the Spartans had fallen defying the Persians 2500 years before” (158).

In Middle-earth, which in the Third Age has largely fallen into ruin, there is no shortage of ancient battlefields, and many of them are referenced throughout the text. Even Gollum knows his history, or at least parts of it. When Frodo and Sam trudge through the Dead Marshes in *The Two Towers*, they see corpses in the water, and Gollum tells them that “There was a great battle, long ago. . . tall Men with long swords, and terrible Elves, and Orcses shrieking. They fought on the plains for days and months at the Black Gates. But the Marshes have grown since then, swallowed up the graves; always creeping, creeping” (261).

Clearly, geography—particularly the geography of historic battlefields—is used as a system of reference in *Lord of the Rings* as well as in the real world, in large part because it ties the events of the present into a culturally-significant past. By comparing the past to the present in this way, Tolkien is also able to foster a sense of lost glory and past greatness within Middle Earth: not only are

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his characters aware that they are walking through bloody and thus hallowed ground, but they are often able to make comparisons between their own martial journeys and those of the historic figures who came before them. When Aragorn sees Weathertop in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, he offers the hobbits a piece of the watchtower's history, saying: "It is told that Elendil stood there watching for the coming of Gil-galad out of the West, in the days of the Last Alliance." Merry presses Aragorn with questions, but he is still "lost in thought" (209), presumably still thinking about his kingly ancestor, or perhaps the last great war that the West fought against Sauron.

Though long dead, Elendil is deeply significant in *The Lord of the Rings*, and his sword, Narsil, is even more important. Much like the watchtower on Weathertop, Elendil and Narsil tie the events unfolding in *The Lord of the Rings* to a meaningful past. A fallen king, a broken sword, and a ruined watchtower are all symbols of lost power and glory. Why was Paris such a prize for Hitler and Nazi Germany? When German troops marched past the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, they were claiming victory not over a city, but over the heart of France—over the symbol and site of national glory and historic pride. The fall of France was traumatic not only because of the immediate practical ramifications for its citizens and allies, but because it was a devastating psychological blow; it damaged, perhaps even shattered, a cultural narrative that had been enconced in monuments, literature, and collective memory. It was bad enough that the German *blitzkrieg* rendered the Maginot Line irrelevant, and that the greater part of France was occupied by the enemy. It was even worse that the country of Napoleon had fallen to German occupation in a mere six weeks. Consequently, a new narrative emerged. "The sense of a predestinated national doom. . . overwhelmed the nation," Keegan writes, adding that after the fall of France, the "decline of *le grande nation*, set about by philistines and barbarians, might seem irrevocably charted" (87). In one sense, it is

cultural narrative that turns events into tragedies. The fall is possible, and made all the more horrible, because of the pride that came before it.

A similar sense of loss and lessening echoes through *The Lord of the Rings*. The broken sword of Elendil is a mark of Gondor's fall from pride, as is the withered White Tree in the Citadel of Minas Tirith; indeed, the city is itself evidence of cultural decay within the once-great kingdoms of men. In *The Return of the King*, Tolkien describes how "Pippin gazed in growing wonder at the great stone city, vaster and more splendid than anything that he had dreamed of." But the great city "was in truth falling year by year into decay," and Pippin is at least vaguely aware of it. "In every street they passed some great house or court over whose doors and arched gates were carved many fair letters of strange and ancient shapes: names Pippin guessed of great men and kindreds that had once dwelt there; and yet now they were silent. . . ." (9)

The past is our context for the present, and the depth of Tolkien's secondary world allows his characters to reflect on this context. In this way, Tolkien gives great weight and significance to the War of the Ring, presenting it not as an isolated series of events but as part of a cultural history stretching back hundreds and thousands of years. When the armies of Gondor and Rohan march on the Black Gate, Imrahil of Dol Amroth calls it "the greatest jest in all the history of Gondor: that we should ride with seven thousands, scarce as many as the vanguard of its army in the days of its power, to assail the mountain and the impenetrable gate of the Black Land!" (*Return* 164). As in Imrahil's case, if an individual has access to this kind of cultural narrative, it will inform and shape his understanding of contemporary events.

Thus far, this paper has discussed how cultural narratives of war can be expressed through geography and place, as well as a sense of past glory and greatness. Such narratives can also be expressed through literature, poetry, and song, and this was certainly the case in World War I. Paul



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Fussell writes in *The Great War and Modern Memory* that the experience of the average British soldier in the trenches was in large part defined by traditionally English narratives of war. As Fussell points out, the *Oxford Book of English Verse* was a standard text in the trenches. So was *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Soldiers liked to read about characters “who played their parts, half ignorant and yet half realizing the inexorable march of fate and their own insignificance before it” (qtd. in Fussell 163) and they defined their own experience in the context of their cultural and literary vision of war, no matter how far that vision diverged from reality.

In a similar way, Tolkien's characters use culturally-significant songs, poetry, and myths to orient themselves throughout the War of the Ring. Although literature and oral tradition add to the sense of place and history discussed earlier, they also provide models of heroic behavior and appropriate conduct in war. The lighthearted ditties that the hobbits sing in the first half of *The Fellowship of the Ring* soon give way to more serious songs and poems. At Weathertop, Sam recites the beginning of *The Fall of Gil-galad*, a heroic elegy; in Moria, Gimli chants a song about Durin the Deathless, the first and greatest of the dwarves. In *The Return of the King*, Théoden's army sings as they ride into battle, “and the sound of their singing that was fair and terrible came even to the City” (111). At Helm's Deep, exhausted and waiting for the next wave of a never-ending onslaught, Aragorn reminds his companions:

“Is it not said that no foe has ever taken the Hornburg, if men defended it?  
'So the minstrels say,' said Éomer.  
Then let us defend it, and hope!' said Aragorn” (*Towers* 153).

Just as soldiers in World War I looked to Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Tolkien's characters find inspiration, hope, and strength in the historical or mythic figures enshrined in literature and song. In *War and*

*the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*, Janet Brennan Croft observes that while Minas Tirith is under siege, soldiers trapped within the city keep up their spirits by singing “amid the gloom some staves of the Lay of Nimrodel, or other songs of the Vale on Anduin out of the vanished years” (qtd. in Croft 45).

According to Fussell, however, the existing literary model of English heroism that Tolkien parallels throughout *The Lord of the Rings* was insufficient in the face of the realities of trench warfare. The result of this gap was bitterness and disillusionment, and Tolkien is willing to acknowledge that literature cannot always meet the needs of individuals caught up in pain and suffering. Frodo is a key example. By the time he and Sam reach the foot of Mount Doom, no poems or songs can strengthen him, and even memories of his beloved home in the Shire, which he set out on his quest determined to protect, have lost all joy and meaning for him. It is only grim, hopeless determination—and when that fails, Sam's determined support—that keeps Frodo moving. There are some situations too grim for song, and in the end, it is only the presence of his dearest friend that offers any consolation: “I am glad you are here with me,” Frodo says, as all of Sauron's works begin to crash down around them. “Here at the end of all things, Sam” (*Return* 241). The power of companionship and *esprit de corps* even in the most miserable of circumstances is a recurring theme in literature from the World Wars. As former Marine Eugene Sledge writes in his classic memoir *With The Old Breed*, “War is brutish, inglorious, and a terrible waste. Combat leaves an indelible mark on those who are forced to endure it. The only redeeming factors were my comrades' incredible bravery and their devotion to each other” (315). Sam is able to save and redeem Frodo through his devotion when stories of the courage and loyalty of other, more distant heroes are no longer sufficient to the task.

But war narratives depend on literature in another, and much more practical, way. Soldiers in World War I frequently struggled to express the realities

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of trench life because they lacked any culturally appropriate language with which to do so. War narratives, whether in the form of letters, family stories, or published narratives, depend at least in part on the needs and expectations of their intended audience. But a “decent solicitude for the feelings of the recipient” (Fussell 182), and the tradition of “British Phlegm” which demanded that even horrific experiences be treated as nonchalantly as possible, crippled attempts by soldiers at the front to communicate their lived experience of war. Even private records like diaries are influenced by cultural considerations: what kind of language is available? Are there words or phrases that effectively express what an individual is feeling? Merry, when he is healed by Aragorn after the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, acknowledges the insufficiency of his own cultural language to the needs of the moment when he says that “it is the way of my people to use light words at such times and say less than they mean. We fear to say too much. It robs us of our right words when a jest is out of place” (*Return* 149). Sam experiences the same problem when he returns to the relative safety of the Shire and his beloved Rosie Cotton says: “If you’ve been looking after Mr. Frodo all this while, what d’you want to leave him for, as soon as things look dangerous?” Rosie, of course, does not realize how absurd her statement is, and poor Sam has no idea how to explain matters to her. “That was too much for Sam. It needed a week’s answer, or none” (312). Certainly, war influences language (Fussell 21-23), but language, or a lack thereof, also has an impact on the way that war narratives are preserved and communicated. What is *not* communicated can be just as significant as what is. Does Sam ever find a way to explain the gravity of his journey to Rosie? In either case, what she and their children understand of war will be affected by what Sam chooses, or is able, to tell them.

Along with geography, a sense of lost greatness, and the power of literature and song, differences between cultures also play a

role in cultural narratives of war. Particular societies in Middle-earth, as in the real world, might be closer (Gondor; the Rangers of the North) or farther away (the Shire) from the realities of death, hardship, and violence. Harari observes that for twentieth-century Western societies, the gulf between war and peacetime experience is broad; “Whereas in 1916 a realistic report of life in the trenches would have shocked most British civilians. . .[a Renaissance soldier’s] reports of the miseries his comrades experienced. . .would have sounded quite familiar to many of his countrymen” (66). In *The Lord of the Rings*, the gulf between war and peace is nowhere more evident than in the Shire, Tolkien’s idealized English pastoral. In the distant past, the hobbits living in the Shire had been obliged to defend themselves from the dangers of the outside world, but as time wore on “they forgot or ignored what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and of the labors of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to remember it” (*Fellowship* 6). Under the protection of the Dúnedain of the North, the Shirefolk live out their quiet and amiable lives, oblivious to the dangers that lurk everywhere outside their land. In consequence, when Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin begin their journey to Rivendell (and, after the Council of Elrond, to Mordor) they are wildly unprepared for what awaits them, and their sanitized narrative of danger and war is insufficient to the task at hand. When they first meet Aragorn in Bree, they are frightened by his ragged appearance, but Pippin says, philosophically, that they will probably look just as dirty and disreputable after some time on the road. Aragorn is unconvinced. “It would take more than a few days, or weeks, or years, of wandering in the Wild to make you look like Strider,” he tells them. “And you would die first, unless you are made of sterner stuff than you look to be” (194). It is in brief moments like this one at Bree that Tolkien most clearly brings together modern and medieval visions of warfare. The hobbits, much like the brave young Englishmen of the summer of 1914, are

still bright with the innocence of their own halcyon days; Aragorn, the weathered soldier of a far more medieval world, has few if any of their illusions. But both Aragorn and the hobbits must make their way through the battles and dangers to come, and they will all tell their own stories of the War of the Ring to those who come after them.

In Tolkien's short work "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth's Beorhthelm's Son," two of his characters have the following brief exchange: "What a murder it is, / this bloody fighting," one says, as they both look down at their leader's headless, mangled corpse. But the other only replies, "and no worse today than the wars you sing of" (qtd. in Nelson 70). In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien tells us a story of war that is both sung and spoken—a story that echoes with both medieval honor and modern disillusionment, and that is rooted in the battlefields, the sorrows, and the languages of a complex and enduring world. Because Tolkien presents war as an experience that is communicated and preserved through narrative, he is able to tell a story about something more than cavalry charges or life in the trenches. War is a tragic, destructive, and fundamental part of human experience, and it is part of a narrative that stretches from the siege of Troy to the Battle of the Somme. Tolkien may have worked outside the lines of our own history, but *The Lord of the Rings* has nevertheless shaped—and will continue to shape—our own cultural understanding of war. We have taken Frodo's story and made it a part of our own.

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# The Artistry of C.S. Lewis: An Examination of the Illustrations for *Boxen* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*

Kathryne Hall  
Oral Roberts University

Primarily recognized as an author, theologian, professor, and lecturer, C. S. Lewis is usually not known for his ability as an artist. He was a wildly popular writer whose fiction books (e.g., *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Space Trilogy*) and Christian non-fiction (e.g., *Mere Christianity* and “The Weight of Glory”) are beloved by many, but he once remarked that he could “remember no time when we [he and his brother Warnie] were not incessantly drawing” (Lewis, *Surprised By Joy*; hereafter abbreviated as *SBJ* 6). Though C. S. Lewis loved to draw and admired art—especially the artist Aubrey Beardsley, he only illustrated a few of his own works (mainly *Boxen*), and he chose to hire popular illustrator Pauline Baynes to bring his cherished *Chronicles* to life.

Lewis became interested in drawing at an early age and thought himself the better artist between him and his brother Warnie. Different subjects interested them: Warnie drew “ships and trains and battles” while Lewis favored “dressed animals—the anthropomorphized beasts of nursery literature.” Lewis remarks, “From them it appears to me that I had the better talent. From a very early age I could draw movement—figures that looked as if they were really running or fighting—and the perspective is good” (*SBJ* 6). His artistry gained momentum when he and his family moved to “The New House.” There Lewis discovered his father’s library of numerous books (*SBJ* 10) and he writes “I soon staked

out a claim to one of the attics and made it my ‘study” (*SBJ* 12). Lewis remarks, “Pictures, of my own making or cut from the brightly colored Christmas numbers of magazines, were nailed on the walls. There I kept my pen and inkpot and writing books and paintbox” (*SBJ* 12). It was in this room that his “first stories were written, and illustrated, with enormous satisfaction” (13). *Boxen* is one of these stories that Lewis wrote—with his brother Warnie, of course.

C.S. Lewis did most of the illustrating in *Boxen*, and in fact drew maps to complete his history of Animal-Land (see fig.1).

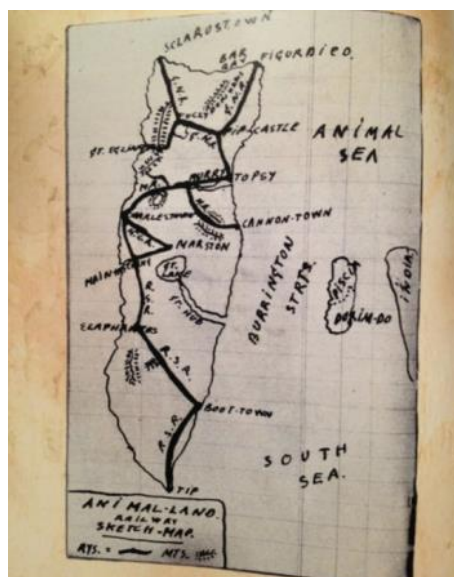


Figure 1. One of Lewis’s maps that he illustrated for *Boxen* (Boxen)  
(Photo Courtesy: Kathryne Hall)

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(This was mainly because Warnie insisted that “trains and steamships” were involved, and as a result, Lewis decided that a “full history” and geography were needed [SB/13]). Lewis was quite the cartographer because “soon a map of Animal-Land – several maps, all tolerably consistent” were produced (13-14). He remarks, “Soon there was a whole world and a map of that world which used every color in my paintbox” (14). Warnie and Lewis loved this world they created, and Lewis (affectionately nicknamed “Jack”) enjoyed illustrating the stories. Walter Hooper writes,

Warnie began a Boxonian newspaper [...] [N]o issues have survived [...] and with the newspapers came some of Jack’s most detailed drawings of such notables as Lord Big (see fig. 2), Viscount Puddiphat and James Bar. Excepting those pictures which were drawn *in* the ‘novels’, some of the best illustrations were drawn on loose sheets of paper and collected in 1926 into the two volumes of *Leborough Studies*. [...] The pity is that we don’t have the stories the drawings were intended to illustrate. (Hooper 235)

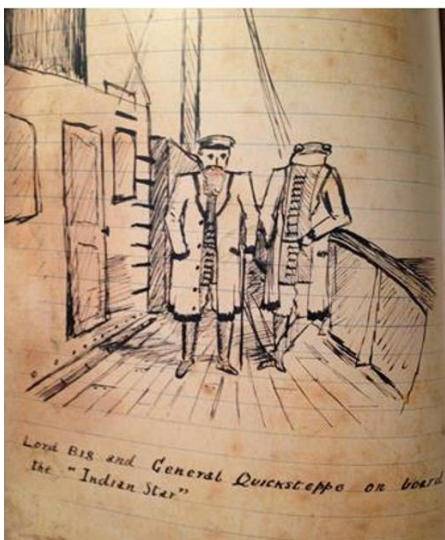


Figure 2. Lord Big and General Quicksteppe on board the “Indian Star,” drawn by Lewis for *Boxen* (Boxen) (Photo Courtesy: Kathrynne Hall)

Thus, C.S. Lewis developed his love for drawing through *Boxen*, and clearly his imagination was spurred on as well.

Lewis’s childhood friend Arthur Greeves was also an artist who enjoyed drawing. The two seemed to delight in discussing art, for in a letter remarking about some drawings that Greeves sent him, Lewis writes,

I finished my last letter in rather a hurry, and can’t remember whether I referred to your drawing in them: I am glad you are going on with it. The absence of models, as far as hands, limbs, folds of clothes, etc go could be helped by the looking-glass, which I imagine is an excellent teacher. How fine it will be when you can get me up in your room again and show me all your new work and all your new treasures. (*Collected Letters* 1:384; hereafter abbreviated as *CL*).

Although confident in his earlier remarks about his drawings compared to Warnie’s, Jack’s self-esteem must have diminished a little over the years. In another letter to Arthur Greeves, he writes:

You are quite wrong old man in saying I can draw “when I like.” On the contrary, if I ever can draw, it is exactly when I don’t like. If I sit down solemnly with the purpose of drawing, it is a sight to make me ‘ridiculous to the pedestrian population of the etc.’. The only decent things I do are scribbled in the margins of my dictionary [...] or the backs of old envelopes, when I ought to be attending to something else. (*CL* 1: 211)

It is intriguing to picture Lewis and Greeves talking about and criticizing each other’s artistic works. Certainly, Lewis thought he was best at drawing when he wasn’t focusing on it.

Lewis was a great admirer of illustrations, for he remarked more than once



about Aubrey Beardsley's drawings, the illustrator of Sir Thomas Malory's works. First, Lewis asks Arthur Greeves if he "know[s] anything of the artist Beardsley (*sic*)?" (CL 1: 211). In a later letter he writes,

"I have also got the 1st 2 volumes of Malory in the Temple Classics. The frontispieces are from designs by Beardsley. They are v. good in the extremest style of mediaevalism [*sic*]*—*perhaps rather affected. One is of the finding of Excalibur [see fig. 3] & the other of someone giving Tristram a shield. In the Excalibur one, Merlin is shewn as a not very old clean-shaven but beautifully wizened man. Not what I'd have imagined him but good all the same" (CL 1: 340).



Figure 3. Aubrey Beardsley's "The Lady of the Lake Telleth Arthur of the Sword Excalibur" ("The Lady of the Lake")

Lewis continues to remark about Beardsley's art - calling the Malory edition "a beautiful book, with a handsome binding, good paper and a fair page: there are lovely

chapter headings and decorations" (CL 1: 384). In the following letter to Greeves, he calls Beardsley's art "a little decadent and 'genre.'" In the same letter, he writes about the illustrations in another book by Corneille. He says, "[T]he plates of course as illustrations are idiotic but there is something solid and grand about them" (CL 1: 403). Lewis also "loved the drawings of Arthur Rackham in *Undine* and *The Ring*, those of Charles Robinson in *The Secret Garden* [see fig. 4], those of Kemble in *Huckleberry Finn*,

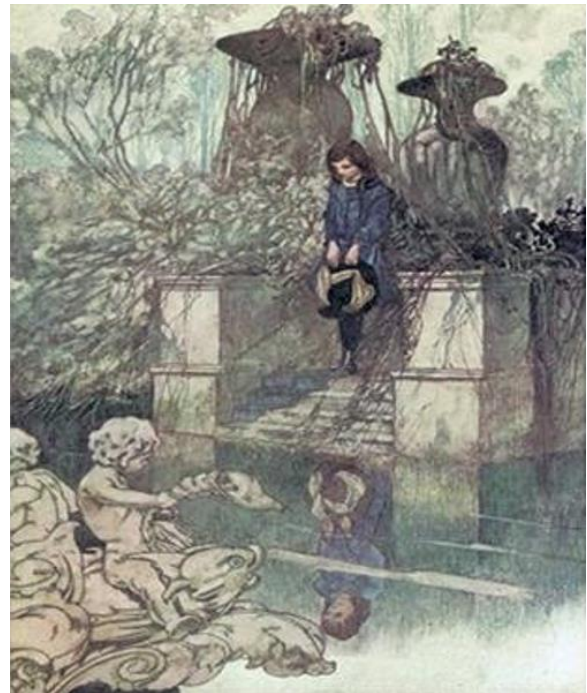


Figure 4. One of Charles Robinson's Illustrations for *The Secret Garden* ("Anachronistic Fairytales")

and, although he found them cramped, those of Arthur Hughes in George MacDonald's books" (Sayer 314). Lewis had strong opinions regarding what he liked and disliked in illustrations: "He loathed illustrations in which the children had vapid, empty faces and hated even more the grotesque style that derived from Walt Disney's cartoons" (Sayer 314). He obviously possessed a keenness for art as he paid close attention to the illustrations of the books that he enjoyed reading.

C.S. Lewis began to wonder if his *Chronicles of Narnia* needed illustrations. According to George Sayer, he "considered

illustrating the stories himself, but decided that even if he had the skill, he would not have the time” (314). Because of this, he decided to seek out a main illustrator for his works. It is unclear whether or not Lewis heard of Pauline Baynes through J.R.R. Tolkien, his close friend, or from a worker in a bookstore, for he once told Baynes that he visited a bookstore and inquired whether or not someone knew of an illustrator that he could use (*CL* 2: 1019). Even so, “[a]s Tolkien had read the manuscript of *The Lion* it is almost certain he showed Lewis the illustrations to *The Farmer Giles of Ham*” (1019).

Tolkien thought of Baynes’ work very highly, especially in *The Farmer Giles of Ham* (see fig. 5), and he did not care for the work by the previous artist commissioned for this book, Milein Cosman (Tolkien 130-131). He complains about the lack of regularity the



Figure 5. One of Pauline Baynes’ Illustrations for *The Farmer Giles of Ham* (Mestre Gil de Ham)

pictures have with the text and remarks, “[T]he artist is a poor drawer of trees” (131). He continues his criticism by writing, “The dragon is absurd. Ridiculously coy, and quite incapable of performing any of the tasks laid on him by the author. [...] The Farmer, a large blusterer bigger than his fellows, is made to look like little Joad at the end of a third degree by railway officials” (131). However, of Baynes’ drawings he writes that he is

“pleased with them beyond even the expectations aroused by the first examples. They are more than illustrations, they are a collateral theme. I showed them to my friends whose polite comment was that they reduced my text to a commentary on the drawings” (Tolkien 133). He expresses interest to use Baynes to illustrate a poem about Tom Bombadil (Tolkien 308), and in a letter to her, he writes that she can “produce wonderful pictures with a touch of ‘fantasy’, but primarily bright and clear visions of things that one might really see” (Tolkien 312)(see fig. 6). Baynes is responsible for notifying



Figure 6. *Tom Bombadil and Goldberry* drawn by Pauline Baynes (Baynes)

Tolkien about his inconsistency of describing Tom Bombadil’s hat as having a peacock feather in it sometimes and at other times detailed with a different kind of feather (318-319). He thanks her for addressing this and says, “Do not be put off by this sort of thing unless it affects the picture! The inwardly seen picture is to me the most important. I look forward to your interpretation” (319). With Tolkien’s excitement over Baynes, it is certainly not surprising that Lewis hired her as well.

Like Tolkien, Lewis also thought Baynes’ illustrations for *The Farmer Giles of Ham* “exquisite and in quite a different genre”



(CL 2: 1009). After “Lewis signed a contract with Geoffrey Bles Ltd for *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* [...] Mr. Bles formally commissioned Baynes to do the illustrations. They were completed and ready for Lewis to see when he met Bles.” Lewis “was so impressed by her traditional style of drawing that he asked her to illustrate all the Narnian stories.” (CL 2: 1019) In a letter to Pauline Baynes, he writes, “I was with Mr. Bles last week and wd. like to congratulate [you] on your drawings for my story, which I thought really excellent. I love (and I think children will love too) the wealth of vigorous detail—if only there were going to be more room for it when they are reduced in size. I wish we were doing a folio!” He goes on to set up their first meeting at “a little lunch party” in Oxford (CL 2: 1009). At this luncheon Baynes “recalls watching CS Lewis pass round the food and, when nobody wanted any more sprouts, gleefully picking out the remaining walnuts” (Cory). She remarked that she is “often asked about that lunch, but the reality is [...] my chief memory of Lewis was seeing him picking out those walnuts” (qtd. in Cory). Lewis and Baynes met one other time face to face “when they had tea at Waterloo station.” According to Baynes, “he spent the whole time looking at his watch.” She must not have been impressed for she wrote in her diary, “Met C.S. Lewis. Came home. Made rock cakes” (qtd. in Cory). Baynes must have addressed Lewis about his attention to the time for in a letter to her later, Lewis writes about this meeting and how “hurried” he was: “You didn’t keep me a bit too long and I shd. have been v. glad if you’d stayed longer. I was hurried (I hope, not rudely so) only because I didn’t want to be left with a long vacancy between your departure and the next train” (CL 3: 84). These meetings between Lewis and Baynes give the idea of a curious relationship between the two. It is surprising that they only saw each other face-to-face two times (Cory) – especially since Lewis first wrote that he hoped they would “have several meetings as the work goes on” (CL 2: 1009).

Lewis did not only have Baynes illustrate the characters in his books, but also had her draw maps. She had experience

drawing maps in World War II, which helped her draw the maps of Narnia (“Pauline Baynes”). Lewis “sent Pauline a map of Narnia to illustrate not only the first two stories, but those he was yet to write” (CL 2: 1019). He included a note with this map that read “My idea was that the map should be more like a medieval map than an Ordnance Survey—mountains and castles drawn—perhaps winds blowing at the corners—and a few heraldic-looking ships, whales and dolphins in the sea” (CL 3: 83). Hooper writes, “When we compare these simple instructions with the map in the end pages of *Prince Caspian* [see fig. 7], and Baynes’s postersized map of Narnia [...], we realize how much our picture of Lewis’s imaginary world owes to the skill and imagination of Pauline Baynes” (CL 2: 1020). Perhaps Lewis was inspired to include maps from his earlier drawings for Animal-Land in *Boxen*, though regardless of the reason for including the maps, they certainly add a character and whimsy to Lewis’s world that would have been missed.



Figure 7. Pauline Baynes’ map for *Prince Caspian* (Meet Carson Ellis: Part One)

Along with maps, Baynes also designed many editions of frontispieces for *The Chronicles of Narnia* - both for English and foreign copies of the books. The cover images are changed significantly for each edition, especially between the first 1950’s editions (see fig. 8) to the ones published in paperback by Puffin (most notably Baynes’ addition of a back piece as well as a front one in the Puffin set) (see fig. 9). It is noted by Jocelyn Gibb that “Baynes’s illustrations



would come out all right” for *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* in the Puffin set and “it would [not] matter very much if they lacked perfection” (CL 3: 921-922n27). It is interesting to point

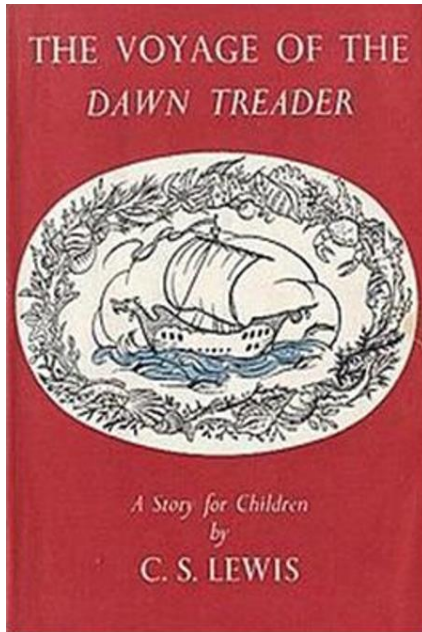


Figure 8. Pauline Baynes’ 1950’s first edition frontispiece for *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (“The Voyage of the Dawn Treader”)

out that, contrary to Gibb’s comments, Dorothy Sayers wrote to Lewis and called Baynes’ picture a “bad drawing – of what is commonly called an ‘effeminate kind, because it is boneless and shallow.” Sayers goes on to

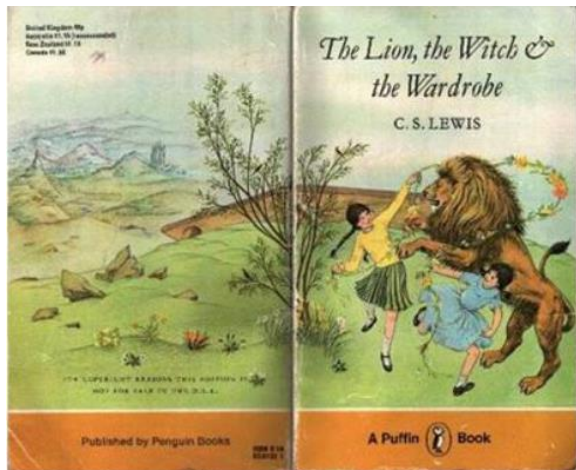


Figure 9. Baynes’ frontispiece for *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* Puffin Paperback Edition (“Brian Sibley”)

write, “I cannot ‘take’ (for instance) the frontispiece to *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It makes me uncomfortable, and if anybody were to call it blasphemous I couldn’t honestly disagree” (qtd. In CL 3: 638n245). The American edition published by Macmillan reduces the size of the frontispiece picture to only half of the cover as well as printing the cover images in black and white, much like the first editions in the fifties. The covers printed by All Collins (British edition) take on more of a cartoonish look (see fig. 10) with the different colors that are used—especially on *The Magician’s Nephew* (“Some Narnian Book Covers”). Lewis must certainly have had some say in Baynes’ designs, for he wrote in a letter to her that “Aslan gazing at the moon would make an excellent cover design (to be repeated somewhere in the book; but do as you please about that)” (CL 3: 83-84).

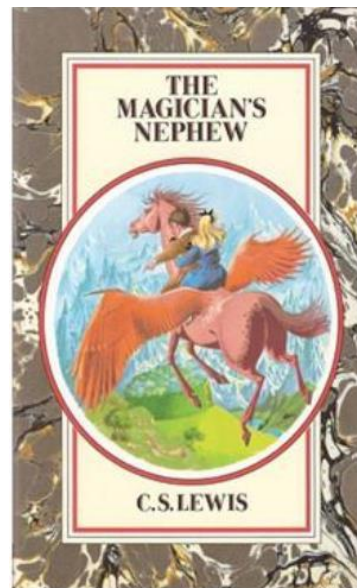


Figure 10. Baynes’ frontispiece for *The Magician’s Nephew* for the All Collins edition (“Narnia Editions”)

Baynes first illustrated *The Chronicles* in black and white but was “kept busy providing more illustrations,” many of which are in color (CL 2: 1021). Some of these new publications include a special edition of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* that “contains her original illustrations as well as seventeen additional full-page illustrations in

colour. For the centenary of Lewis's birth in 1998 Baynes was commissioned to colour the original black and white illustrations in all seven books" (CL 2: 1021). Her progression from using ink to paint adds to the depth of the illustrations, as adding color brings out a dimension to her characters that would otherwise be missed.

Although Lewis was fond of Baynes's work, he certainly did not abstain from criticizing it. He called "[h]er Mouse [...] one of her best beasts" (CL 3: 80) (see fig. 11) but said that she needed a lot of work with her anatomy. He was not afraid of being candid with her, for he once wrote to her: "If only you cd. take 6 months off and devote them to anatomy, there's no limit to your possibilities" (CL 3: 412). In a later letter to Dorothy Sayers he wrote:

The main trouble about Pauline B. is not her femininity but her total ignorance of animal anatomy. [...] I have always had serious reservations about her (this is *sub sigillo* ["under seal"]). But she had merits (her botanical forms are lovely), she needed the work (old mother to support, I think), and worst of all she is such a timid creature, so "easily put down" that criticism cd. only be hinted, & approval had, on a second shot, to be feigned. At any *real* reprimand she'd have thrown up the job; not in a huff but in sheer, downright, unresenting, pusillanimous dejection. She [...] has no interest in matter—how boats are rowed, or bows shot with, or feet planted, or fists clenched. (CL 3: 638-639)

Agreeing with Sayers, Lewis calls Baynes' draying "effeminate too," which he does *not* like but rather "prefer[s]" *people* (CL 3: 639). George Sayer writes that Lewis "often found the faces of her children empty, expressionless, and too alike. Although he thought she improved in this respect [even writing to Geoffrey Bles that her faces were "greatly improved" (CL 3: 299), he was never

entirely satisfied." Lewis told George Sayer "[m]ore than once" that "[s]he can't draw lions [see fig. 12], but she is so good and beautiful and sensitive that I [Lewis] can't tell her this" (Sayer 314-315).



Figure 11. One of Baynes' Illustrations of Reepicheep the Mouse (Riordan) (Photo Courtesy: Kathrynne Hall)

Lewis did think that Baynes improved and wrote, "[i]t is delightful to find (and not only for selfish reasons) that you do each book a little bit better than the last—it is nice to see an artist growing" (CL 3:412). He even lists several examples from her drawings that



Figure 12. One of Baynes' Illustrations of Aslan the Lion (Riordan) (Photo Courtesy: Kathrynne Hall)

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he liked and specifically compliments her on each way that she improved (*CL* 3:412-413). His praise continues in another letter to “Miss Baynes” saying that “This Horse, whether charging with his hansom, or growing his wings, or flying, is the real thing; and so is the elephant. Congratulations! I mention the beasts first because they show the greatest advance” (*CL* 3: 511-512). Though Lewis was harsh at times about Baynes’ drawings, he did admire her greatly. When she sent him a letter commending him for receiving the Carnegie award, he replied and said, “[I]s it not rather ‘our’ Medal?” (*CL* 3: 850).

Perhaps Lewis’s particular thoughts about art derived from how he came to know art and beauty. He writes in his autobiography, “This absence of beauty, now that I come to think of it, is characteristic of our childhood. No picture on the walls of my father’s house ever attracted—and indeed none deserved—our attention. We never saw a beautiful building nor imagined that a building could be beautiful. My earliest aesthetic experiences, if indeed they were aesthetic, were not of that kind; they were already incurably romantic, not formal” (*SBJ* 6-7). Warnie once made a homemade garden to bring into their room, which fascinated Jack. He continues, “What the real garden had failed to do, the toy garden did. It made me aware of nature—not, indeed, as a storehouse of forms and colors but as something cool, dewy, fresh, exuberant” (*SBJ* 7). He did not care much for the realness of nature in his early years, so it is intriguing that he is so particular about it later in the illustrations of Baynes. Concerning when he and Warnie used to draw together as boys, Lewis writes “Trees appear as balls of cotton wool stuck on posts, and there is nothing to show that either of us knew the shape of any leaf in the garden where we played almost daily” (*SBJ* 6).

C.S. Lewis loved to draw from an early age, and he enjoyed looking at the illustrations of other books—especially those of Aubrey Beardsley. It is too bad he did not illustrate more of his books because his attention to detail and perspective would have resulted in some very good drawings.

Lewis chose Pauline Baynes as his illustrator, and although their relationship was strange and perhaps strained because of Lewis’s criticism, “[i]t was the perfect marriage of author and illustrator” (*CL* 2: 1020).

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# The Wizard in the Well: The Transmogrification of the Mythical Merlin in C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*

Mark R. Hall  
Oral Roberts University

Since his boyhood, C. S. Lewis had been enamored with mythology and the tales of Arthur and Merlin as reflected in his early diaries and letters. He originally desired to be a great poet,<sup>1</sup> to compose an epic that would be praised alongside such poems as *The Faerie Queene* and *Orlando Furioso*, works that he admired and read (Hannay 241; Ross).<sup>2</sup> At thirteen he crafted a long poem that focused on Nibelung in Wagner's *Ring* cycle (King 4-5);<sup>3</sup> at fifteen he was creating a tragic Norse opera *Loki Bound* with plans to have his friend Arthur Greeves compose the music.<sup>4</sup> Other subjects that interested the young Lewis and influenced his early writing included Medea's childhood (Medea being the enchantress who helped Jason gain the golden fleece),<sup>5</sup> Helen (of Troy),<sup>6</sup> Sigrid,<sup>7</sup> Nimue (the sorceress who seduced Merlin),<sup>8</sup> and the story of Cupid and Psyche,<sup>9</sup> which was the source and inspiration for his last novel *Till We Have Faces* (Hannay 241; *All My Road* 262n2; hereafter abbreviated as *AMR*).

Lewis's familiarity with the Arthurian literary tradition, especially Merlin, is revealed in some of his letters to Arthur Greeves. Lewis writes in a letter dated January 26, 1915 concerning Malory:

Now that my friends have gone, there is nothing to do but sit & read or write when it rains, and consequently I have nearly finished *The Morte D'arthur*. I am more

pleased at having bought it every day, as it has opened up a new world to me. I had no idea that the Arthurian legends were so fine. (The name is against them isn't it??) Malory is really not a great author, but he has two excellent gifts, (1) that of lively narrative and (2) the power of getting you to know characters by gradual association. (*The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis* 1:103; hereafter abbreviated as *CL*)

Lewis demonstrates great enthusiasm for Malory in a letter dated February 2 of that same year when he writes, "I am deep in *Morte D'Arthur* by this time, and it is really the greatest thing I've ever read" (*CL* 1:104). Showing his interest in the frontispiece to an edition of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* he obtained, Lewis comments on the style of the picture in a letter to Arthur Greeves dated October 28?, 1917:

I have also got the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 volumes of Malory in the Temple Classics. The frontispieces are from designs by Beardsley. They are v. good in the extremest style of mediaevalism—perhaps rather affected. One is of the finding of Excalibur & the other of someone giving Tristram a shield. In the Excalibur one, Merlin is shewn as a not very old clean-

shaven but beautifully wizened man.  
Not what I'd have imagined him but  
good all the same. (CL 1: 340)

It is clear that Thomas Malory had a formative and lifelong influence on Lewis's writing.

In a letter dated September 18, 1919, Lewis relates how he has abandoned his *Medea* poem while continuing to revise *Nimue*, an Arthurian poem he was constructing. According to Walter Hooper, this excerpt in the letter is the only stanza of the poem that has survived.

On getting back to England I had the pleasure of looking over my 'Medea' of which I told you and finding that it was all hopeless and only fit for the fire! Nothing daunted however I bade it a long farewell—poor still-born—and consoled myself by turning the 'Nimue' from a monologue into a narrative, in which form it may do. It appears in 'stanzas' of my own invention and is rather indebted to 'St Agnes' Eve' with touches of Christabel and some references to contemporary politics—by way of showing how much better I could manage the country if they made me Prime Minister. Sounds promising, DON'T it? It relates the events of a single evening—Merlin coming back & catching Nimue at last. This is the first stanza, do you think it any good?

*'There was none stirring in the hall  
that night,  
The dogs slept in the ashes, and the  
guard  
Drowsily nodded in the warm fire-  
light,  
Lulled by the rain and wearied of  
his ward,  
Till, hearing one that knocked  
without full hard,  
Half-dazed he started up in aged  
fear*

*And rubbed his eyes and took his  
tarnished spear  
And hobbled to the doorway and  
unbarred.'* (CL 1: 465-466)

Lewis writes to Arthur Greeves on April 11, 1920 that he was still working on the poem:

Look at me—I am still working at my poem on Merlin and Nimue. It has been in succession—rhymed monologue—rhymed dialogue—blank verse dialogue—long narrative in stanzas—short narrative in couplets—and I am at present at work on a blank verse narrative version. I hope I am not wasting my time: but there must be some good in a subject which drags me back to itself so often." (CL 1: 482-483)

Lewis's diary entry for Thursday, May 4, 1922, records that he submitted the poem to Squire with little hope of it being accepted for publication (AMR 29). Don King notes that this was probably the blank verse version of the poem that had been sent to the *London Mercury* and was rejected (50).

In another letter to Arthur Greeves, written on October 18, 1919, Lewis shares his opinion of Geoffrey of Monmouth's work and refers once again to his Merlin poem *Nimue*:

Since then I have read Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'History of the Kings of Britain'. I don't think you would care much for it, there are a good many dull battles and his Arthur is merely contemptible. Where he really is good is in the early part. Who would not hear about the first coming of Brut, and Bladud (our first aeronaut, the British counterpart of Daedalus), and the birth of Merlin and the building of Stonehenge (its delightful alternative name being The Dance of Giants) and the Vortigern and Lear and Lochrine? One learns a little too. 'Kaer' apparently is British for 'city'. Hence



Leil builds Kaer-Leil (Carlyle) and Kaer-leon is the city of legion. 'Kaerleon of the legions' (as I call it in Nimue) what a name! (CL 1: 468)

From the "History of the Kings of Britain," as this letter indicates, Lewis found his word for Cair Paravel, "the castle of the kings and queens of Narnia in Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*," "cair" actually meaning "city" (CL 1: 468n93).

Lewis's fascination with Merlin and the Arthurian tradition is finally realized almost thirty years later in the third book of his Space Trilogy *That Hideous Strength* (hereafter abbreviated as *THS*) published in 1945. In a letter to I. O. Evans, dated September 26, 1945, Lewis discusses the novel and provides a list of Arthurian works that he knows:

About Merlin: I don't know much more than you do. Apart from Malory (the Everyman edition and the Temple Classics are both complete) you will get something more in Geoffrey of Monmouth (Temple Classics) and LAYAMON (to be found in the Everyman volume entitled 'Arthurian Chronicles from Wace and Layamon'. For Arthur in general see 'Arthur of Britain' by E. K. Chambers, Collinwood in Vol. 1 of 'Oxford History of England', and Vinaver's 'Malory'. But the blessing about Merlin (for you and me) is that 'very little is known'—so we have a free hand! (CL 2: 672-673)

Although some critics such as Professor Chad Walsh have argued that the book would have been much better written had Lewis not included the Arthurian traditions (Sayer 304)—asserting that Merlin functions as a *deus ex machina* (Downing 75)—in reality the return of Merlin seems to contextualize the battle Lewis is depicting and sets up the reader for the ultimate resolution of the conflict of the novel.

The story begins with the narrator entering the restricted Bragdon Wood—an enclosed garden on the property of Bracton College—experiencing a sense of the sacred, journeying to "the centre of the Wood" (*THS* 21). There he encounters Merlin's Well, described by Doris Myers as "a numinous place" (93), "a well with steps going down to it and the remains of an ancient pavement about it. It was very imperfect now. I did not step on it, but I lay down in the grass and touched it with my fingers. For this was the heart of Bracton or Bragdon Wood: out of this all the legends had come and on this, I suspected . . . the very existence of the College had originally depended" (*THS* 21). Lewis continues his detailed description of this ancient location, presenting a historical framework and relating the important events surrounding "Merlin's Well":

The archaeologists were agreed that the masonry was very late British-Roman work, done on the eve of the Anglo-Saxon invasion. [. . .] Certainly, if all that was told were true, or even half of it, the Wood was older than the Bractons. [. . .] A sixteenth-century Warden of the College [had been led] to say that, "We know not by ancientest report of any Britain without Bragdon." (*THS* 21)

According to a song from the Middle Ages, the connection of the Well to Merlin hearkens back to medieval times.

But the medieval song takes us back to the fourteenth century.

*In Bragdon bricht this ende dai  
Herde ich Merlin ther he lai  
Singende woo and welawai.*

It is good enough evidence that the well with the British-Roman pavement was already "Merlin's Well," though the name is not found till Queen Elizabeth's reign [. . .] when [. . .] the fountain [is] called in vanity Merlin's Well. (*THS* 21-22)

The Well itself had been controversial, especially during the time of Cromwell

when one of Cromwell's Major Generals, conceiving it his business to destroy "the groves and the high places," sent a few troopers with power to impress the country people for this pious work. The scheme came to nothing in the end; but there had been a bicker between the College and the troopers in the heart of Bragdon, and the fabulously learned and saintly Richard Crowe had been killed by a musket-ball on the very steps of the Well. (*THS* 22)

The Well was the focus of tradition and ritual: "And always, through all changes, every Warden of Bracton, on the day of his election, had drunk a ceremonial draught of water from Merlin's Well in the great cup which, both for its antiquity and beauty, was the greatest of the Bracton treasures" (*THS* 22). It is also surrounded by history and intrigue as the narrator relates:

All of this I thought of, lying beside Merlin's Well, beside the well which must certainly date from Merlin's time if there had ever been a real Merlin: lying where Sir Kenelm Digby had lain all one summer night and seen a certain strange appearance: where Collins the poet had lain, and where George the Third had cried: where the brilliant and much-loved Nathaniel Fox had composed the famous poem three weeks before he was killed in France.<sup>10</sup> (*THS* 22)

A place of serenity and mystery—"The air was so still and the billows of foliage so heavy above me, that I fell asleep" (*THS* 22)—Merlin's Well had become a symbol of "the sanity, the balance of religion, science and law that makes up the Bracton College tradition" (Myers 93). The historical

figures associated with the Well represent the Tao (which Lewis describes in *The Abolition of Man*, the non-fiction work on which the fictional *That Hideous Strength* is based), for their actions functioned as a beacon of moral authority, as they successfully defended the Well from the Progressive forces of the College—those who wanted to destroy it in order to purify the place (Myers 93).

The reader learns that Merlin, the most famous wizard in the ancient tales of King Arthur, was buried here. In a conversation with Jane Studdock—one of the protagonists in *That Hideous Strength* along with her husband Mark—"a pair of anchorless modern intellectuals in an unfulfilling marriage" (Downing 53), Dr. Dimble (Jane's former tutor) and Mrs. Dimble (also known as Mother Dimble, her "unofficial aunt") discuss the myth of the ancient Merlin during a lunch engagement (*THS* 29). Jane asks, "And where would Merlin be?" To which Dr. Dimble replies, "Yes. . . . He's the really interesting figure. Did the whole thing fail because he died so soon? Has it ever struck you what an odd creation Merlin is? He's not evil; yet he's a magician. He is obviously a druid; yet he knows all about the Grail. He's 'the devil's son'; but then Layamon goes out of his way to tell you that the kind of being who fathered Merlin needn't have been bad after all." Dr. Dimble continues, "I often wonder [. . .] whether Merlin doesn't represent the last trace of something the later tradition has quite forgotten about—something that became impossible when the only people in touch with the supernatural were either white or black, either priests or sorcerers." Mrs. Dimble interjects, "Anyway, Merlin happened a long time ago if he happened at all and he's safely dead and buried under Bragdon Wood as every one of us knows." "Buried but *not* dead, according to the story," corrected Dr. Dimble" (*THS* 31-32). Various traditions place Merlin's burial sites in different locations: "His prison and/or burial place is said to be beneath Merlin's Mound at Marlborough College in Marlborough (Wiltshire), at Drumelzier in



Tweeddale (Scotland), Bryn Myrddin (Merlin's Hill) near Carmarthen (Wales), Le Tombeau de Merlin (Merlin's Tomb) near Paimpont (Brittany) and Ynys Enlli (Bardsey Island) off the Lleyn Peninsula (Wales)" ("Merlin"). For Lewis, it is his mythical Bragdon Wood.

The most famous depiction of Merlin's demise comes from *Le Morte d'Arthur* (a very familiar story to Lewis as noted previously), where Malory relates the tragic tale of the wizard and Nimue (Nimwu), the Lady of the Lake:

[I]t fell so that Merlin fell in a dotage on the damosel that King Pellinore brought to court, and she was one of the damosels of the lake, that hight Nimue. But Merlin would let her have no rest, but always he would be with her. And ever she made Merlin good cheer till she had learned of him all manner thing that she desired; and he was assotted upon her that he might not be from her. [. . .] And so, soon after, the lady and Merlin departed, and by the way Merlin showed her many wonders, and came into Cornwall. And always Merlin lay about the lady to have her maidenhood, and she was ever passing weary of him, and fain would have been delivered of him, for she was afeard of him because he was a devil's son, and she could not beskift him by no mean. And so on a time it happed that Merlin showed to her in a rock whereas was a great wonder, and wrought by enchantment, that went under a great stone. So by her subtle working she made Merlin to go under that stone to let her wit of the marvels there; but she wrought so there for him that he came never out for all the craft he could do. And so she departed and left Merlin. (bk. 4, ch. 1)

Malory relates how Merlin is beguiled by a woman who desires to discover his esoteric knowledge. He, a willing victim with ulterior motives of his own, is outmaneuvered and trapped helplessly under a rock (probably in a cave), and according to this tradition, he never came out—a victim of his own desires—deceived and alone. Another interpretation of the Merlin tradition cited by Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper asserts that "Merlin did not die, but was imprisoned in a tomb, in a magic sleep, by an enchantress: and from that sleep he would awake at some future date no older than when he fell into it" (176). Lewis emphasizes this aspect of the Merlin tale in *That Hideous Strength*.

There is little debate that Lewis was an eclectic writer, assimilating and transforming the texts that he read, shaping them into his own fiction. Alan Jacobs observes, "If there is anything truly unique about Lewis, it is the facility with which he assimilated influences" (121). For example, Lewis adopts close friend and fellow Inkling Charles Williams' interpretation of Logres in *That Hideous Strength*. Downing explains, "In his Arthurian books, Williams used Logres to represent the spiritual side of England, the combination of Christian and Celtic ideals, a force that stands against the tides of worldliness and corruption" (76). According to Lewis' novel, Merlin's body lay beneath Bragdon Wood "uncorrupted for fifteen hundred years," a discovery that "did not seem strange to them [the eldils]; they knew worlds where there was no corruption at all. [. . .] Merlin had not died. His life had been hidden, sidetracked, moved out of our one-dimensional time, for fifteen centuries. But under certain conditions it would return to his body" (*THS* 201-202). Green and Hooper note that this sleeping Merlin is an

ancient legend still believed in the case of Epimenides of Crete<sup>11</sup> and the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus,<sup>12</sup> used most memorably as conscious literary background in *Rip Van Winkle*<sup>13</sup> and Edwin Lester Arnold's

*Lepidus the Centurion*,<sup>14</sup> and in the imaginative science fiction of Rider Haggard's *When the World Shook*.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Lewis may have had all these at the back of his mind—Jane's dream of the vault and the sleeper under Bragdon Wood seems too close to Louis Allenby's discovery of Lepidus to be mere coincidence. (Green and Hooper 176)<sup>16</sup>

In "the lecture with which Jack Bennett [a member of the Inklings, medieval scholar, and Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Magdalene College, Cambridge] inaugurated his Cambridge chair after the death of C. S. Lewis" (Boitani 10), he declares, "In our own time it was Lewis who turned men's minds to the Middle Ages and so stimulated our mental thirst" ("Humane Medievalist" 364).<sup>17</sup> Bennett points out in his essay "Grete Clerk" Lewis' s fascination with Merlin: "The Merlin who in a very literal sense underlies the action of *That Hideous Strength* is the Merlin who was the figure in his selections from Layamon's Brut" (49). In fact, Lewis wrote a chapter entitled "The Genesis of a Medieval Book" devoted to "Brut" (*Studies* 18-40). Downing observes, "Indeed, the Merlin of the Brut, like the Merlin in *That Hideous Strength*, is a shaggy, half-savage man who gives fealty only to the pendragon, who challenges his rivals by asking them riddling questions, and who demands that his enemies be beheaded" (137). In Lewis' introduction to medieval and Renaissance literature entitled *The Discarded Image*, Merlin is classified as one of the Longaevi, the Longlivers, who "are usually of at least fully human stature": he is "only half human by blood and never shown practicing magic *as an art*" (130). A. N. Wilson even asserts that "Lewis drew on Yeats when he was describing the bulky mysterious figure of Merlin, the morally ambivalent wizard-ruffian of *That Hideous Strength*" (71).

The location of Merlin's Well in Bragdon Wood is connected to King Arthur, to Logres, as explained by Dr. Dimble: "It all began [. . .] when we discovered that the

Arthurian story is mostly true history. There was a moment in the Sixth Century when something that is always trying to break through into this country nearly succeeded. Logres was our name for it—it will do as well as another. And then . . . gradually we began to see all English history in a new way." Dr. Dimble calls this discovery "the haunting": "We discovered the haunting [. . .] [h]ow something we may call Britain is always haunted by something we may call Logres. Haven't you noticed that we are two countries? After every Arthur, a Mordred. [. . .] Is it any wonder they call us hypocrites? But what they mistake for hypocrisy is really the struggle between Logres and Britain" (*THS* 368-369). Merlin's connection to Logres is essential to the action that follows, to what Merlin will do to help save Thulcandra by destroying N.I.C.E. (National Institute of Coordinated Experiments), an organization that is anything but nice.

Indeed in *That Hideous Strength*, Merlin the Longliver arises from the ancient well of Bragdon Wood after centuries of sleep, his purpose to overcome the sinister forces of evil (N.I.C.E.) that seek to destroy Thulcandra. By taking the elements of the Arthurian tradition and transmuting them into this "modern fairy-tale for grown-ups"—depicting the age-old battle between Logres (the sacred, the spiritual reality) and Britain (the secular, the earthly reality)—Lewis is able to demonstrate that even though human beings may be hunted by evil forces, a future Merlin will arise to once again deliver them—to haunt them from the past in order to deliver them in the future. By discovering more about the haunting, Logres would be saved. Dr. Dimble explains:

It was long afterwards [. . .] after the Director had returned from the Third Heaven, that we were told a little more. This haunting turned out to be not only from the other side of the invisible wall. Ransom was summoned to the bedside of an old

man then dying in Cumberland. His name would mean nothing to you if I told it. That man was the Pendragon, the successor of Arthur and Uther and Cassibelaun. Then we learned the truth. There has been a secret Logres in the very heart of Britain all these years: an unbroken succession of Pendragons. That old man was the seventy-eighth from Arthur: our Director received from him the office and the blessings; tomorrow we shall know, or tonight, who is to be the eightieth. Some of the Pendragons are well known to history, though not under that name. Others you have never heard of. But in every age they and the little Logres which gathered round them have been the fingers which gave the tiny shove or the almost imperceptible pull, to prod England out of the drunken sleep or to draw her back from the final outrage into which Britain tempted her. (*THS* 369)

When MacPhee questions Dr. Dimble's version of history, claiming it "is a wee bit lacking in documents," Dr. Dimble answers "with a smile": "It has plenty. [. . .] But you do not know the language they're written in. When the history of these last few months comes to be written in *your* language, and printed, and taught in schools, there will be no mention in it of you and me, nor of Merlin and the Pendragon and the Planets. And yet in these months Britain rebelled most dangerously against Logres and was defeated only just in time" (*THS* 369). Ultimately, Lewis' wizard in the well arises from his sleep and delivers Logres from the clutches of evil, preserving the spiritual reality of England.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>In a diary entry written on Saturday, March 6, 1926, Lewis expresses his desire to be a famous poet: My desire then contains two elements: (a) The desire for some proof to myself that I am a poet. (b) The desire that my poet-hood should be acknowledged even if no one knows that it is mine" (*CL* 1: 929-930). He continues, "I have flattered myself with the idea of being among my own people when I was reading the poets and it is unpleasing to have to stand down and take my place in the crowd" (*CL* 1: 930). When Owen Barfield spoke at Wheaton College on October 16, 1964, he reminisced about his early acquaintance with Lewis, noting that his "ruling ambition was to become a great poet. At that time if you thought of Lewis you automatically thought of poetry" (qtd. in King 2).

<sup>2</sup>In an article by Charles Ross, "Arthuriana and the Limits of C. S. Lewis' *Ariosto Marginalia*," the author discusses some of the marginalia of Lewis as he is annotating the Arthurian text *Orlando Furioso*. He includes in it facsimile pages that demonstrate Lewis' focus on the various Arthurian elements that intrigued him. Ross describes Lewis' process:

Lewis rigorously summarized the plot of Ariosto's long poem. He did so generally without comment, in neat captions copied out in a fair hand across the top of the distressingly cheap editions, often second hand, that it was his practice to purchase. His annotations also included underlinings as well as single vertical lines. These marginalia indicate a habit of mind that is extremely focused, limited to a fixed number of topics, and at times almost mundane and personal. Lewis always marked the Arthurian moments, and the related themes of Ireland (he was born in Belfast), women, significant parallels

to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and virtue. He also had a strange fascination for noses. (47)

<sup>3</sup> C. S. Lewis began reading "a magazine called *The Soundbox* [that] was doing synopses of great operas week by week, and it now did the whole *Ring*." He writes,

I read in a rapture and discovered who Siegfried was and what was the 'twilight' of the gods. I could contain myself no longer—I began a poem, a heroic poem on the Wagnerian version of the Niblung story. My only source was the abstracts in *The Soundbox*, and I was so ignorant that I made Alberich rhyme with *ditch* and Mime with *time*. My model was Pope's *Odyssey* and the poem began (with some mixture of mythologies) *Descend to earth, descend, celestial Nine*  
*And change the ancient legends of the Rhine. . . .*

Since the fourth book has carried me only as far as the last scene of *The Rheingold*, the reader will not be surprised to hear that the poem was never finished. But it was not a waster of time, and I can still see just what it did for me and where it began to do it. The first three books (I may, perhaps, at this distance of time, say it without vanity) are really not at all bad for a boy. At the beginning of the unfinished fourth it goes all to pieces; and that is exactly the point at which I really began to try to make poetry. Up to then, if my lines rhymed and scanned and got on with the story I asked no more. Now, at the beginning of the fourth, I began to try to convey some of the intense excitement I was feeling, to look for expressions which would not merely state, but suggest. Of course I failed, lost my prosaic clarity, spluttered, gasped, and

presently fell silent; but I had learned what writing means.  
(*Surprised by Joy* 74)

<sup>4</sup> In a letter to Arthur Greeves dated June 5, 1914, Lewis writes, "Of course, take the 'Loki Bound' MS. over to Bernaugh, anytime you feel inclined to compose a little operatic music" (*CL* 1: 59). In a subsequent one written on October 6 of that same year to Greeves, he sets forth "the plot of my would-be tragedy," "divided into the technical parts of a Greek tragedy" (*CL* 1:75-78), and in an epistle penned on October 14, he acknowledges, "I am afraid this is rather a 'Loki' letter, and I know that I must not expect others to doat [*sic*] on the subject as foolishly as do I" (*CL* 1: 81).

Lewis remarks to Greeves:

I was very glad to hear your favourable criticism of 'Loki' (and I hope it is genuine) and to see that you are taking an interest in it. Of course your supposed difficulty about scoring is a 'phantasm.' For, in the first place, if we do compose this opera, it will in all probability never have the chance of being played by an orchestra: and, in the second place, if by any chance it were ever to be produced, the job of scoring it would be given—as is customary—to a hireling. (*CL* 1: 80)

<sup>5</sup> In letters to Arthur Greeves and an entry in his diary, Lewis discusses his interest in the childhood of Medea and the poem he is writing about the subject.

July 11, 1916: "I am very glad to hear that you are getting to like Jason: I agree with you that the whole description of Medea—glorious character—going out by night, and of her sorceries in the wood is absolutely wonderful, and there are other bits later on such as the description of the 'Winter by the Northern River' and the garden of the Hesperides, which I think quite as good" (*CL* 1: 209).

February 17, 1917: "The subject is 'The childhood of Medea,' & it will leave off

where the most poems about her begin— shortly after her meeting with Jason. It will describe her lonely, frightened childhood away in a castle with the terrible old king her father & how she is gradually made to learn magic against her will” (CL 1: 277-278).

February 20, 1917: “The childhood of Medea has progressed to some two hundred and twenty lines, in the metre of ‘Jason’—tho’ I am trying not to imitate [William] Morris too much” (CL 1: 282)

February 28, 1917: “‘Medea’s Childhood’ after struggling on for 300 turgid lines has been quietly made into spills for my ‘tobacco pipe’—all those fine landscapes and vigorous speeches, devoted to real use at last!” (CL 1: 286).

July 4, 1923: “[. . .] I wrote and destroyed over seven hundred lines of a poem on Medea” (AMR 252).

<sup>6</sup> Lewis reflected on his Helen poem in letters to Arthur Greeves.

May 5, 1919: “I have nearly finished the Venus poem and am full of ideas for another, which Gilbert Murray gave me the hint of in a lecture—a very curious legend about Helen, whom Simon Magus, a gnostic magician mentioned in the Acts, found living as a very earthly person in Antioch and gradually recalled to her who she was and took her up to Zeus again, reborn: on their way they had to fight ‘the Dynasties’ or planets—the evil powers that hold the heaven, between us and something really friendly beyond—I have written some of it, but of course I get hardly any time either for reading or writing” (CL 1: 447).

June 2, 1919: “Hardly writing anything at all except a few lines yesterday for the Helen poem, and bits for a short one I thought of doing on ‘Nimue’. What are the possibilities of the subject?” (CL 1: 454).

<sup>7</sup> In his diary entry of July 11, 1923, Lewis mentions his “Sigfrid” poem: “[. . .] [C]oming across my old poem on ‘Sigrid’, I began to turn it into a new version in couplets with great and totally unexpected success” (AMR 259).

<sup>8</sup> In an April 20, 1922 entry in his diary, Lewis comments on his “Nimue” poem: “After supper I began to copy out ‘Nimue’ with many corrections: I am pleasantly satisfied with it. Whether I succeed or fail, how ridiculous that will read some day! . . .” (AMR 23).

<sup>9</sup> In a diary entry dated September 9, 1923, Lewis discusses his Cupid and Psyche poem: “. . . My head was very full of my old idea of a poem on my own version of the Cupid and Psyche story in which Psyche’s sister would not be jealous, but unable to see anything but moors when Psyche showed her the Palace. I have tried it twice before, once in couplet and once in ballad form (AMR 266).

<sup>10</sup> Doris Myers describes the figures Lewis mentions in this passage: “Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665), an amateur scientist, poet, and collector of manuscripts; William Collins (1721-59), a pre-romantic poet; George III (1738-1820), the mad king; and Nathaniel Fox, a fictional World War I poet” (93).

<sup>11</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, who probably wrote around 250 A.D., records the tale of Epimenides in his *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*:

Epimenides, according to Theopompus and many other writers, was the son of Phaestius; some, however, make him the son of Dosiadas, others of Agesarchus. He was a native of Cnossos in Crete, though from wearing his hair long he did not look like a Cretan. One day he was sent into the country by his father to look for a stray sheep, and at noon he turned aside out of the way, and went to sleep in a cave, where he slept for fifty-seven years. After this he got up and went in search of the sheep, thinking he had been asleep only a short time. And when he could not find it, he came to the farm, and found everything changed and another owner in possession. Then he went back to

the town in utter perplexity; and there, on entering his own house, he fell in with people who wanted to know who he was. At length he found his younger brother, now an old man, and learnt the truth from him. So he became famous throughout Greece, and was believed to be a special favourite of heaven. (1.109-110)

<sup>12</sup> Around 1250 A.D. the tale of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus was recorded in chapter 24 of the work by James de Voragine entitled *Legenda aurea* (the “Golden Legend”), which relates information on the lives of the saints and Christian feasts. Pieter W. van der Horst in his article, “Pious Long-Sleepers in Greek, Jewish, and Christian Antiquity,” summarizes the story:

During the persecution of Christians by the emperor Decius (ca. 250 CE), seven pious young men took refuge in a cave near Ephesus where they fell asleep and were walled up by Decius. When they woke up, initially they thought they had slept only for a short time and sent one of their number, Iamblichus, to the market to get some food. But as he came into the city, everything appeared strange to him: the buildings were changed, Jesus Christ was being talked about freely by the people, and crosses were inscribed on all the city gates. He couldn’t believe that this was his Ephesus. Finally he realized that it was no less than 372 years later: Theodosius was the Emperor. (Curiously enough, this is said to have happened not about 622 CE but in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius, either I or II [379-395 and 408-450 CE respectively]). The appearance of the seven young men became the occasion for great ecclesiastical festivity in which also the Emperor participated. All who saw the young

men thanked God for the miracle. The cave became a much visited pilgrim site for many centuries. (1)

<sup>13</sup> “Rip Van Winkle” is a short story published in 1819 by Washington Irving. The protagonist of the tale, after which the story is titled, lives before the advent of the American Revolutionary War. Although popular with townsfolk and children, he is an idler and his farm has suffered as a result. He finally escapes to his beloved wilderness with Wolf his dog to avoid his wife’s constant nagging. On his way, he sees a fellow Dutchman who needs assistance carrying a keg of moonshine. As they proceed, Van Winkle hears deafening noises. Finally, they arrive at a place where he discovers that the source of the noise is a company of men who are bowling. Helping himself to their liquor, Van Winkle quickly falls asleep. When he awakens, he sees a rusty gun, no dog, and he is sporting a foot-long beard. He is a stranger to the town and sees no people he recognizes. Hanging in the village’s inn is a portrait of George Washington instead of King George III. His wife is dead and his friends gone. He sees his son who is now an adult. Van Winkle finds out that he was asleep twenty years, and his adult daughter finally takes him in.

<sup>14</sup> *Lepidus the Centurion: A Roman of Today* is a British fantasy novel written by Edwin Lester Arnold, published in 1901. Louis Allanby, the young squire who is the narrator of the story, lives in modern-day Rome. He discovers on his estate the underground tomb of a Roman centurion named Marcus Lepidus. For some unexplained reason, Lepidus comes back to life with the help of Allanby. The squire invites him to be a guest at his house introducing him as his cousin to his other visitors. The reader learns of the past life of Lepidus in ancient Rome where he became a centurion in order to be close to the woman he loved.

<sup>15</sup> *When the World Shook: Being an Account of the Great Adventure of Bastin, Bickley, and Arbuthnot* is a science fiction

novel by H. Rider Haggard published in 1919, shortly after WW I. It relates the travels of Basil Bastin, a preacher; Bickley, a physician; and Humphrey Arbuthnot, an author who writes adventure stories, to the mysterious south sea island of Orofena where they are marooned. They learn from the natives of their powerful god Oro who has been asleep for 250,000 years. The shipwrecked men search a volcanic cave and discover two coffins made of crystal in which two beings have been laid. They revive Oro and his daughter Yva, who looks just like Arbuthnot's dead wife Natalie. The two plan to marry. After Oro forces Arbuthnot to show him the negative state of the world through some kind of remote projection, the god decides to destroy the world through an earthquake in order to create a golden age with the survivors. Yva thwarts the attempt but in the process is killed. The grieving father allows the three travellers to return to England where Arbuthnot dies and is buried next to Natalie.

<sup>16</sup> Although not mentioned by Green and Hooper, there can be little doubt that Lewis would have also been familiar with the medieval work "St. Erkenwald," a miracle story that relates the resuscitation of an ancient corpse that was discovered in a pagan tomb during construction of a cathedral. The tomb is opened and inside is a perfectly preserved body dressed in kingly garments. Unsure about what all of this means, the mayor sends for St. Erkenwald who prays to learn the identity of the individual. After Erkenwald prays, a light appears, and the corpse is revived. Asking questions of the corpse, Erkenwald discovers that the animated man is a just judge who lived in Britain before the time of Christ. One teardrop from St. Erkenwald, symbolizing baptism, falls on the former judge. With his soul now ready to enter bliss, his body turns to dust.

<sup>17</sup> In that same lecture, Bennett expressed his sincere sorrow at the loss of his colleague, "C. S. Lewis died a year ago today,

and the year has deepened not diminished our sense of loss," and describes the affection his students and friends had for him:

The regard he inspired in his pupils happily illustrated on the night he inaugurated this professorship; when a platoon of them who had made the journey from Oxford could find no place to sit save on the dais, on which they ranged themselves like a *sceldtruma* or shield-wall resolved to defend their liege-lord. In fact, of course, he found here friends rather than adversaries, and friends who added happiness and solace to his last years. No man was ever more indifferent to 'status'. But no man could have relished more the friendliness and the freedom that Cambridge accorded him. And assuredly he was not distressed to find here that the dinosaurian culture which he described so memorably in his opening lecture was not quite so moribund as he had suggested. ("Humane Medievalist" 359)

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# MALEldil and Mutual Society: A Modern Woman's Defense of Jane Studdock

Crystal Hurd  
East Tennessee State University

When C.S. Lewis penned the final installment of his space trilogy *That Hideous Strength*, he began not with his prodigious protagonist Dr. Ransom, but with a newlywed scholar named Jane Studdock. She is recalling, and bristling, at the language contained in the marriage vows from the *Book of Common Prayer*: "Mutual society, help, and comfort," said Jane bitterly. In reality marriage had proved to be the door out of a world of work and comradeship and laughter and innumerable things to do, into something like solitary confinement" (13). Jane decides to postpone motherhood in exchange for a blossoming career as a scholar of Dante. Her spouse Mark Studdock is preoccupied with career goals, spending long evenings tickling the egos of the college elite instead of delighting in the company of his bride. Over time, Jane has grown resentful of her husband, listening to the ticking clock after the morning chores are finished. She feels that the whole circumstance is grossly unjust. Mark can frolic with his work friends while she busies herself with housework. *But at least she has academics*. Her studies on Dante, although benign, have provided her with a brief glimpse of her former liberty, of a time before "wifely obligations" which allowed her the privilege to choose her own path. Although only six months have passed since their nuptials, Mark and Jane have seen very little of one another, which only widened the vast chasm that already exists in their

marriage. So we ask, who bears the fault? Should Mark be blamed for his overzealous ambition and domestic truancy or should Jane be blamed for nurturing an unrelenting bitterness in his absence?

Perhaps first we should explore how Lewis and his surrounding culture interpreted gender. Lewis inhabited a time of great social, familial, and economic change for women. During his lifetime, women gained the right to vote, were allowed to graduate with a degree from Oxford University (as his friend Dorothy Sayers did), and began occupying challenging and diverse careers which had been formerly held exclusively by men. Admittedly, Lewis claims his advocacy of Hierarchical Conception, discussed and exemplified in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. There, Satan's disobedience to God and his refusal to submit to a superior authority propagate his fall, the establishment of hell, while catalyzing his role as God's adversary. By extension, Adam and Eve are guilty of this same sin when they knowingly partake of fruit which has been explicitly forbidden. In both situations, the attempt to become "equal" is the fatal flaw which precipitates the downfall. Lewis firmly admits in his essay "Equality" what is derived from II Corinthians chapter 12: "There [in the Christian life] we are not homogeneous units, but different and complementary organs of a mystical body" (494). Obedience, he claims, is the key to a happy, peaceful, and tranquil life. Lewis

harkens a music metaphor in a passage from *Preface to Paradise Lost*:

Discipline, while the world is yet unfallen, exists for the sake of what seems its very opposite—for freedom, almost for extravagance. The pattern deep hidden in the dance, hidden so deep that shallow spectators cannot see it . . . The heavenly frolic arises from an orchestra which is in tune; the rules of courtesy make perfect ease and freedom possible between those who obey them. (81)

But keep in mind here that Lewis was discussing man's relationship to God, not necessarily a relationship to one another. Although, the same is often true of marriages, the foundational idea is that God is a perfect superior, while man is not. This, he reiterates, is strongly portrayed in *Paradise Lost*. Man's leadership role is much more difficult, as his fallen nature makes him vulnerable to corruption.

However, despite our fallen natures, a hierarchy of some kind must exist to maintain order and peace. Shall we dismiss all male leadership because of a few "bad apples"? Furthermore, do we attempt to actually remedy our fallen natures by substituting a different scenario? Lewis explains in the essay "Priestesses in the Church":

We men may often make bad priests. That is because we are insufficiently masculine. It is no cure to call in those who are not masculine at all. A given man may make a very bad husband; you cannot mend matters by trying to reverse the roles. He may make a bad male partner in a dance. The cure for that is that men should more diligently attend dancing classes; not that the ballroom should henceforward ignore distinctions of sex and treat all dancers as neuter (461).

How does this structure work in the home? Lewis states that we must have a power structure for the home to work properly:

"Must we not teach that if the home is to be a means of grace it must be a place of *rules*? There cannot be a common life without a *regula*. The alternative to rule is not freedom but the unconstitutional (and often unconscious) tyranny of the most selfish member" (495).

In the earlier installment of the space trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet*, the lack of structure is noted by the various creatures of Malacandra:

'It is because they have no Oyarsa,' said one of the pupils. 'It is because every one of them wants to be a little Oyarsa himself,' said Augray. 'They cannot help it,' said the old sorn. 'They must be ruled, yet how can creatures rule themselves? Beasts must be ruled by hnau and hnau by eldila and eldila by Maleldill. These creatures have no eldila. They are like one trying to lift himself by his own hair—or one trying to see over a whole country when he is on a level with it—like a female trying to beget young on herself. (102)

Notice that Lewis names the Malacandran God Maleldill. He states in a letter dated 11 August 1945: "MAL- is really equivalent to the definite article in some of the definite article's uses. ELDIL means a lord or ruler, Maleldill 'The Lord': i.e. it is, strictly speaking the Old Solar not for DEUS but for DOMINUS" (213). Lewis posits that in Christ, all members of the body of feminine, making Christ the MALE head of the Church, as he mentions in his essay "Priestesses in the Church?": "I am crushingly aware how inadequate most [men] are, in our actual and historical individualities, to fill the place prepared for us...Only one wearing the masculine uniform can...represent the Lord to the Church: for we are all, corporately and individually, feminine to him" (461)

Lewis talks openly about the importance of hierarchy, but notice how many of his personal experiences contradict this. When Lewis was a young man, he lived

with Janie and Maureen Moore. It is well documented that, although Lewis was the only male in the household, he was subject to assiduous chores assigned by Mrs. Moore, tasks which only intensified later when her illness progressed. When Joy moved into the Kilns as Mrs. Lewis, she was quick to make several household renovations and updates to the former “bachelor pad”. Lewis was opposed to using weapons in threatening trespassers, yet Joy proudly purchased a shotgun to protect the property. Douglas Gresham tells us in *Lenten Lands* that on one occasion when stubborn poachers refused to leave, Joy retrieved her gun immediately. Lewis stepped in front of her to offer protection (as any chivalrous man would do), to which Joy emphatically yelled, “Damn it Jack, get out of my line of fire!” (85).

Yet, even as a proponent of hierarchy who draws gender distinctions, Lewis argued that differences DO NOT determine value. This is illustrated in the conclusion of *Perelandra*:

Gender is a reality, and a more fundamental reality than sex. Sex is, in fact, merely the adaptation to organic life of a fundamental polarity which divides all created beings. Female sex is simply one of the things that have feminine gender; there are many others, and Masculine and Feminine meet us on planes of reality where male and female would simply be meaningless. Masculine is not attenuated male, nor feminine attenuated female. On the contrary, the male and female or organic creatures are rather faint and blurred reflections of masculine and feminine. Their reproductive functions, their differences in strength and size, partly exhibit, but partly also confuse and misrepresent, the real polarity.

Here Lewis argues that Gender is in fact God-ordained, an irrevocable and inalienable

component of our nature. Sex, however, is derived from human (and therefore flawed) cultural perceptions and expectations. Gender runs much deeper than our reproductive functions, our domestic responsibilities, or our physical and intellectual capabilities. It is derived of God’s holy design, His divine symmetry of creation which transcends all of the frivolous and shallow misperceptions which often dictate gender roles in contemporary culture. Adam Barkman argues in his article “All is Righteousness and There is No Equality” that Lewis’s comment on women “lowering the metaphysical energy” of male conversation is indicative of his strong belief that women are of “lesser value”. “The implication seems to be clear,” Barkman writes. “Men, not wholly because of education, but by their very essence, are more suited for metaphysical, theological, and theoretical tasks than women, whereas women are more suited for practical and concrete ones. This, of course, need not entail value in terms of cognitive faculties, but given Lewis’ earlier comments about the value of each sex, my suspicion is that Lewis implied this” (432-33). Here I must respectfully disagree. As we explore the Ransom Trilogy, the latter installments of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and especially *Till We Have Faces*, we see women who are comfortable with weapons, who rule successful kingdoms, and share authority. Take, for example, the fact that Orual engages in a dual to win Trunia’s freedom (a nice switch of traditional roles). In *Perelandra*, Mars and Venus stand side-by-side in a contrasting and yet harmonious posture, describing Malacandra as rhythm and Perelandra as melody: “He thinks that the first held in his hand something like a spear, but the hands of the other were open, with the palms toward him” (200).

Interestingly, we see that the male and female are unique, yet equally important. This inequity is what readers first encounter in *That Hideous Strength*. Jane is wounded from Mark’s dismissive behavior and Mark is blissfully ignorant of the pain he inflicts upon his wife. Both are wrong and, as Lewis writes in “A Sermon and a Lunch” in need of

restoration: “The family, like the nation, can be offered to God, can be converted and redeemed, and will then become the channel of particular blessings and graces. But like everything else that is human, it needs redemption. Unredeemed, it will produce only particular temptations, corruptions, and miseries. Charity begins at home: so does uncharity” (494). Essentially, Mark is still performing the role of bachelor, becoming more self-consumed with career advancement and administrative flattery than seeking the companionship of his wife. However, Jane is not unblemished. Lewis continues from “The Sermon and the Lunch”: Affection, as the distinct from charity, is not a cause of lasting happiness. Left to its natural bent affection becomes in the end greedy, naggingly solicitous, jealous, exacting, timorous. It suffers agony when its object is absent – but is not repaid by any long enjoyment when the object is present. (494)

The reader will sense some reluctance in Jane when Mark does arrive home. She feels that he will find her conversation boring and insignificant in comparison to the lengthy, sociological discussions he holds with colleagues. In fact, she is afraid Mark will view her as a typical “whiny” female:

Men hated women who had things wrong with them, specially queer, unusual things. Her resolution was easily kept for Mark, full of his own story, asked her no questions...She knew he often had rather grandiose ideas, and from something in his face she divined that during his absence he had been drinking much more than he usually did. And so, all evening, the male bird displayed his plumage and the female played her part and asked questions and laughed and feigned more interest than she felt. Both were young, and if neither loved very much, each was still anxious to be admired. (89)

Jane is essentially distraught because she is unhappy with the social expectations impressed upon a wife. She has cleaned and cooked and laughed at Mark’s jokes, why must he repay her with loneliness? Over the passage of time, her enmity festers into a disdain for other male characters in the novel, including Mr. Denniston. She interprets them as “complacent, patriarchal figures making arrangements for women as if women were children or bartering them for cattle” and was “very angry” (117). Her displeasure with one man, her husband Mark, has catalyzed a hatred for males in general. Dr. Ransom sees through her emotions and addresses this very issue with Jane:

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 you 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” (316)

Throughout his correspondence and essays, Lewis is generally sympathetic toward the plight of women. He wrote on 8 April 1948 to Margaret Fuller, “Who said I disliked women? I never liked or disliked any *generalisation*” (849). Most claims that Lewis’s expulsion of Susan from Aslan’s Country is further proof that Lewis hated women. However, Lewis who is often praised for his acumen and clarity, is very adamant that women are not an inferior species. His friend and poetess Ruth Pitter wrote in a letter to Walter Hooper on 13 January 1969:

It is a pity that he made his first (and perhaps biggest) impact with Screwtape, in which some women are only too well portrayed in their

horrors, rather like Milton's Satan – it is this perhaps that has made people think he hated us? But even here, the insight is prodigious...I would say he was a great and very perspicacious lover of women, from poor little things right up to the "Lady" in *Perelandra*. I think he touched innumerable women to the heart here – I know he did me...Surely the shoals of letters he got from women (as he told me) must show how great was his appeal to them: nobody's going to tell me these were hate-letters. (239)

Additionally, several of Lewis's female students at Oxford were very complimentary of him. Rosamund Cowan writes in *In Search of C.S. Lewis*,

It was a joy to study with Lewis. He treated us like queens. I think Pat Thompson and I were the first women students he had. He had perfect manners, always standing up when we came in. And he brought to everything a remarkable original approach. At first we were a bit frightened as he had a reputation of being a "man's man." We rather thought he would be a bit down on women. Actually he was delightful. He told me I reminded him of a Shakespearean heroine – a compliment I've always cherished. He certainly treated me like one. (62)

Her fellow student Patricia (Thompson) Berry writes:

Owing to the call-up of men in World War II, Lewis consented to teach women students...Someone reports that Lewis disliked tutorials. He did not show it. Instead of remind us, as other tutors had done, of what we had left out of our essays, he considered what was in them. He

did not encourage us to bow to his value judgments, but to form our own. His comments for or against our work were just, his conversation highly enlightening to young, would-be intellectuals. His manner to the "ladies of St. Hugh's" was most gracious. (70)

Lewis's issue was not with the feminist movement in general or women's effort to achieve equality for career advancement, but in the fact that, in historical context, the empowerment movement often hindered relationships with men by encouraging a climate of female animosity. Lewis's friend, Dante scholar and mystery novelist Dorothy Sayers, references this particular climate in a talk entitled "Are Women Human?" from the collection *Unpopular Opinions*. When asked if she would be associated with the "feminist movement", Sayers replies:

I replied – a little irritably, I am afraid – that I was not sure I wanted to 'identify myself,' as the phrase goes, with feminism, and that the time for 'feminism,' in the old-fashioned sense of the word, had gone past. In fact, I think I went so far as to say that, under present conditions, an aggressive feminism might do more harm than good" (106). She later goes on to say that the question of "sex-equality" is, "like all questions affecting human relationships, delicate and complicated" (106).

As mentioned earlier, men who abused their power were not "wholly masculine" by God's design. It is absurd to believe that Lewis supported male domestic tyranny. Lewis writes that women must disarm themselves of previous hostilities before they can enter into a healthy relationship:

Men have so horribly abused their power over women in the past that

to wives, of all people, equality is in danger of appearing as an ideal...Have as much equality as you please – the more the better – in our marriage laws: but at some level consent to inequality, nay, delight in inequality, is an erotic necessity. Mrs. Mitchison speaks of women so fostered on a defiant idea of equality that the mere sensation of the male embrace rouses an undercurrent of resentment. Marriages are thus shipwrecked. This is the tragicomedy of the modern woman; taught by Freud to consider the act of love the most important thing in life, and then inhibited by feminism from that internal surrender which alone can make it a complete emotional success. Merely for the sake of her own erotic pleasure...some degree of obedience and humility seems to be (normally) necessary on the woman's part. (19)

Lewis makes clear that women are in danger of “shipwrecking” relationships. He is operating on the assumption that feminists have fostered a profound disdain, an abiding “resentment” which often develops into an obstruction to a sexual relationship. Please note the use of semantics: “Feminist” is a term which has altered greatly in the nearly sixty years which have lapsed since the composition of this essay. Lewis is speaking strictly from experience and literature of the day. In my observation, the term has changed; in the evangelical sense, it has been “softened” and typically means “not aggressive or discriminatory toward women”. These linguistic shifts cannot be understated, as they lend us great clarity of the perspective from which Lewis is speaking. Lewis, perhaps, was operating on a more severe interpretation of the term. Some posit that Lewis's harsh criticism originates from the male hegemony of the day, men frustrated with the increasing liberation of women. However, Lewis, in many senses, often felt sympathetic for the difficulties women face in

culture and relationships, as noted in the essay “We Have No Right to Happiness” from *God in the Dock*:

A society in which conjugal infidelity is tolerated must always be in the long run a society adverse to women. Women, whatever a few male songs and satires may say to the contrary, are more naturally monogamous than men; it is a biological necessity...And the quality by which they most easily hold a man, their beauty, decreases every year after they have come to maturity, but this does not happen to those qualities of personality – women don't really care twopence about our looks – by which we hold women. Thus in the ruthless war of promiscuity women are at a double disadvantage. They play for higher stakes and are also more likely to lose. I have no sympathy with moralists who frown at the increasing crudity of female provocativeness. These signs of desperate competition fill me with pity. (519).

Even within the Hierarchical conception, Lewis never insists that females completely abandon all aspirations for family responsibility, only that they accept fundamental differences of gender and achieve balance. We see this in the final pages of *That Hideous Strength*, but originally we see this in Charles Williams's *The Place of the Lion*. A strong friendship between Lewis and Charles Williams began more as a mutual affection for one another's work. Williams's letter to Lewis praising *The Allegory of Love* and Lewis's letter to Williams revering *The Place of the Lion* nearly crossed in the post. Damaris's compelling exchange with Anthony in this work and Jane's final conversation with Ransom are strikingly similar: “Tell me one thing first, Damaris said. “Do you think – I've been wondering this afternoon – do you think it's wrong of me to work at Abelard?”

“Darling, how can intelligence be wrong?” he answered. “I should think you knew more about him than anyone else in the world, and it’s a perfectly sound idea to make a beautiful thing of what you know. So long as you don’t neglect me in order to do it” (e-book).

Notice that Mark and Anthony are not domestic tyrants. They simply ask their wives for balance. Mark, especially, has learned this lesson the hard way. Alan Jacobs writes, “But of course, Lewis condescends to her husband, Mark too, as we have already seen. Neither of them has any idea what it means to be truly married; both of them must learn, and at the books’ end they do begin to learn” (258). At the conclusion of *That Hideous Strength*, he realizes how foolhardy it was to jeopardize his marriage for reckless ambition. After his conversion, Mark contemplates, “He had gone wrong only in assuming that marriage, by itself, gave him either power or title to appropriate [her] freshness. As he now saw, one might as well have thought one could buy a sunset by buying the field from which one had seen it” (360).

Either male or female, we are all fallen creatures. Lewis mentions in “Meditations in a Toolshed” that the experience of “looking at” is vastly different than “looking along.” Looking along means that one is fully encompassed in a phenomenon and has greater comprehension of its origins, lending us a greater understanding than can be achieved simply by “looking at”. So it is with C.S. Lewis. His understanding of marriage, although deft insight, was not fully accomplished until he himself wed Joy Davidman and experienced it for himself. He writes in *A Grief Observed*:

For a good wife contains so many persons in herself. What was H. not to me? She was my daughter and my mother, my pupil and my teacher, my subject and my sovereign; and always, holding all these in solution, my trusty comrade, friend, shipmate, fellow-soldier. My mistress; but at the same time all that any man friend (and I have

good ones) has ever been to me. Perhaps more...That’s what I meant when I once praised her for her ‘masculine virtues.’ But she soon put a stop to that by asking how I’d like to be praised for my feminine ones...Solomon calls his bride Sister. Could a woman be a complete wife unless, for a moment, in one particular mood, a man felt almost inclined to call her Brother? (455)

So perhaps you wonder, where is the defense? Is Jane a victim or culprit in *That Hideous Strength*? What is truly defensible about her remains after her conversion to Christianity. Once Jane recognizes that gender is an aspect much deeper and more complex than lonely hours and housework, that marriage is a unity of supernatural origin, she disposes of her enmity. She begins the journey to become who she is intended to be in Christ, and this makes her a better woman, a better wife, and a better individual. Obedience is necessary but it is done not out of obligation, but out of love and devotion, in both a martial sense and a spiritual sense. This is where general Affection transitions to Eros. That deeper connection, that intimacy is only permitted when both male and female have discarded their armor, have dismantled their stumbling blocks and create a home and life together. It is a shared space of reciprocal respect, admiration, and trust with Christ at its center. Mutual society, indeed.



**MALEeldil and Mutual Society · Crystal Hurd**

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## **Lewis in the Dock (Part 2); A Brief Review of the Secular Media's Coverage of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of C.S. Lewis's Death**

**Richard James**

In 1999, I presented a paper here at this colloquium on the secular print media's response to the 1998 C.S. Lewis Centenary Celebration. In 2014, it seems only natural to do a similar paper on the secular media's coverage of the 50th anniversary of Lewis's death which also included the dedication in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey of a memorial stone in his honor. The number of articles again abounds, even more than in 1998.

This paper will consider articles by syndicated literary, news and religious columnists from secular newspapers and periodicals; internet postings by public TV and secular cable news websites; print, audio and video coverage by the BBC; plus, one article posted on Aljazeera and another one that is a large multi-color section in a Delaware newspaper. Therefore, I will not be sharing any reports or opinions from any non-secular sources, any Lewis-related conferences or any news site or blog who are themselves directly promoting the life and works of C.S. Lewis.

When we seek merely to consider the number of reports made by the secular media about both the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lewis's death and his being honored at Poets' Corner, I found, in my own search on the internet and through library accessible databases, close to 200 separate secular accounts plus that many more that are non-secular or directly connected to C.S. Lewis. Those articles

published in syndication or reposted on someone's blog were only counted once.

### **Six Syndicated Columnists Who Wrote About C.S. Lewis and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Death**

I begin my review of the responses with six syndicated columnists. Four of these – Cal Thomas, Michael Gerson, Ross Douthat, and Eric Schulzke are weekly news columnists. The other two – Sarah Pulliam Bailey and Terry Mattingly focus more on the religious side of the news. All six are published in both national and regional secular news outlets.

Thomas, also a broadcast journalist, writes for the *Tribune Media Services* and is published in over 500 newspapers. Gerson, possibly better-known as a former speech writer for President George W. Bush and as a political commentator on the “PBS NewsHour” and “Face the Nation”, has a twice-a-week op-ed column for the *Washington Post Writers Group*. Ross Douthat, formerly a senior editor at *The Atlantic*, has, since 2009, been a regular op-ed columnist for the *New York Times*. Columnist Eric Schulzke, writes on national politics and policy for the *Deseret News* in Salt Lake City. Sarah Pulliam Bailey, formerly online editor for *Christianity Today*, is a national correspondent for the *Religion News Service (RNS)*, covering faith, politics and culture. Terry Mattingly, a journalism professor,

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writes [quote, unquote] “On Religion”, a weekly column for the Universal Syndicate which appears in about 350 newspapers.

When we focus on the headlines of each of these columnists, three of them – Thomas, Schulzke, and Douthat - chose to highlight each of these famous men dying on the same day, November 22, 1963, fifty years ago.

In Thomas’s opinion “Lewis remains perhaps the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s most towering intellectual practitioner of the Christian faith”. From an older generation, Thomas views *Mere Christianity* as “perhaps his most influential work”. He closes stating that

“some people long for another C.S. Lewis, but the original should suffice for at least another 50 years.”

- Thomas, Cal.

“Kennedy, Huxley and Lewis“. *The Chicago Tribune* (November 15, 2013)

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/sns-201311151030--tms--cthomastq--b-a20131115-20131115,0,381216.column>

and *World Radio*

<https://soundcloud.com/world-news-group/the-influence-of-c-s-lewis> )

and *Louisville Courier Journal*

<http://www.courier-journal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013311170035>

and *Bowling Green Daily News*

[http://www.bgdailynews.com/opinion/commentary/kennedy-huxley-and-lewis/article\\_1574dd54-f0b0-5eeb-acd6-63bfb1aaddb7.html](http://www.bgdailynews.com/opinion/commentary/kennedy-huxley-and-lewis/article_1574dd54-f0b0-5eeb-acd6-63bfb1aaddb7.html)

and *Omaha World Herald*

<http://www.omaha.com/article/20131126/NEWS08/131129110/1677>

and *Townhall*

<http://townhall.com/columnists/calthomas/2013/11/14/kennedy-huxley-and-lewis-n1745883>

Schulzke reviews their basic beliefs, how each died and also includes several quotes from their biographers and friends, noting that “their three divergent paths remain compelling models to millions of skeptics and seekers alike.” He ends by stating that

“reasonable minds may differ in weighing the spiritual paths of Huxley and Lewis. Few, it seems, are asking the same question about John F. Kennedy.”

- Schulzke, Eric.

“50 years ago today, Kennedy, Huxley and Lewis followed different paths to the grave”. *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City) (November 22, 2013)

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865591037/50-years-ago-Kennedy-Huxley-and-Lewis-followed-different-paths-to-the-grave.html>

and *The Steuben Courier Advocate* (NY)

<http://www.steubencourier.com/article/20131121/NEWS/311219990/10122/LIFESTYLE>

and *Peoria Journal Star* (IL)

<http://www.pjstar.com/article/20131121/NEWS/311219991/10940/LIFESTYLE>

Douthat suggests that “pausing amid [November’s] Kennedy-anniversary coverage to remember the two British-born writers offers a useful way to think about the J.F.K. mythos as well.” He observes that “the impulses driving the Kennedy nostalgists are the same ones animating Lewis’s Puddleglum (from *The Silver Chair*) and Huxley’s Savage (a character at the end of *Brave New World*). All three viewpoints, he writes, have a desire

“for grace and beauty, for icons and heroes, for a high stakes dimension to human affairs that a consumerist, materialist civilization can flatten and exclude.”

- Douthat, Ross.

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“Puddleglum and the Savage”. *New York Times* (November 23, 2013)  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/24/opinion/sunday/douthat-puddleglum-and-the-savage.html>

and *Anchorage Daily News*  
<http://www.adn.com/2013/11/24/3194234/ross-douthat-even-jfk-skeptics.html>

and *St. Paul Pioneer Press*  
[http://www.twincities.com/columnists/ci\\_24607269/ross-douthat-kennedy-puggleglum-and-savage?IADID=Search-www.twincities.com-www.twincities.com](http://www.twincities.com/columnists/ci_24607269/ross-douthat-kennedy-puggleglum-and-savage?IADID=Search-www.twincities.com-www.twincities.com)

and *News and Observer* (Raleigh)  
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/11/28/3413249/jfk-lewis-huxley-calculating-comfort.html>

Writing on Lewis’s 115<sup>th</sup> birthday and looking back fifty years to the date of his death and to the honors he received at Westminster Abbey this past year, Mattingly states that “the entire Lewis canon is as popular as ever” noting that “researchers struggle to total the numbers” that are somewhere over 100 million copies sold, just for the Narnia books. Yet on the other hand, he writes that

“many academics and liberal religious leaders still see Lewis as “far too popular to be taken seriously.”

- Mattingly, Terry.

“50 years after death, C.S. Lewis is as popular as ever”. *The Eagle Tribune* (North Andover, MA) (November 29, 2013)  
<http://www.eagletribune.com/opinion/x517510457/Column-50-years-after-death-C-S-Lewis-is-as-popular-as-ever>

and *Indiana (PA) Gazette*  
<http://www.indianagazette.com/news/regional-world/50-years-after-death-cs-lewis-is-still-as-popular-as-ever,18785667/>

and *Knoxville News Sentinel*  
[http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2013/nov/30/terry-mattingly-50-years-after-death-cs-lewis-is/?partner=yahoo\\_feeds](http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2013/nov/30/terry-mattingly-50-years-after-death-cs-lewis-is/?partner=yahoo_feeds)

and *Evansville Courier & Press*  
<http://www.courierpress.com/news/2013/nov/29/50-years-after-death-cs-lewis-popular-ever/>

and *Abilene Reporter News*  
<http://www.reporternews.com/news/2013/nov/29/50-years-after-death-cs-lewis-is-as-popular-as/>

Gerson turns to Lewis as what he calls “our guide to the good life”. To do this he tells us that Lewis does two things: first, his writings help us to deal with what Lewis calls “the poison of subjectivism”, helping us realize the need and importance of an “objective standard of good”; and second, his writings also help us realize that

“our deepest, unsatisfied desires for joy, meaning and homecoming are not cruel jokes of nature. They are meant for fulfillment.” And for Lewis this was found in Christianity.

- Gerson, Michael.

“C.S. Lewis, our guide to the good life”.  
*Washington Post* (November 21, 2013)  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/michael-gerson-cs-lewis-our-guide-to-the-good-life/2013/11/21/d11b6c54-52d9-11e3-a7f0-b790929232e1\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/michael-gerson-cs-lewis-our-guide-to-the-good-life/2013/11/21/d11b6c54-52d9-11e3-a7f0-b790929232e1_story.html)

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<http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20131127-c.s.-lewis-restored-the-dignity-of-our-desires.ece>

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[http://www.hutchnews.com/news/article\\_c20aa51e-302d-5ae9-b080-a5d1c4c6bfd3.html?mode=jqm](http://www.hutchnews.com/news/article_c20aa51e-302d-5ae9-b080-a5d1c4c6bfd3.html?mode=jqm)

and *San Angelo Standard-News (TX)*  
<http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2013/nov/24/michael-gerson-the-wonder-of-cs-lewis-rescuing/>

and *Grand Island Independent (NE)*  
[http://www.theindependent.com/opinion/columnists/c-s-lewis-helps-to-lead-us-home/article\\_db41898e-53ba-11e3-bbd2-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.theindependent.com/opinion/columnists/c-s-lewis-helps-to-lead-us-home/article_db41898e-53ba-11e3-bbd2-001a4bcf887a.html)

and *Real Clear Politics*  
[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2013/11/22/cs\\_lewis\\_rescuing\\_desire\\_120737.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2013/11/22/cs_lewis_rescuing_desire_120737.html)

After noting the fiftieth anniversary and the memorial stone celebration, Bailey points us to the Lewis who “still inspires 50 years after his death”. She interviews several people influenced by Lewis. Among these were Tim and Kathy Keller, herself someone with whom Lewis had corresponded; James Houston, a friend and colleague of Lewis; and Mickey Maudlin, senior vice president at HarperOne, who became a Christian by reading Lewis’s spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*.

Bailey, Sarah Pulliam. “C.S. Lewis Still Inspires 50 Years After His Death”. *Huffington Post* (November 22, 2013)  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/22/cs-lewis-50-year-death\\_n\\_4325358.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/22/cs-lewis-50-year-death_n_4325358.html),

*Washington Post* (November 21, 2013)  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/2013/11/21/c63198d8-52f5-11e3-9ee6-2580086d8254\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/2013/11/21/c63198d8-52f5-11e3-9ee6-2580086d8254_story.html)

and *Religion News Service (RNS)*  
<http://www.religionnews.com/2013/11/21/c-s-lewis-anniversary-marks-milestone-many-christians/>

### **Secular newspapers with the most published Lewis-related articles**

While the news about Lewis’s anniversary and his special honors at

Westminster Abbey spread in the United States mostly through these syndicated reports, I found that it was through four non-American news outlets that the most articles were published. Yes, Lewis is still very, very popular in the States, especially among Evangelicals and Roman Catholics and even Mormons. The *Deseret News* in Utah had six articles, the *Petoskey News* in Northern Michigan had five, the *Washington Post* and the internet-only *Huffington Post* had four, the *Jackson Sun* in western Tennessee had three, the *New York Times* had two, and many, many more had at least one. But, it was in Great Britain, which had, over the years, been sorely lacking in recognition of Lewis, that I found the most articles written about him.

First place with the most individual articles went to a countywide newspaper, *The Oxford Mail* and *Oxford Times*, a companion daily-weekly published in Oxford. Here there were thirteen reports covering the local Lewis Festival at his home church, Holy Trinity at Headington Quarry, a couple of stories on the Kilns, a remembrance interview with Doug Gresham and plans for 56 members of the church to attend the Poets’ Corner memorial service. Two unsigned editorials also raise some local issues about how the property around the Kilns is kept and whether or not the local community is doing all it can to honor Lewis. I will say more about the local festival later in my paper.

### ***The Oxford Mail* (daily) and *The Oxford Times* (weekly) (13)**

- Fantato, Damian. “Church to celebrate life of Narnia creator”. *Oxford Mail* (1 April 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/yourtown/oxford/10323582.Church\\_to\\_celebrate\\_life\\_of\\_Narnia\\_creator/](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/yourtown/oxford/10323582.Church_to_celebrate_life_of_Narnia_creator/)

- Gray, Chris. “Review of biography of Narnia author”. *The Oxford Times* (11 April 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/leisure/books/10342803.C\\_S\\_Lewis\\_by\\_Alister\\_McGrath/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/leisure/books/10342803.C_S_Lewis_by_Alister_McGrath/)

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- Harrison, Emma. "Festival will chronicle 50 years since death of Narnia writer CS Lewis" *The Oxford Mail* (4 September 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10651436.Festival will chronicle 50 years since death of Narnia writer CS Lewis/?ref=twtr](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10651436.Festival%20will%20chronicle%2050%20years%20since%20death%20of%20Narnia%20writer%20CS%20Lewis/?ref=twtr)

- Harrison, Emma. "Festival will chronicle 50 years since death of Narnia writer CS Lewis" *The Oxford Mail* (4 September 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/10651436.Festival will chronicle 50 years since death of Narnia writer CS Lewis/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/10651436.Festival%20will%20chronicle%2050%20years%20since%20death%20of%20Narnia%20writer%20CS%20Lewis/)

- Anonymous. "Narnia gets a rubbish makeover in church's CS Lewis festival". (18th September 2013) *The Oxford Times*  
[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/10680664.Narnia gets a rubbish makeover in church s CS Lewis festival/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/10680664.Narnia%20gets%20a%20rubbish%20makeover%20in%20church%20s%20CS%20Lewis%20festival/)

- Anonymous. "Window on the world of Narnia, in Oxford". *Oxford Mail* (21 September 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10690027.Window on the world of Narnia in Oxford/](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10690027.Window%20on%20the%20world%20of%20Narnia%20in%20Oxford/)

- Anonymous. "Narnia expert treats his audience to CS Lewis talk". *The Oxford Mail* (24 October 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10758497.Narnia expert treats his audience to CS Lewis talk/](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10758497.Narnia%20expert%20treats%20his%20audience%20to%20CS%20Lewis%20talk/)

- Stead, The Rev Tim. "Yours Faithfully: Christianity deeply and privately lived". *The Oxford Times* (11 November 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/archive/2013/11/11/10799396.YOURS FAITHFULLY Christianity deeply and privately lived The Rev Tim Stead vicar of Holy Trinity Church Headington Quarry/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/archive/2013/11/11/10799396.YOURS%20FAITHFULLY%20Christianity%20deeply%20and%20privately%20lived%20The%20Rev%20Tim%20Stead%20vicar%20of%20Holy%20Trinity%20Church%20Headington%20Quarry/)

- Unsigned Editorial. "Finding Narnia". *The Oxford Times* (20 November 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/opinions/leader/10823010.Finding Narnia/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/opinions/leader/10823010.Finding%20Narnia/)

- Little, Reg and Tom Burrows. "CS Lewis: the man I called father". *Oxford Mail* (22 November 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/yourtown/oxford/10826842. CS Lewis the man I called father /](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/yourtown/oxford/10826842.CS%20Lewis%20the%20man%20I%20called%20father/)

- Unsigned Editorial. "Unloved place". *The Oxford Times* (28 November 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/opinions/leader/10838860.Unloved place/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/opinions/leader/10838860.Unloved%20place/)

- Woodforde, Giles. "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is Oxford's 'mane' event this year". *The Oxford Times* (29 November 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/leisure/theatre/10844947.The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe is Oxford s mane event this year/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/leisure/theatre/10844947.The%20Lion%20the%20Witch%20and%20the%20Wardrobe%20is%20Oxford%20s%20mane%20event%20this%20year/)

- Little, Reg. "A tour of the former home of C.S. Lewis". *The Oxford Times* (5 December 2013)  
[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/features/10858891.A tour of the former home of C S Lewis/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/features/10858891.A%20tour%20of%20the%20former%20home%20of%20C%20S%20Lewis/)

There is a two-way tie for second place with eleven articles each for both the "left-of-center" *Guardian* - formerly of Manchester, but now a major national newspaper published in London, and the "strongly conservative" national newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*. The *Guardian* reports consider Lewis's life and the honors to be given him at Westminster. Especially interesting was an unsigned editorial which offered praise to President Kennedy, Huxley and Lewis for the hope that each in their own way offered to our world. Closing with the affirmation that "in their different ways they were wise - and we still need their wisdom." In another article journalist Sam Leith acknowledges the mixed reaction some had to Lewis's work, wondering whether his literary legacy is 'dodgy and unpleasant' or 'exceptionally good.' Two other articles, the one by Laura Miller and Nicholas Murray and the one by Lucy Mangan I will mention later in my presentation.

### ***The Guardian* (11)**

- Standord, Peter. "CS Lewis: A Life by Alister McGrath – review". *The Guardian* (13 April 2013)  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2013/apr/14/cs-lewis-life-mcgrath-review>
- Leith, Sam. "CS Lewis: A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet by Alister McGrath – review". *The Guardian* (8 May 2013)  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2013/may/08/lewis-genius-prophet-mcgrath-review>
- Dugdale, John. "CS Lewis and Aldous Huxley's afterlives and deaths". *The Guardian: Booksblog* (14 November 2013)  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/nov/14/cs-lewis-aldots-huxley>
- Unsigned Editorial. "In praise of ... the wise ones: John F Kennedy, Aldous Huxley and CS Lewis" *The Guardian* (18 November 2013)  
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/18/in-praise-of-the-wise-ones>
- Leith, Sam. "CS Lewis's literary legacy: 'dodgy and unpleasant' or 'exceptionally good'?". *The Guardian* (19 November 2013)  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/nov/19/cs-lewis-literary-legacy>
- Naughton, John. "Aldous Huxley: the prophet of our brave new digital dystopia". *The Guardian* (21 November 2013)  
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/22/aldous-huxley-prophet-dystopia-cs-lewis>
- Lewis, C.S. "An unseen essay on truth and fiction (an excerpt)". *The Guardian* (21 November 2013)  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/nov/21/cs-lewis-unseen-essay-image-imagination>
- Lewis, Phil. "CS Lewis: Early Guardian Reviews and Debate Over His Legacy". *The Guardian: From the Archive Blog* (November 21, 2013)

<http://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/from-the-archive-blog/2013/nov/21/cs-lewis-childrens-author-christian-apologist-narnia>

- Miller, Laura and Nicholas Murray. "My hero: CS Lewis by Laura Miller and Aldous Huxley by Nicholas Murray". *The Guardian* (22 November 2013)  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/nov/22/other-heroes-cs-lewis-aldots-huxley>
- Mangan, Lucy. "Narnia's Lost Poet: the Secret Lives and Loves of CS Lewis (ANWilson) – TV review", *The Guardian* (27 November 2013)  
<http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2013/nov/28/narnias-lost-poet-the-secret-lives-and-loves-of-cs-lewis-tv-review>

Of the eleven Lewis-related articles in the *Daily Telegraph*, six are about the service in Poets Corner: one speaks of its announcement, a second tells why Lewis should be honored, a third article mentions that former Archbishop Rowan Williams will pay tribute to Lewis, two more openly question whether Lewis deserved to be there, and a sixth mentions the several anniversaries of that day plus noting the newly discovered depth in the *Narniad* by Michael Ward and the prophetic anticipation for our time of his novel, *That Hideous Strength*.

### ***The Daily Telegraph* (11)**

- McGrath, Alister. "C S Lewis deserves his place in Poets' Corner". *Telegraph* (21 November 2012)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/9693294/C-S-Lewis-deserves-his-place-in-Poets-Corner.html>
- Peterkin, Tom. "CS Lewis, Chronicles of Narnia author, honoured in Poets' corner". *The Telegraph* (22 November 2012)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/9694561/CS-Lewis-Chronicles-of-Narnia-author-honoured-in-Poets-corner.html>

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- Philip. Womack. "CS Lewis by Alister McGrath: review". *The Telegraph* (22 April 2013)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/biographyandmemoirreviews/10000289/CS-Lewis-by-Alister-McGrath-review.html>
- Massie, Allan. "CS Lewis had three pints at lunchtime? How shocking!". *Telegraph* (June 24, 2013)  
<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/allanmassie/100069744/cs-lewis-had-three-pints-at-lunchtime-how-shocking/>
- Massie, Allan. "Aldous Huxley: The visionary could yet outlast the fantasist". *The Telegraph* (26 October 2013)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10406518/Why-Aldous-Huxleys-novels-could-outlast-those-of-CS-Lewis.html>
- Malnick, Edward. "Rowan Williams to unveil CS Lewis tribute in Poets' Corner". *The Telegraph* (17 November 2013)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10454520/Rowan-Williams-to-unveil-CS-Lewis-tribute-in-Poets-Corner.html>
- McLaren, Iona. "CS Lewis joins Poets' Corner". *The Telegraph* (November 22, 2013)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10452711/Does-CS-Lewis-deserve-a-place-in-Poets-Corner.html>
- Howse, Christopher. "C.S. Lewis Memorial: A Stone for a lover not for a poet". *The Telegraph* (22 November 2013)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10469362/CS-Lewis-memorial-A-stone-for-a-lover-not-for-a-poet.html>
- Hannan, Daniel. "Margaret Thatcher, John F Kennedy, CS Lewis, Aldous Huxley and Ayn Rand: today's quite a day". *The Telegraph* (November 22, 2013)  
<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/danielhannan/100246359/margaret-thatcher-john-f-kennedy-cs-lewis-aldots-huxley-and-ayn-rand-todays-quite-a-day/>

- Runcie, Charlotte. "JFK's assassination: not a slow news day". *Telegraph* (22 November 2013)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culture-news/10465714/JFKs-assassination-not-a-slow-news-day.html>

- Gosnell, Emma. "Narnia's Lost Poet: The Secret Lives and Loves of CS Lewis, BBC Four, review" *Telegraph* (27 November 2013)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/tv-and-radio-reviews/10479373/Narnias-Lost-Poet-The-Secret-Lives-and-Loves-of-CS-Lewis-BBC-Four-review.html>

Fourth place, with ten articles goes to the generally "unionist" leaning, regional paper –*The Belfast Telegraph*. Like much of Great Britain, little had been done in the past in Belfast to honor Lewis, their native son. He was born and raised in the East Belfast section of County Down. It was County Down native and political leader, David Bleakley, himself a former student at Oxford, who told me on my visit there, that back in 1945 Lewis had told him that in his opinion "Heaven is Oxford lifted and placed in the middle of the County Down." So, in spite of his dislike of the "religious troubles" there in Ulster, Lewis was otherwise very fond of the land in which he was born and visited there as often as he could.

One *Belfast Telegraph* article by Ivan Little notes the sad chapter in Belfast's history of their neglect of Lewis. A second writer mentions a call for the Belfast City Council to "step up to the plate", concerned that Belfast was not yet doing enough to honor Lewis in 2013. I will describe what did eventually happen in a few paragraphs later. Also, here I point out that three of the ten articles on Lewis's life and the upcoming celebrations are very positive ones from the same author, Alf McCreary, the *Belfast Telegraph's* award-winning religion correspondent. McCreary wrote that in his opinion



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Lewis was a rounded character and not one of those frightful religious bores who have never lived enough to have really sinned and who try to lecture you and me from on high. In a sense, Lewis had earned the right to talk to us about Christianity, not just because he was intellectually brilliant but also because he related his faith to real, everyday lives.

### ***The Belfast Telegraph (10)***

- McCreary, Alf. "Memorial to a good man behind the saintly myth". *Belfast Telegraph* (3 December 2012)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/alf-mccreary/memorial-to-a-good-man-behind-the-saintly-myth-16245730.html>

- O'Hara, Victoria. "Step up to plate for CS Lewis 50th anniversary festivities, Belfast council is told". *Belfast Telegraph* (03 April 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/step-up-to-plate-for-cs-lewis-50th-anniversary-festivities-belfast-council-is-told-29170619.html>

- McCreary, Alf. "The definitive study of 'most reluctant convert' CS Lewis". *Belfast Telegraph* (01 July 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/alf-mccreary/the-definitive-study-of-most-reluctant-convert-cs-lewis-29382601.html>

- Little, Ivan. "Our neglect of Belfast-born writer CS Lewis is a sad chapter". *Belfast Telegraph* (15 November 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/debateni/blogs/our-neglect-of-belfastborn-writer-cs-lewis-is-a-sad-chapter-29756200.html>

- Brankin, Una. "Did CS Lewis have a secret romance with pal's mum before marriage to Joy?". *Belfast Telegraph* (18 NOVEMBER 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/lifestyle/features/did-cs-lewis-have-a-secret-romance-with-pals-mum-before-marriage-to-joy-29762371.html>

- Osborne, Simon. "CS Lewis: The Belfast boy whose death was overshadowed by JFK". *Belfast Telegraph* (22 November 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/lifestyle/features/cs-lewis-the-belfast-boy-whose-death-was-overshadowed-by-jfk-29775661.html>

- McCreary, Alf. "Why CS Lewis remains such an inspiration to me". *Belfast Telegraph* (23 November 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/alf-mccreary/why-cs-lewis-remains-such-an-inspiration-to-me-29777983.html>

- Smyth, Michelle. "CS Lewis exhibition: Magic of Narnia is illustrated at Belfast's Linen Hall Library". *Belfast Telegraph* (05 November 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/entertainment/theatre-arts/cs-lewis-exhibition-magic-of-narnia-is-illustrated-at-belfasts-linen-hall-library-29726230.html>

- Smyth, Michelle. "A taste of Narnia at CS Lewis Festival breakfast". *Belfast Telegraph* (19 November 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/a-taste-of-narnia-at-cs-lewis-festival-breakfast-29764745.html>

- Graham, Claire. "Westminster Abbey honours CS Lewis alongside literary elite 50 years after his death". *Belfast Telegraph* (23 November 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/westminster-abbey-honours-cs-lewis-alongside-literary-elite-50-years-after-his-death-29777942.html>

### Secular Periodical with the most Lewis-related articles

Turning next to secular periodicals which published articles related to the Lewis 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the special celebration at Poets' Corner, one magazine, *National Review*, stands out above all others. Between September 26 and December 16, 2013, it published nine individual articles about C.S. Lewis. Two short articles announced the "C.S. Lewis: In Memoriam" conference on November 23<sup>rd</sup> which was sponsored jointly by the New York C.S. Lewis Society and the Fulton Sheen Center for Thought and Culture with William Griffin, Elaine Tixier, and Michael Travers as speakers. One article provided a long slide show on the life and work of Lewis with several illustrated quotations. Three more articles tried to discuss current social and political issues from a Lewisian viewpoint. Two authors, M.D. Aeschliman and Christopher Tollefsen reviewed Lewis's arguments against 'scientism' and "subjectivism" and his belief in "the objectivity of value" and the "truth of the natural law".

But in my opinion the best Lewis-related article in this group was written by Jim Como, a former professor of rhetoric at York College and a co-founder of the New York C.S. Lewis Society, known by many through his books and articles on Lewis. In his "Why All the Fuss?" essay he lightly reviews the many facets of who Lewis was and how as a "Christian apologist, novelist and public intellectual he spoke to his own time and ours in many voices."

He then sums up his article about Lewis with these remarks, "For it is all of those voices together that sing us to intellectual clarity and coherence, to visionary joy, and to spiritual hope, and that lift us finally to the brink of Heaven. At the end of the day, that is why all the fuss."

### National Review (9)

- Bridges, Linda. "C. S. Lewis: In Memoriam". *National Review Online* (September 26, 2013) (<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/359634/c-s-lewis-memoriam-linda-bridges>)

- Bridges, Linda. "C.S. Lewis: In Memoriam – Update". *National Review Online* (November 18, 2013) (<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/364260/c-s-lewis-memoriam-update-linda-bridges>)

- Charen, Mona. "Obama's Soft Despotism: The failures and overreach of Obamacare aren't mitigated by his good intentions". *National Review Online* (November 19, 2013) (<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/364251/obamas-soft-despotism-mona-charen>)

Anonymous. "C.S. Lewis Remembered" *National Review Online Slideshows* (November 22, 2013) (<http://www.nationalreview.com/slideshows/364592>)

- Aeschliman, M. D. "C. S. Lewis: Jack the Giant-Killer". *National Review* (NOVEMBER 22, 2013) (<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/364374/c-s-lewis-jack-giant-killer-m-d-aeschliman>)

- Como, James. "C. S. Lewis: Why All the Fuss?". *National Review* (November 22, 2013) (<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/364366/c-s-lewis-why-all-fuss-james-como>)

- Rigney, Joe. "That Hideous State: C. S. Lewis's social critiques are more relevant than ever in the Age of Obama", *National Review Online* (November 22, 2013) (<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/364370/hideous-state-joe-rigney>)

- Steyn, Mark. "Knockouts High and Low". *National Review Online* (November 22, 2013) (<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/364659/knockouts-high-and-low-mark-steyn>)

- Tollefsen, Christopher. "The Tao of Enchantment". *National Review* (December 16, 2013): 50-51.  
<https://m.nationalreview.com/nrd/articles/364983/tao-enchantment>

### Other Secular Print Periodicals

Several additional periodicals also honored C.S. Lewis with articles about him and the events of November 2013. I chose five of these to mention in my presentation. First, even though it usually only cites books that are being reviewed, the October 30<sup>th</sup> *Publishers Weekly* chose in that issue to mention some events as well as books that would be honoring C.S. Lewis in the next month. So, along with some new HarperOne editions, we hear of the "C.S. Lewis and American Culture" conference at Wheaton College on November 1<sup>st</sup>; the C.S. Lewis Foundation's "Forge of Friendship" conference in Houston on November 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>; the C.S. Lewis Symposium at Westminster Abbey on November 21<sup>st</sup>; the memorial stone dedication service there on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and the "Lewis as Critic" conference at Magdelene College, Cambridge on November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

John Garth, well-known for his book on the influence of World War I on Tolkien, wrote an essay for Oxford University in their November issue of the *Oxford Today Magazine*. After reviewing the individual lives of Kennedy, Huxley and Lewis, their basic beliefs, how they each dealt with grief and how they each died, Garth writes in conclusion that "it is surely in their achievements in life that we must really measure these men: the writings of Huxley and Lewis which look beneath and beyond the world; and the 13 days in 1962 when Kennedy ensured the survival of that world in which we can continue to read them."

Fantasy novelist and book critic, Lev Grossman writes in *Time* magazine on the theme, "Why Narnia Still Matters". Illustrated with a dust jacket of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and a 1946 photo of Lewis standing near Magdalen College, Grossman tells of his personal connection with Lewis through his mother who met him as a student at "The Bird and Baby" pub and of being profoundly affected at eight years old when reading that first Narnian volume for himself. He tells us that "every reader of Lewis has had to come to a reckoning with him, a renegotiation of terms, as he or she has grown up." While troubled by Aslan's role in the stories, he sees that tension as an opportunity not to give up on Lewis, but to talk back to him through his own novels. He says that "it's a sign of Lewis's greatness that...people still need to talk to him: to ask him questions, to air their grievances, to share his sense of wonder, and to tell him stories the way he told us stories."

Jeremy Lott's article in the December 2013 issue of *The American Spectator* focuses on what he calls "The C.S. Lewis Industry". He states that the many 2013 Lewis-related celebrations, while grand in themselves, are but "a small part of a vast and growing C.S. Lewis Industry in America, the United Kingdom, and all over the globe." He covers the waterfront with the many journals, societies, conferences, Hollywood movies, merchandise, the publishing of unknown essays and portions of books, new biographies, most seemingly making profits as well. After noting some critical issues that arose after A.N. Wilson's biography of Lewis was written, Lott tells us that everyone has adjusted a little, accepting some of Lewis's flaws and continued on to sell even more Lewis products. He ends by saying, "One suspects that the success the great novelist and apologist has found in the 50 years since his death will last well into the next 50, too."

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One more article seeking to acknowledge this special year's celebration of C.S. Lewis is found in the December issue of *The Atlantic*. Written by Aaron Hanbury and entitled, "Why C.S. Lewis Never Goes Out of Style", this article seeks to show how Lewis's "writings are more relevant than ever." He quotes one reviewer who reminds us that "while Huxley is now largely forgotten and Kennedy remains a symbol of lost promise, Lewis lives on through his novels, stories, essays, and autobiographical works." (Carrigan, *PW* (3/27/13) Other quotations and facts mentioned in much of the remainder of his article seek to show why this in his opinion is mostly so. He closes with the thought that at his death Lewis left us a legacy with influence that reaches far beyond his own lifetime by his wedding of "significant facts with ideas that live on."

### Other Secular Print Periodicals (5)

- Garrett, Lynn. "Events, Books Honor C.S. Lewis 50 Years After His Death". *Publishers Weekly* (Oct 30, 2013)(  
<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/religion/article/59760-events-books-honor-c-s-lewis-50-years-after-his-death.html>

-Garth, John. "Rendezvous With Death". *Oxford Today Magazine*. Volume 26, Number 1, (20 November 2013): 38-40, 43.  
(<http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/features/rendezvous-death>)

and expanded version at *The Daily Beast* as "Three Great Men Died That Day"  
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/11/03/three-great-men-died-that-day-jfk-c-s-lewis-and-aldous-huxley.html>

- Grossman, Lev. "Why Narnia Still Matters: One fantasist's thoughts on C.S. Lewis, who died 50 years ago today". *Time* (Nov. 22, 2013)  
<http://entertainment.time.com/2013/11/22/why-narnia-still-matters/>

- Lott, Jeremy. "The C.S. Lewis Industry: 50 years later, he continues to sell" *The American Spectator* (December 2013)  
(<http://spectator.org/articles/56780/cs-lewis-industry>)

- Hanbury, Aaron Cline. "Why C.S. Lewis Never Goes Out of Style". *The Atlantic* (December 17, 2013)  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/12/why-cs-lewis-never-goes-out-of-style/282351/>

### Selected Public Broadcasting and Secular Cable News Postings

Next we will consider public broadcasting and secular cable news postings of Lewis-related reports and programs. I was only able to find three such postings in the United States. One was on the PBS Newshour website Art Beat, by Victoria Fleishcher and was titled "Celebrating a Literary Giant: The 50th anniversary of C.S. Lewis's Death". It reviews Lewis's life and his work, and then includes in the report an audio interview of Gregory Maguire, best-selling author of *Wicked who* discusses his reading and love of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. He says that when he came to write *Wicked* that he looked at Oz the way he thought Lewis might have looked at it. He also notes that Lewis has many imitators today; even those like Pullman who are so critical of his Christian worldview.

The second American posting on public broadcasting was done by WGBH, the PBS station in Boston. In this report Edgar Herwick focuses on Huxley and Lewis and calls them in his title, "Two Other 20<sup>th</sup> Century Titans Who Died on Nov. 22, 1963." The third public broadcast report comes from Shreveport, Louisiana over the National Public Radio station there. Kate Kent reports

on Centenary College's 12-day series of programs on the life and legacy of C.S. Lewis.

### **Selected Public Broadcasting and Secular Cable News Postings**

#### **United States:**

##### **- PBS NewsHour (Arlington, VA)**

Fleischer, Victoria. "Celebrating a Literary Giant: The 50th anniversary of C.S. Lewis's Death" on Art Beat with Gregory Maguire interview (November 22, 2013) (<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/blog/2013/11/celebrating-a-literary-giant-the-50th-anniversary-of-cs-lewiss-death.html>)

##### **- WGBH News and The Curiosity Desk (PBS Boston)**

Herwick III, Edgar B. "Two Other 20th Century Titans Who Died On Nov. 22, 1963" (NOVEMBER 22, 2013) (<http://wgbhnews.org/post/two-other-20th-century-titans-who-died-nov-22-1963> and <https://soundcloud.com/wgbhcuriositydesk/the-two-other-20th-century>)

##### **- Red River Radio (NPR LSU-Shreveport)**

Kent, Kate Archer. "Centenary College celebrates C.S. Lewis' legacy in religion series" (November 4, 2013) <http://redriverradio.org/post/centenary-college-celebrates-cs-lewis-legacy-religion-series>

Moving half-way around the world to Australia, I found a November 22<sup>nd</sup> article posted by Lewis biographer and well-known professor of historical theology, Alister McGrath, on the ABC, the Australian Broadcasting Commission website. His essay was titled, "A 'mere Christian'? Assessing C.S. Lewis after fifty years". There he writes of Lewis the Christian apologist, literary scholar and writer of children's fiction, as now being seen also by some Christian leaders as a significant theologian, pointing to "continuing interest and influence in the foreseeable future" for Lewis.

#### **Australia:**

##### **- ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission) Religion and Ethics**

McGrath, Alister. "A 'mere Christian'? Assessing C.S. Lewis after fifty years" (22 NOV 2013) (<http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2013/11/22/3896579.htm>)

Still staying with public broadcasting but moving back to North America, we discover in Canada on the Canadian Broadcasting Commission, the CBC, two Lewis-related audio programs. The first program is called *Ideas with Paul Kennedy* and is a two-part series on "C.S. Lewis and the Inklings" which first aired on October 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Each part is one hour long and after a brief review of Lewis's life includes interviews with Malcom Guite, Alister McGrath, Monica Hilder and Ralph Wood. Lewis, Tolkien, Barfield and Williams are the main Inklings that are discussed. The second Lewis-related CBC program was aired on November 22 and was a promotion interview done on Information Morning Radio to promote a C.S. Lewis Symposium in Halifax, Nova Scotia on Saturday November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Two leaders of the symposium were interviewed and asked about Lewis and why they were having an all day seminar on him.

#### **Canada:**

##### **Canadian Broadcasting Commission**

- Ideas With Paul Kennedy. "C.S. Lewis and The Inklings, Part 1" *cbc.ca* (October 9, 2013) <http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/episodes/2013/10/09/cs-lewis-and-the-inklings/>  
(Audio: <http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/popupaudio.html?clipIds=2411499215>-<http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/episodes/2013/10/17/cs-lewis-and-the-inklings-part-2-1/>)

- Ideas With Paul Kennedy. "C.S. Lewis and The Inklings, Part 2". *cbc.ca* (October 17, 2013)

(Audio:

<http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/popupaudio.html?clipIds=2412729330,%202411499215>)

- Atlantic School of Theology C.S. Lewis Symposium. "Both Sides of the Wardrobe: C. S. Lewis Theological Imagination and Everyday Discipleship" (November 23, 2013) <http://www.astheology.ns.ca/home/CSLewis.html>

and Audio Promotion: Information Morning Radio Program. "Celebrating CS Lewis". *cbc.ca* (November 22, 2013)

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Local+Shows/Maritimes/Information+Morning++NS/ID/2419953674/>

Three secular cable networks also had postings and programs related to the November Lewis celebrations. On the CNN Belief Blog journalist John Blake, on December 1<sup>st</sup>, posted an essay titled, "The C.S. Lewis you never knew". After telling us that Lewis "lived secretly with a woman for years" and that "he once asked people at a party if he could spank them." Blake then goes on to tell us three more things that most people supposedly do not know about Lewis: first, that "his religious books made him poor"; second, that "he felt like a failure as a Christian communicator"; and third, that "he had a "horrible" personal life". All of this was mostly shared out of context and pretty much without any explanation.

The second secular cable network posting came on Fox News. Its Latino version had an article reporting that Lewis was to be honored at Westminster Abbey. Fox News itself had two additional Lewis-related posts. One was an article by Mark Steyn, a reposting of an article from the *National Review* referred to earlier. The second was a video interview of Cal Thomas by Lauren Green on November 21<sup>st</sup>, discussing on her program *Spirited Debate* his syndicated column about C.S. Lewis.

## Commercial Cable News (US):

### - CNN Belief Blog

- Blake, John. "The C.S. Lewis you never knew" (December 1, 2013)

(<http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/12/01/the-c-s-lewis-you-never-knew/comment-page-4/>)

### - Fox News Latino

- Anonymous. "C.S. Lewis to be honored at Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner". *Fox News Latino* (November 22, 2012) <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/lifestyle/2012/11/22/cs-lewis-to-be-honored-at-westminster-abbey-poets-corner/>

### - Fox News

- Green, Lauren and Cal Thomas. "Remembering JFK, Aldous Huxley and C.S. Lewis" *Spirited Debate* (November 21, 2013) <http://video.foxnews.com/v/2857335413001/remembering-jfk-aldous-huxley-and-cs-lewis-/#sp=show-clips>

- Steyn, Mark (National Review). "Knockouts High and Low" (November 25, 2013) <http://nation.foxnews.com/2013/11/25/mark-steyn-knockouts-high-and-low>

MSNBC was the third secular cable network to have a Lewis-related report. Martin Bashir, on his program segment, *Clear the Air*, gave a very positive statement of Lewis as a "uniquely gifted writer and academic". He also spoke of Lewis as a "novelist, poet and theologian", mentioning several of his books as the movie, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, was playing on the screen in the background. Bashir shared with his viewers that Lewis would be honored with a memorial stone the next day in Westminster Abbey, next to many other well-known literary figures. A lot of information was shared very effectively in a very short period of time.

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### - MSNBC

- Bashir, Martin. "Clear the Air: Remembering C.S. Lewis". *MSNBC* (November 21, 2013)

<http://www.msnbc.com/martin-bashir/watch/bashir-remembering-c-s-lewis-68719683925>

and

<http://video.msnbc.msn.com/martin-bashir/53627223/#53627223>

For our next Lewis-related public broadcasting programs we go to some of the BBC programs specifically meant to honor C.S. Lewis on Radio 4. In addition there is also a review in *The Guardian* of a BBC documentary which I will share about a few paragraphs later.

These BBC Radio 4 programs were all presented to the public from November 12<sup>th</sup> through December 8<sup>th</sup>, and they varied in length with the shortest being just 90 seconds. That interview with actress Jill Freud, Clement Freud's wife, came about because she was one of the evacuees that lived with Lewis and Mrs. Moore during World War II and for whom Lewis paid the expenses for her acting school classes. Also, there is a thirty minute program titled "Brave New World" which discusses both Lewis and Huxley and their literary contributions. There is another program on the Tolkien-Lewis friendship and also a daily reading from *The Screwtape Letters*. Some of these are still available online.

Three new short stories were contracted by the BBC specifically for this event. Sub-headed under the general theme, "Through the Wardrobe", they are titled, "The Belle Dress", "Tilly's Tale", and "The Rosy Rural Ruby". These are not, in what I read and heard, in my opinion, typical stories that you would expect to find in a program honoring Lewis that is titled, "Through the Wardrobe". But, from all I can tell, they seem to be quite acceptable to the British public who heard and reviewed them. Award-winning Belfast author, Lucy Caldwell read her story, "The Belle Dress" on the Vimeo video website listed below. The other stories have already been taken down. A snippet

comment from one reviewer of "The Belle Dress" describes it as a story about a young boy raised in a Belfast family in which "gender roles were clearly defined", and "he found himself inexorably attracted to a belle dress belonging to one of his sisters." The story goes on from there to describe what he did with the dress.

### United Kingdom:

#### - BBC TV 4

- Mangan, Lucy. "Narnia's Lost Poet: the Secret Lives and Loves of CS Lewis (ANWilson) – TV review", *The Guardian* (27 November 2013)

<http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2013/nov/28/narnias-lost-poet-the-secret-lives-and-loves-of-cs-lewis-tv-review>

#### - BBC Radio 4

- Selected programmes meant to honor "C.S. Lewis" on Radio 4 Home (Nov 12 – Dec 8):

"The Lion, the Witch and Poets' Corner"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01lpzwh>,

"The Brave New World"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03h2rdj>,

"Shadowlands"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00n3ptg>,

"Lewis and Tolkien: The Lost Road"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03hxjrl>,

"The Northern Irishman in C.S. Lewis"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007jw8w>,

"The Screwtape Letters"

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03hng18>,

“C.S. Lewis and the Evacuee”  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p010zvkt>,

Three Short Stories: “The Belle Dress”  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03j98t9>  
and  
<http://www.radiodramareviews.com/id1557.html>,

“Tilly’s Tale”  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03jysr8>  
and  
<http://www.radiodramareviews.com/id1564.html>,

“The Rosy Rural Ruby”  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03kpl7r>.)

- Lucy Caldwell reads “The Belle Dress” on WordFactory.tv  
(<http://vimeo.com/78062400>)

It is hard to pass up two other Lewis-related programs reported on the BBC. The first one related to the fantasy TV series, “Dr. Who”, in which an article by Fraser McAlpine says that the fifty year-old program, “Dr. Who”, owes Lewis a debt of gratitude for at least five reasons. Also, on the BBC Religion and Ethics site, there is an informative essay by Alister McGrath on the religious symbolism behind the Narnian stories.

#### - BBC America

McAlpine, Fraser. “Five Reasons ‘Doctor Who’ Owes C.S. Lewis A Debt Of Gratitude” (November 22, 2013)  
(<http://www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2013/11/five-reasons-doctor-owes-c-s-lewis-debt-gratitude/>)(  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEwiklhEZrE> )

#### - BBC Religion and Ethics

McGrath, Alister. “The religious symbolism behind the Chronicles of Narnia” (21 November 2013)

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/0/24865379>)

#### C.S. Lewis Festivals and Memorials 7/28/14

I have mentioned in passing a few of the 2013 Lewis-related festivals, conferences and celebrations that occurred in the United States, Canada and Australia. I attended three myself - one in Minneapolis, one at Wheaton College and one near Lexington, Kentucky. There were many others in New York and Houston, one in San Diego, another in Petosky, Michigan. I even came across one led by Perry Bramlett in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. I know that wherever they were and whoever went, that they must have all been great times of celebration, fellowship and scholarship. But what I discovered for even most of the ones that I mentioned that these Lewis-related conferences had no external secular media promotion or reports about them. And if they did, they were few and far between.

#### Headington Quarry - CSL Jubilee Festival at Holy Trinity – September 19-22, 2013

Anyway this leads me into a look at something very different that happened in Great Britain where local, regional and national secular media, especially the BBC and also the community in Belfast, were present to promote and report the story of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lewis's death and the memorial service in his honor.

Let's look first at Headington Quarry in Oxfordshire where Lewis's home church, Holy Trinity, held a C.S. Lewis Jubilee Festival, September 19<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Of course, as you see below, it was promoted by the local newspaper, the *Oxford Mail* and *Oxford Times*; plus the BBC and the *Times* of London added three articles. The festival started with a talk by Alister McGrath. A new play on the life of Lewis was also presented. There were guided walks around Headington near where Lewis lived, and on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> the Bishop of Oxford spoke at the evening service. Plus, along with several family activities, one of the



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local pubs, Masons Arms, came up with a special brew in honor of Lewis that it named "Jack's Delight". It was so popular that the pub ran out of it before the festival was over. In its report *The Times* of London called it "Apologetic ale".

### Headington Quarry - CSL Jubilee Festival at Holy Trinity – September 19-22, 2013

#### BBC

- Anonymous. "CS Lewis Jubilee Festival in Oxford to mark author's life" *BBC News* (10 May 2013)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-22478582>

- Anonymous. "Headington remembers Narnia writer CS Lewis". *BBC News* (19 September 2013)

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-24124097>

#### Oxford Mail (daily) and Oxford Times (weekly)

- Fantato, Damian. "Church to celebrate life of Narnia creator". *Oxford Mail* (1 April 2013)

[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/yourtown/oxford/10323582.Church\\_to\\_celebrate\\_life\\_of\\_Narnia\\_creator/](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/yourtown/oxford/10323582.Church_to_celebrate_life_of_Narnia_creator/)

- Harrison, Emma. "Festival will chronicle 50 years since death of Narnia writer CS Lewis" *The Oxford Mail* (4 September 2013)

[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10651436.Festival\\_will\\_chronicle\\_50\\_years\\_since\\_death\\_of\\_Narnia\\_writer\\_CS\\_Lewis/?ref=twrtrec](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10651436.Festival_will_chronicle_50_years_since_death_of_Narnia_writer_CS_Lewis/?ref=twrtrec)

and *The Oxford Times*

[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/10651436.Festival\\_will\\_chronicle\\_50\\_years\\_since\\_death\\_of\\_Narnia\\_writer\\_CS\\_Lewis/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/10651436.Festival_will_chronicle_50_years_since_death_of_Narnia_writer_CS_Lewis/)

- Anonymous. "Narnia gets a rubbish makeover in church's CS Lewis festival". *The Oxford Times* (18th September 2013)

[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/10680664.Narnia\\_gets\\_a\\_rubbish\\_makeover\\_in\\_church\\_s\\_CS\\_Lewis\\_festival/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/10680664.Narnia_gets_a_rubbish_makeover_in_church_s_CS_Lewis_festival/)

- Anonymous. "Window on the world of Narnia, in Oxford". *Oxford Mail* (21 September 2013)

[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10690027.Window\\_on\\_the\\_world\\_of\\_Narnia\\_in\\_Oxford/](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10690027.Window_on_the_world_of_Narnia_in_Oxford/)

Anonymous. "Narnia expert treats his audience to CS Lewis talk". *The Oxford Mail* (24 October 2013)

[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10758497.Narnia\\_expert\\_treats\\_his\\_audience\\_to\\_CS\\_Lewis\\_talk/](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10758497.Narnia_expert_treats_his_audience_to_CS_Lewis_talk/)

- Stead, The Rev Tim. "Yours Faithfully: Christianity deeply and privately lived". *The Oxford Times* (11 November 2013)

[http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/archive/2013/11/11/10799396.YOURS\\_FAITHFULLY\\_Christianity\\_deeply\\_and\\_privately\\_lived\\_The\\_Rev\\_Tim\\_Stead\\_vicar\\_of\\_Holy\\_Trinity\\_Church\\_Headington\\_Quarry/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/archive/2013/11/11/10799396.YOURS_FAITHFULLY_Christianity_deeply_and_privately_lived_The_Rev_Tim_Stead_vicar_of_Holy_Trinity_Church_Headington_Quarry/)

#### The Times

- Davies, Bess Twiston. "Apologetic ale". *The Times* (September 28 2013)

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article3881184.ece>

and

<https://twitter.com/BillCahusac/status/384960650147282944/photo/1>

### Belfast – C.S. Lewis Festival – funded by Belfast City Council (November 18-23, 2013)

But back in Belfast, the place of Lewis's birth, something unique among Lewis celebrations was happening. The BBC Northern Ireland announced that a C.S. Lewis Festival was taking place on November 18<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup> and that it had been funded by the Belfast City Council and organized by community leaders in East Belfast with the *Belfast Newsletter* newspaper writing about "the string of events" that would occur as this city celebrated C.S. Lewis.

**Belfast – C.S. Lewis Festival – funded by Belfast City Council (November 18-23, 2013)**

**BBC**

- Anonymous. "CS Lewis' life celebrated in Belfast festival". *BBC News Northern Ireland* (18 November 2013)  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-24978356>

**The News Letter (Belfast)**

- Kula, Adam. "String of Events in Celebration of Writer CS Lewis". *The News Letter* (Belfast) (19 November 2013)  
<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/life/book-reviews/string-of-events-in-celebration-of-writer-cs-lewis-1-5691039>

- Philip. Bradfield, "CS Lewis still growing in popularity 50 years after death". *The News Letter* (Belfast) (November 22, 2013)  
<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/life/book-reviews/cs-lewis-still-growing-in-popularity-50-years-after-death-1-5700131>

The City Council announced what it called "a dizzying array of family friendly and schools events" including a Lewis Trail Tour, a lamplighting program at Campbell College, an interactive rendition of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, with St. Marks Church providing its own series of events focusing on faith, and much more.

**Belfast – C.S. Lewis Festival – funded by Belfast City Council (November 18-23, 2013)**

**Belfast City Council – CSL Festival Programmes**

- *C.S. Lewis Festival Website*  
<http://www.communitygreenway.co.uk/CSLewisFestival>

- *C.S. Lewis Festival Brochure (.pdf)*  
[http://www.communitygreenway.co.uk/sites/default/files/CSLewisFestivalProgramme\\_2013.pdf](http://www.communitygreenway.co.uk/sites/default/files/CSLewisFestivalProgramme_2013.pdf)

- Anonymous. "C.S. Lewis Festival Programme launched at Belmont Tower" (31 October 2013)

<http://www.communitygreenway.co.uk/news/2013-10-31/cs-lewis-festival-programme-launched-at-belmont-tower>

and *Northern Ireland News*  
[http://www.4ni.co.uk/northern\\_ireland\\_news.asp?id=171440](http://www.4ni.co.uk/northern_ireland_news.asp?id=171440)

- *C.S. Lewis Festival Public Events at a Glance*  
<http://www.communitygreenway.co.uk/sites/default/files/at%20a%20glance.jpg>

- *C.S. Lewis Festival Event News and Images*  
<http://www.communitygreenway.co.uk/CSLewisFestival>

Plus there are still more reports of Lewis-related activities in Belfast: a special Narnia art exhibit at Belfast's Linen Hall Library, a somewhat "quirky" breakfast which includes Narnia-inspired foods – cakes, sardines and, of course, Turkish delight. Even a civic square at the Holywood Arches will be named after Lewis.

**Belfast – C.S. Lewis Festival – funded by Belfast City Council (November 18-23, 2013)**

**Belfast Telegraph**

- Smyth, Michelle. "CS Lewis exhibition: Magic of Narnia is illustrated at Belfast's Linen Hall Library". *Belfast Telegraph* (05 November 2013)  
<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/entertainment/theatre-arts/cs-lewis-exhibition-magic-of-narnia-is-illustrated-at-belfasts-linen-hall-library-29726230.html>

- Smyth, Michelle. "A taste of Narnia at CS Lewis Festival breakfast". *Belfast Telegraph* (19 November 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/a-taste-of-narnia-at-cs-lewis-festival-breakfast-29764745.html>

***The Irish News***

- Connolly, Maeve. "Colourful week of events to commemorate Narnia author". *The Irish News* (01 November 2013)  
<http://www.irishnews.com/news/colourful-week-of-events-to-commemorate-narnia-author-1298594>

***Irish Times***

- Casey, Fr Thomas G. "Belfast man who died the same day as JFK continues to fascinate 50 years on". *Irish Times* (November 19, 2013)  
<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/belfast-man-who-died-the-same-day-as-jfk-continues-to-fascinate-50-years-on-1.1599190>

***UTV News (Ulster)***

- Anonymous. "Festival remembers legacy of CS Lewis". *UTV News (Ulster)* (19 November 2013)  
<http://www.u.tv/Entertainment/Festival-remembers-legacy-of-CS-Lewis/5e3add8c-147c-40f1-99c4-194623a83804>

**London - Poets Corner Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey – November 22, 2013  
- but first announced in 2012**

This next section of articles tells of the announcement by Canon Vernon White in 2012 and the year-long planning that will go into the memorial services for Lewis to be held at Westminster Abbey in 2013. In the BBC article Canon White, who is considered to be the progenitor of the Lewis memorial celebration, speaks of Lewis as an "extraordinarily imaginative and rigorous thinker and writer."

**London - Poets Corner Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey – November 22, 2013  
- Memorial Announced in 2012**

- Anonymous. "CS Lewis to be honoured in Poets' Corner". *BBC* (21 November 2012)  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-20426778>

- McGrath, Alister. "C S Lewis deserves his place in Poets' Corner". *Telegraph* (21 November 2012)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/9693294/C-S-Lewis-deserves-his-place-in-Poets-Corner.html>

- Jury, Louise. "C S Lewis to be honoured with Poets' Corner memorial stone". *London Evening Standard* (22 November 2012)  
<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/c-s-lewis-to-be-honoured-with-poets-corner-memorial-stone-8343365.html>

- Collett-White, Mike. "CS Lewis to be honoured with memorial stone at Poet's Corner". *The Independent* (22 November 2012) <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/cs-lewis-to-be-honoured-with-memorial-stone-at-poets-corner-8344170.html>  
and *Chicago Tribune*  
[http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-11-22/entertainment/sns-rt-us-cslewis-memorialbre8al0ku-20121122\\_1\\_narnia-poets-corner-white-witch](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-11-22/entertainment/sns-rt-us-cslewis-memorialbre8al0ku-20121122_1_narnia-poets-corner-white-witch)

- McCreary, Alf. "Memorial to a good man behind the saintly myth". *Belfast Telegraph* (3 December 2012)  
<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/alf-mccreary/memorial-to-a-good-man-behind-the-saintly-myth-16245730.html>

- Peterkin, Tom. "CS Lewis, Chronicles of Narnia author, honoured in Poets' corner". *The Telegraph* (22 November 2012)  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/9694561/CS-Lewis-Chronicles-of-Narnia-author-honoured-in-Poets-corner.html>

**August 5, 2014**

**Memorial Week Services Reported in 2013**

The memorial service took place in Westminster Abbey, officially called “the Collegiate Church of St Peter at Westminster”. It is the place where some of the most significant people in the nation's history are buried or commemorated. It also serves as the place where the British monarch is coronated and where many of them have been married. Here, in Poets’ Corner, with so many other British literary greats, is where Lewis’s memorial stone was dedicated on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. Engraved on the stone is one of his most famous quotes from a talk given to the Socratic Club, in 1944, titled “Is Theology Poetry?": “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”

Below is a listing of the secular media coverage of the Lewis memorial service, seventeen printed articles, including a copy of McGrath’s sermon at Headington Quarry on Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. The audio is also posted on YouTube. Five of these reports come from the BBC, one describing the service, who did what and mentioning also the conference that had been at the abbey the previous day. Mostly just the facts, but little detail. One very special article is by James Conlee of the *Deseret News* who provides an online summary of his trip to the service and fifty additional photos from his two week trip to London and Oxford. Most of the other secular papers offer only a photo of the engraved memorial stone. As of the posting of this essay audio recordings of the service and the symposium given the day before can also be found on the community broadcast site, Audioboo, as listed below and should be heard.

**London - Poets Corner Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey - November 22, 2013 - Memorial Week Services Reported**

**BBC**

- Balding, Clare. “Good Morning Sunday Interviews Alister McGrath”. *BBC Radio 2*

(November 17, 2013)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03hml10>

and

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zUHK-avAzc>

- Alister. McGrath, “Sunday Service with Message at Holy Trinity Headington Quarry: “A Vision of Heaven”. *BBC Radio 4* (17 November 2013)

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03hmn\\_gx](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03hmn_gx)

and *YouTube*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbRnMAENHT8>

- Anonymous. “CS Lewis honoured with Poets’ Corner memorial”. *BBC* (22 November 2013) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-25031909>

- Anonymous. “CS Lewis included in Poets’ Corner at Westminster Abbey”. *BBC News Northern Ireland* (22 November 2013) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-25042401>

- Trujillo, Kristina. C.S. Lewis Has Been Added to the Poets’ Corner”. *BBC America* (November 25th, 2013) <http://www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2013/11/c-s-lewis-poets-corner/>

**Audioboo Community Broadcasts**

- Talk by Alister McGrath at C.S. Lewis Symposium on Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> at WA, entitled “Telling the Truth through Rational Argument”:  
<https://audioboo.fm/boos/1770159-c-s-lewis-symposium-telling-the-truth-through-rational-argument.mp3?nojs=1>,

- Talk by Malcom Guite at C.S. Lewis Symposium on Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> at WA, entitled “Telling the Truth through Imaginative Fiction”:  
<https://audioboo.fm/boos/1770206-c-s-lewis-symposium-telling-the-truth-through-imaginative-fiction.mp3?nojs=1>,

- a panel discussion at the C S Lewis Symposium on Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> at WA, entitled "What can 21st century apologetics learn from CS Lewis":

<https://audioboo.fm/boos/1770252-c-s-lewis-symposium-panel-discussion-what-can-21st-century-apologetics-learn-from-cs-lewis.mp3?nojs=1>

- the Service to dedicate memorial stone to C.S. Lewis on Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> at WA:

<https://audioboo.fm/boos/1754635-a-service-to-dedicate-a-memorial-to-c-s-lewis-writer-scholar-and-apologist.mp3?nojs=1>

### **Belfast Telegraph**

- Graham, Claire. "Westminster Abbey honours CS Lewis alongside literary elite 50 years after his death". *Belfast Telegraph* (23 November 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/westminster-abbey-honours-cs-lewis-alongside-literary-elite-50-years-after-his-death-29777942.html>

### **The Deseret News**

- Conlee, James. "A week of commemorating C. S. Lewis begins with a BBC broadcast from his local church". *Deseret News* (November 21, 2013)

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865591047/A-week-of-commemorating-C-S-Lewis-begins-with-a-BBC-broadcast-from-his-local-church.html>

- Conlee, James. "Two weeks with C. S. Lewis: An invitation to the 50th Anniversary Commemoration (+50 photos)". *Deseret News* (January 1, 2014)

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865593310/Two-weeks-with-C-S-Lewis-The-50th-Anniversary-Commemoration.html>

### **Newham Recorder**

- Adams, Matt. "CS Lewis 'should be proud' of role he played in Doctor Who". *Newham Recorder* (November 22, 2013)

[http://www.newhamrecorder.co.uk/what-s-on/cs\\_lewis\\_should\\_be\\_proud\\_of\\_role\\_he\\_played\\_in\\_doctor\\_who\\_1\\_3031185](http://www.newhamrecorder.co.uk/what-s-on/cs_lewis_should_be_proud_of_role_he_played_in_doctor_who_1_3031185)

### **The Oxford Mail**

- Little, Reg and Tom Burrows. "CS Lewis: the man I called father". *Oxford Mail* (22 November 2013)

[http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/yourtown/oxford/10826842.CS\\_Lewis\\_the\\_man\\_I\\_called\\_father/](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/yourtown/oxford/10826842.CS_Lewis_the_man_I_called_father/)

### **New York Times**

- Erlanger, Steven. "The Chronicles of C. S. Lewis Lead to Poets' Corner". *New York Times* (November 20, 2013)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/21/books/the-chronicles-of-c-s-lewis-lead-to-poets-corner.html>

### **The Telegraph**

- Malnick, Edward. "Rowan Williams to unveil CS Lewis tribute in Poets' Corner". *The Telegraph* (17 November 2013)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10454520/Rowan-Williams-to-unveil-CS-Lewis-tribute-in-Poets-Corner.html>

- McLaren, Iona. "CS Lewis joins Poets' Corner". *The Telegraph* (November 22, 2013)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10452711/Does-CS-Lewis-deserve-a-place-in-Poets-Corner.html>

- Howse, Christopher. "C.S. Lewis Memorial: A Stone for a lover not for a poet". *The Telegraph* (22 November 2013)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10469362/CS-Lewis-memorial-A-stone-for-a-lover-not-for-a-poet.html>

- Hannan, Daniel. "Margaret Thatcher, John F Kennedy, CS Lewis, Aldous Huxley and Ayn Rand: today's quite a day". *The Telegraph* (November 22, 2013)

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/danielhannan/100246359/margaret-thatcher-john-f-kennedy-cs-lewis-aldous-huxley-and-ayn-rand-todays-quite-a-day/>

### **The Times**

- Burgess, Kaya. "C.S. Lewis is honoured in Poets' Corner". *The Times* (UK) (23 November 2013):13.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article3929688.ece>

### **UPI**

- Anonymous. "C.S. Lewis gets plaque in Westminster Abbey". *UPI* (November 29, 2013)

[http://www.upi.com/Entertainment\\_News/2013/11/29/CS-Lewis-gets-plaque-in-Westminster-Abbey/UPI-71881385766648/](http://www.upi.com/Entertainment_News/2013/11/29/CS-Lewis-gets-plaque-in-Westminster-Abbey/UPI-71881385766648/)

### **Post Memorial Service Conferences (November 23, 2013)**

Both Magdalen College, Oxford and Magdalene College, Cambridge held special programs in honor of Lewis on the day after the memorial service. Rowan Williams, the main speaker the day before at Westminster Abbey, also spoke at both of these two programs.

### **Post Memorial Service Conferences (November 23, 2013)**

#### **- Magdalen College, Oxford University**

- Anonymous. "Special event to honor C S Lewis on 23 November". *Magdalen College, Oxford* (22 NOVEMBER 2013)

<http://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/news/50th-anniversary-of-the-death-of-c-s-lewis/>

#### **- Magdalene College, Cambridge University**

- Anonymous. "Lewis As Critic: A Conference Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of C.S. Lewis's death". *Magdalene College, Cambridge* (23 November, 2013)

<http://lewisascritic.wordpress.com/>

### **Two Lewis-related Dramas Reviewed by the Secular Media**

In addition to the newspaper articles, periodical essays, festivals, symposiums and memorial services there were several additional Lewis-inspired events to which the

secular media gave its response during 2013. There were three major biographies published and one hour-long TV documentary produced on Lewis's life followed-up with an insider's behind-the-scenes eBook written to describe its production. Plus, there were also at least two drama productions that were promoted in the secular press and reviewed there as well. Each of these mentioned that their composition or production was connected with the Lewis 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I note first the two dramas. The Fellowship for the Performing Arts opened its national tour of a dramatic version of one of his books, *The Great Divorce*, in Phoenix, Arizona in December. Kerry Lengel, the *Arizona Republic's* arts critic, gave it a positive review, writing that "*The Great Divorce* does Lewis justice, brings his voice to stage" and "raises questions about right and wrong and how we live that should provoke thought in anyone. And just as important, it never feels like a dry sermon."

In August a touring group called the Searchlight Theatre, performed *Questioning Aslan*, a stage play about Lewis's interaction with a student facing difficulties in his life. Performed in Scotland, it also received a positive review from critic Isla Van Tricht where she wrote that it was "thought-provoking, well-written and well-performed" and adding that "*Questioning Aslan* is an intriguing and open discussion about doubt and faith. Regardless of your beliefs this is a bright and beautifully constructed piece of theatre."

### **Drama Reviews from Secular Newspapers and Internet sites:**

- *The Great Divorce* – Fellowship for the Performing Arts

-Lengel, Kerry. "*Great Divorce* does Lewis justice, brings his voice to stage". *Arizona Republic* (December 20, 2013)

[http://www.azcentral.com/thingstodo/arts/articles/20131221review-great-divorce.html?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.azcentral.com/thingstodo/arts/articles/20131221review-great-divorce.html?nclick_check=1)

- **Questioning Aslan** – Searchlight Theatre Company

- Van Tricht, Isla. "Review of *Questioning Aslan*". *Broadway Baby* (18 August 2013)  
<http://www.broadwaybaby.com/shows/questioning-aslan/32124>  
and  
<http://www.broadwaybaby.com/search.php?t=5&q=Isla+van+Tricht>

### Secular Media Reviews of Three Lewis Biographies

The three major biographies of Lewis that were published in 2013 were Devin Brown's *A Life Observed: A Spiritual Biography of C.S. Lewis*, Colin Duriez's *C.S. Lewis: A Biography of Friendship*, and Alister McGrath's *C.S. Lewis – A Life: Eccentric Genius. Reluctant Prophet*. There were only two short secular reviews of Brown's *A Life Observed*. One, by Carrigan, sees Lewis's life as focused on seeking joy, providing "a close reading of Lewis's writings and an examination of Lewis's friendships" with Tolkien and other Inklings. The other by McConnell notes that Brown tells the "fascinating tale" with much to "savor" of a "man's lifelong attempt to live out his faith."

Also, only two reviews in the secular media were found of Duriez's biography of Lewis. Robert Wilson writes that Duriez built his biography on "the key relationships in the life of Lewis". Then, he tells us that Duriez, "by a process of ruthless selection", has "managed to give us a brief and lucid biography". The second review on the Duriez book is by A.N. Wilson who spends much of it stating his own views about Lewis's life. About this book he does say that Duriez "has written a lively, short account of a great man" concentrating on Lewis's friendships. He questions the author's belief that Lewis and Mrs. Moore had only a platonic relationship. But still sees this book as "a good place to start" for anyone seeking to learn about the life of Lewis.

**Biographies: Reviews from Secular Media and Internet sites:**

**Brown, Devin. *C.S. Lewis: A Life Observed*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2013.**

- Carrigan, Jr., Henry L. "C.S. Lewis: Still Bringing Readers Joy". *Publishers Weekly* (March 27, 2013) (brief)  
<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/religion/article/56535-c-s-lewis-still-bringing-readers-joy.html>

- McConnell, Christopher. "Review of *A Life Observed: A Spiritual Biography of C.S. Lewis*". *Booklist* Vol. 109, No. 22 (August 2013): 4-6. (find .pdf on *Ebsco*)

**Duriez, Colin. *C.S. Lewis: A Biography of Friendship*. Oxford: Lion Books, 2013.**

- Wilson, A. N. "The Chronicler of Narnia and his love of the whip". *The Daily Mail Online* (13 April 2013)  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/event/article-2308500/BOOKS-Life-loveable-man-letters-chronicler-Narnia-love-whip.html>

- Wilson, Robert. "From Narnia to Christianity". *Sydney Morning Herald* (September 28, 2013)  
<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/from-narnia-to-christianity-20130926-2ugfo.html>

In the next list there are twenty reviews of McGrath's biography of Lewis by the secular media in both the U.S. and England. Most are positive and appreciative for the work put in to produce this over 400 page biography. One well-known Irish reviewer calls it the "definitive biography of Lewis" (McCreary). Another speaks not of the biography but of the subject of the biography, calling Lewis's life an "odd story" and himself, "an extremely odd man". (Wilson) One flaw seen is that it is "rich with information but short on ...anecdotes that that make author biographies colorful." (*Kirkus*)

It is a biography we are told by Olson that "Lewis' admirers would prefer to all others". John calls it "accessible" and "very helpful". Of this biography Wilson tells us that

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“McGrath deals with the whole story remarkably fairly.” Heitman says that McGrath is “thorough”, but “his narrative method tends to keep Lewis “at arm’s length.” He tells us also that McGrath suggests that reading what Lewis read and reading what he wrote is the best way to understand Lewis.”

Dirda calls McGrath’s biography “a fine book” - “not a work of synopsis, but of analysis”, but he has the complaint that while McGrath dealt well and “chiefly with Lewis’s religious writing”, he failed to deal with Lewis as a “literary scholar”. But if someone is looking for a good introduction to Lewis, McGrath’s biography is, as Wilson said of Duriez’s, a “good place to start”. Gray notes that McGrath has also “well analyzed” the “Lewis industry”, but he is concerned that the sub-title - “Eccentric Genius. Reluctant Prophet” is “unnecessary and potentially misleading.”

### **Biographies: Reviews from Secular Media and Internet sites:**

#### **McGrath, Alister. *C.S. Lewis - A Life: Eccentric Genius. Reluctant Prophet*. Carol Stream,**

-Anonymous. “Review of *C.S. Lewis - A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet*”. *Kirkus Reviews* Vol. 81, Issue 1 (January 1, 2013):55. (find .html on *Ebsco*)

- Jaeger, John. “Review of *C.S. Lewis: A Life*”. *Library Journal* Vol. 138, Issue 3 (2/15/2013) (find .html on *Ebsco*)

- Olson, Roy. “Review of *C. S. Lewis—a Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet*”. *Booklist* Vol. 109, Issue 11, page 11 (February 1, 2013) (find .pdf on *Ebsco*)

- Wilson, A.N. “The Joys of C.S. Lewis” and “The Odd Story of C.S. Lewis, an Extremely Odd Man”. *The Daily Beast* (March 10, 2013) <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/03/10/the-odd-story-of-c-s-lewis-an-extremely-odd-man.html>

- Heitman, Danny. “C.S. Lewis: A Life”. *Christian Science Monitor* (March 11, 2013) <http://www.csmonitor.com/Books/Book-Reviews/2013/0311/C.S.-Lewis-A-Life>

- Dirda, Michael. “‘C.S. Lewis: A Life,’ by Alister McGrath”. *Washington Post* (March 13, 2013) [http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/cs-lewis-a-life-by-alister-mcgrath/2013/03/13/ec08be7e-8b36-11e2-b63f-f53fb9f2fcb4\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/cs-lewis-a-life-by-alister-mcgrath/2013/03/13/ec08be7e-8b36-11e2-b63f-f53fb9f2fcb4_story.html)

- Paine, Dawn Andrus. “Book Buzz: C.S. Lewis - A Life”. *Daily Herald* (Provo, Utah) (March 17, 2013) <http://www.heraldextra.com/entertainment/books-and-literature/book-buzz-c-s-lewis---a-life/article-3f3a153d-b0af-587d-a01e-24dbb8e87e6f.html>

- Carrigan, Jr., Henry L. “C.S. Lewis: Still Bringing Readers Joy”. *Publishers Weekly* (March 27, 2013) (brief) <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/religion/article/56535-c-s-lewis-still-bringing-readers-joy.html>

- Higgins, Jim. “New C.S. Lewis biography explores man behind ‘Narnia’”. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (March 29, 2013) <http://www.jsonline.com/entertainment/books/new-cs-lewis-biography-explores-the-man-behind-narnia-7q990bn-200606581.html>

- McDonagh, Melanie. “So much more than a champion of Christianity”. *Evening Standard* (11 April 2013) <http://www.standard.co.uk/arts/book/so-much-more-than-a-champion-of-christianity-8568102.html>

- Gray, Chris. “Review of biography of Narnia author”. *The Oxford Times* (11 April 2013) [http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/leisure/books/10342803.C\\_S\\_Lewis\\_by\\_Alister\\_McGrath/](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/leisure/books/10342803.C_S_Lewis_by_Alister_McGrath/)



## Lewis in the Dock (Part 2) · Richard James

- Standord, Peter. "CS Lewis: A Life by Alister McGrath – review". *The Guardian* (13 April 2013)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2013/apr/14/cs-lewis-life-mcgrath-review>

- Leith, Sam. "CS Lewis: A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet by Alister McGrath – review". *The Guardian* (8 May 2013)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2013/may/08/lewis-genius-prophet-mcgrath-review>

- Philip. Womack. "CS Lewis by Alister McGrath: review". *The Telegraph* (22 April 2013)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/biographyandmemoirreviews/10000289/CS-Lewis-by-Alister-McGrath-review.html>

- Bell, Matthew. "Review: CS Lewis, A Life". *The Independent* (11 May 2013)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/review-cs-lewis-a-life-by-alistair-mcgrath-8612245.html>

- Davenport, Arlice. "New biography shows how 'Narnia' author C.S. Lewis' intellect, imagination were formed". *The Wichita Eagle* (KS)(May 12, 2013)

<http://www.kansas.com/2013/05/12/2799609/new-biography-shows-how-narnia.html>

- Anonymous. "Literary lion: The never-ending complexities of a beloved British writer". *The Economist* (May 18th 2013)

<http://www.economist.com/news/books-and-arts/21578008-never-ending-complexities-beloved-british-writer-literary-lion>

- Kenny, Anthony. "Mere C. S. Lewis" *Times Literary Supplement* (19 June 2013)

<http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article1275683.ece>

- Massie, Allan. "CS Lewis had three pints at lunchtime? How shocking!". *Telegraph* (June 24, 2013)

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/allanmassie/100069744/cs-lewis-had-three-pints-at-lunchtime-how-shocking/>

- McCreary, Alf. "The definitive study of 'most reluctant convert' CS Lewis". *Belfast Telegraph* (01 July 2013)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/alf-mccreary/the-definitive-study-of-most-reluctant-convert-cs-lewis-29382601.html>

- Garrett, Lynn. "Events, Books Honor C.S. Lewis 50 Years After His Death". *Publishers Weekly* (Oct 30, 2013) (brief) (

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/religion/article/59760-events-books-honor-c-s-lewis-50-years-after-his-death.html>

### His Life on TV: "Narnia's Lost Poet" Documentary

On Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> in the week following the celebration at Poets' Corner, one more secular media report appeared about C.S. Lewis on the BBC TV Four. Using the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death and the memorial service at Westminster Abbey as a springboard, this hour-long documentary had an unusual title. It was called "Narnia's Lost Poet: The Secret Lives and Loves of C.S. Lewis". The presenter/narrator and also scriptwriter of this video was Lewis biographer A.N. Wilson – a journalist, novelist, historian, former tutor at Oxford, and now a TV broadcaster. The full program was available first on the BBC, last shown there on January 23, 2014 and then, could be seen for a while on a copy made on YouTube. I was able to view it on December 1<sup>st</sup>, but it is now unavailable, except for brief excerpts that can be viewed on Vimeo and YouTube.

**Public Broadcasting Documentary  
BBC TV4 – “Narnia's Lost Poet: the Secret  
Lives and Loves of CS Lewis” (November  
27, 2013 – 9:00 p.m.)**

- Anonymous. “Narnia's Lost Poet: The Secret Lives and Loves of CS Lewis”. *BBC TV Four* (First shown: 27 November 2013)  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03jrw5j> (current listing)

**(Full programme is now unavailable, but excerpts can be viewed on Vimeo (http://vimeo.com/91716243) and YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4UV3kZLYZc, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AZvP2G0hrQ, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnmVxlfHkuY, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhCLh4K7MXo, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6riKPmae3A, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3mNLlqBoA, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmDjMwxsTbw**

Below is the BBC TV Four's description of this documentary in their TV guide. Read closely, and you can pick up on some of the slant that is brought to video:

CS Lewis's biographer AN Wilson goes in search of the man behind Narnia - bestselling children's author and famous Christian writer, but an under-appreciated Oxford academic and an aspiring poet who never achieved the same success in writing verse as he did prose.

Although his public life was spent in the all-male world of Oxford colleges, his private life was marked by secrecy and even his best friend JRR Tolkien didn't know of his marriage to an American divorcee late in life. Lewis died on the same

day as the assassination of John F Kennedy and few were at his burial; his alcoholic brother was too drunk to tell people the time of the funeral. Fifty years on, his life as a writer is now being remembered alongside other national literary heroes in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner.

In this personal and insightful film, Wilson paints a psychological portrait of a man who experienced fame in the public arena, but whose personal life was marked by the loss of the three women he most loved.

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Readers are not asked to take a quiz on who these women are [their names start with the letters F, J & J], but I encourage you to watch it if you can, just to see the Lewis-related places in London, Belfast, Oxford, Cambridge and Headington. Also, some highly edited portions of interviews with Alister McGrath, Michael Ward, Peter Cousins, Jill Freud and others are shown. Be careful about what is said by Wilson, since in my opinion much of the video is more about Wilson and his own reaction to Lewis than it is about Lewis himself. While many facts are shared and much beautiful scenery is shown, to someone like myself who has done counseling and also been in counseling, there seems to be a large amount of Freudian psychoanalysis offered by someone who is untrained in that field and who also fails to mention that Lewis himself had studied and written on that very subject, expressing some very strong opinions against its use in literary criticism. Yet, overall, in spite of many of Wilson's very slanted comments, many of those interviewed are still able to provide the film with a needed positive balance.

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Below is a list of previews and reviews from secular newspapers and internet sites which will help give some perspective on the video when it was shown. *The Times of London* reviewer, Alex Hardy begins his review with

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the statement, “C.S.Lewis’s biographer showed us that the writer was a hybrid creature, who had a few skeletons in the wardrobe.” On most of these reviews, I also checked the internet comments following the reviews, and they, like the reviews themselves, were highly positive about Wilson’s presentation and the video, itself, in a way that seemed to say that Lewis was shown to be a “really good chap” who like everyone else had his problems, but also wrote some wonderful books – both academic and children’s fiction. His apologetics like *Mere Christianity* are generally dismissed while books like the *Chronicles of Narnia* and *A Grief Observed* are highly recommended, along with some, but not all of his literary work.

### Previews and Reviews from Secular Newspapers and Internet sites:

- Butcher, David. “Narnia's Lost Poet: The Secret Lives and Loves of CS Lewis”. *Radio Times* (23-29 November 2013) <http://www.radiotimes.com/episode/cqgpr9/narnias-lost-poet-the-secret-lives-and-loves-of-cs-lewis>
- David, Chater. “Pick of the Day: Wednesday’s TV: Narnia’s Lost Poet — The Secret Lives And Loves of C. S. Lewis on 27 November 2013”. *The Times Saturday Review and Viewing Guide* (23 November 2013) <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/tv-radio/article3928437.ece> (no longer available)
- Gosnell, Emma. “Narnia's Lost Poet: The Secret Lives and Loves of CS Lewis, BBC Four, review” *Telegraph* (27 November 2013) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/tv-and-radio-reviews/10479373/Narnias-Lost-Poet-The-Secret-Lives-and-Loves-of-CS-Lewis-BBC-Four-review.html>

- Mangan, Lucy. “Narnia's Lost Poet: the Secret Lives and Loves of CS Lewis” (ANWilson) – TV review”, *The Guardian* (27 November 2013) <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2013/nov/28/narnias-lost-poet-the-secret-lives-and-loves-of-cs-lewis-tv-review>

- Dean, Will. “Narnia's Lost Poet: The Secret Lives and Loves of C S Lewis: TV review - behind closed doors with a man as magical as his classic Chronicles”. *The Independent* (27 November 2013) <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/reviews/narnias-lost-poet-the-secret-lives-and-loves-of-c-s-lewis-tv-review--behind-closed-doors-with-a-man-as-magical-as-his-classic-chronicles-8968095.html>

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### ***The Man Behind Narnia* eBook**

Published on December 10<sup>th</sup>, just two weeks after his Lewis documentary on the BBC, *The Man Behind Narnia* is A.N. Wilson’s e-book attempt to give the reader a behind-the-scenes explanation of the making of that documentary, *Narnia's Lost Poet: The Secret Lives and Loves of C S Lewis*. In the first of seven chapters titled, “C.S. Lewis and I”, Wilson invites us to share his re-encounter with the creator of Narnia. Following on, much like a friendly conversation that sometimes seems confessional, Wilson revisits with us his generally negative interaction with someone he eventually cannot avoid describing in chapter six as “a very, very good man”. But this slight praise,

in his shortest chapter, never overcomes the initial negative impression he gives us, both in the documentary and early in his book, of “poor old C.S. Lewis”. In fact, in chapter seven he closes by saying that even though he now thinks more highly of Lewis as a man, “I like his works rather less than I did.” Somehow Wilson misses the whole point of the memorial services and the talk given by former Archbishop Williams, that it is only now that the value and depth of many of Lewis’s insights are beginning to be seen.

Unlike the documentary which drew several immediate reviews in the secular media, I have been unable to discover any reviews in the last six months of this behind-the-scenes, personal impressions, eBook - either in a major newspaper or periodical. There is one exception: the publisher’s website, Amazon.com, has twenty-three brief, somewhat mixed reviews – 19 in the United Kingdom and 4 in the U.S. If you have the inclination and do not mind spending \$1.99 on an eBook or interacting with Wilson’s highly personal bias, this book gives some insight into where Wilson is in his recent return to the faith, including his presuppositions in preparing the documentary and how it came to be. Like many who struggle in the faith dimension of their lives, he, too, is in the process of rediscovering and recovering what he had lost regarding his religious faith over those years between his writing of the Lewis biography in 1990 and his return in 2009.

Here is the book’s description on Amazon’s website:

It looks like a wardrobe, but open it up and it leads you back into a world of childhood – of fantasy. Lewis, now famed the world over as a children’s author and religious apologist, was a university Professor who kept his private life a doggedly guarded secret. Living exclusively in the world of men, his life was really dominated by women – by his mother, whose death when he was a

child scarred his whole life; by Jane Moore, with whom he lived for thirty-three years; and by Joy Davidman, the American he married. The mystery of Lewis is deep. He was a man who professed to be ruled by his head, but was manifestly governed by his heart. In *THE MAN BEHIND NARNIA, A.N.* Wilson, who wrote Lewis’s full-length biography over twenty years ago, returns to the theme – having made a television documentary about Lewis and his work. He opens the wardrobe and finds many demons – some are Lewis’s, and some are his own.

### Two articles with two double authors

Both *The Guardian* and *The Times* have offered their readers a very unique experience in their observance of November 22, 2013. These two national newspaper have chosen to focus, not on the American president who died on that day 50 years ago, but to direct their reporting on the life and work of the two well-known British authors who died on that same day, Lewis and Huxley. Their chosen method is to have two authors each for the one article in each paper. In *The Guardian*, Laura Miller, co-founder of Salon.com and author of *The Magician’s Book*, a book on the Narnian stories, writes of how, along with her love of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, she cherishes, not Lewis’s Christian apologetics, but “his literary criticism”. Nicholas Murray, on the other hand, a biographer of Huxley, “admires his exemplary open mind”, describing him as “an eloquent critical voice” who warns us “against our tendency to ‘love our slavery’” as he had described it in his *Brave New World*.

In *The Telegraph* Oliver Moody reminds us that “Aldous Huxley becomes more and more relevant as the years pass”. Huxley’s great insight, he writes, “is that the real danger is not that our freedom will be taken away, but that we will hand it over

willingly.” Michael Ward tells us that “C.S. Lewis lacked faith only in the lasting power of his work”. He concludes that Lewis’s Christian writings remain both popular and good because “they spring from conviction”, affirming that Lewis passionately believed “in the value of whatever he wrote about.”

### Two articles with two side-by-side authors from *The Guardian* and *The Times*

- Miller, Laura and Nicholas Murray. “My hero: CS Lewis by Laura Miller and Aldous Huxley by Nicholas Murray”. *The Guardian* (22 November 2013)  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/nov/22/other-heroes-cs-lewis-aldous-huxley>

- Moody, Oliver. “Kennedy’s killing overshadowed the death of two greats...”  
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/article3929454.ece>  
and  
Ward, Michael. “... and we should not let them be forgotten”  
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/article3929471.ece> *The Times* (UK) (23 November 2013): 28.

### Four Serendipitous Coverages

Over the many weeks that the secular media responded to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis and to the programs that celebrated his memorial at Poets’ Corner, four articles stood out to me as simply serendipitous because they were either extraordinarily creative or different or maybe unexpected. The first of these I discovered in the *Wilmington Delaware News Journal*. This regional newspaper did an amazing double-page multi-color section on Lewis in its November 19<sup>th</sup> edition titled “Did You Know: Fifty years after his death”. Artist Dan Garrow’s creative caricature of Lewis surrounded by many of his Narnian characters was the center of these two pages that were filled with Lewis quotes, a reading guide, information on the Inklings and the Poets’ Corner memorial, a brief Lewis biography, and an essay on him by Gary

Soulsman. Enlarging the pdf will allow you to read the essay by itself. When you do, you will note an obvious error in Soulsman’s comment about the subject of *Surprised by Joy*, calling it a memoir about Lewis’s wife. Possibly he meant *A Grief Observed* here, but who knows. That somewhat obvious mistake takes away from the project’s accuracy, but not from its creative presentation.

### Four serendipitous coverages:

#### 1. A double-page multi-color section in *Wilmington (DE) News Journal*

- Soulsman, Gary and illustrator, Dan Garrow. “Did You Know: Fifty years after his death” *Wilmington News Journal* (November 19, 2013)

<http://archive.delawareonline.com/assets/pdf/BL2152831119.PDF>

My second surprise came when I found an article on the JFK-Huxley-C.S. Lewis 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Aljazeera by Rahul Radhakrishnan. But there it was and most of the facts are right with an interview with Judith Priestman, a librarian at the Bodleian, one with author John Garth and a few references to the Peter Kreeft book, *Between Heaven and Hell*. For me it was an unanticipated find on my Google search for Lewis-related articles posted to remember the events of November 22, 1963 and the celebrations in 2013. Plus, the photographs of all three men together somehow gave the report more gravity in its non-western setting.

### Four serendipitous coverages:

#### 2. An article in Aljazeera

- Radhakrishnan, Rahul. “Remembering Huxley and Lewis”. *Aljazeera* (22 November 2013)

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/11/remembering-huxley-lewis-2013112211156397737.html>

A third unexpected post was found on November 29<sup>th</sup> on the website of Tor, that part of Macmillan that publishes their fantasy and science fiction books. There I discovered

an article by Leah Schnelbach mentioning the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death the previous week and the honor given him in Poets' Corner. She describes him as a Moral Fantasist. She also wrote that "the career that made him famous and became his lasting legacy was that of a fantasy and science fiction author... Lewis was a member of one of the most famous literary societies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, The Inklings,... But his greatest impact can be felt each time a child looks into a wardrobe with a little more wonder than necessary." Plus, next to her comment on Lewis was an interesting caricature of him drawn by David Johnson.

#### **Four serendipitous coverages:**

##### **3. A SF/Fantasy tribute from Tor**

- Schnelbach, Leah. "C.S. Lewis: Moral Fantasist". *Tor.com* (November 29, 2013) <http://www.tor.com/blogs/2013/11/cs-lewis-on-this-day>

A personal remembrance by Damaris Walsh McGuire in *The Times-Union* newspaper of Albany, New York, is my fourth serendipitous article celebrating the November 22<sup>nd</sup> events honoring Lewis. The article was titled "C.S. Lewis, 'Shadowlands': an Albany woman remembers" and reports that her father was Chad Walsh, the first person to write a book on Lewis back in 1947. Walsh, took their family to England to meet Lewis, and Damaris (aka Demi) mentions in this article how her father, as a friend of Joy Gresham, had encouraged her to write Lewis and ask him the questions she had about his writings. Anyway, she describes her father as the official matchmaker between them – the yenta! It's an interesting fact to discover about the Lewis-Gresham relationship right in the middle of the memorial stone celebration.

#### **Four serendipitous coverages:**

##### **4. A personal remembrance**

- Biancolli, Amy. "C.S. Lewis, 'Shadowlands': an Albany woman remembers". *Albany Times Union* (New York) (November 22, 2013) <http://blog.timesunion.com/localarts/c-s-lewis-shadowlands-an-albany-woman-remembers/31041/>

#### **From Alaska to Kentucky We each try to share what Lewis means to us**

I close with two small personal examples: first, from Alaska and next, from Kentucky. I did not know that Dr. Bruce Edwards now lived in Alaska until just recently, but that did not deter him from doing his C.S. Lewis "thing" at the Bad Coffee Lecture Series at Fireside Books in Palmer, Alaska on Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup> as promoted on Facebook events by the bookstore. We all thank Bruce Edwards for his continued example for all of us in getting the word out about Lewis wherever we are, each of us in our own way.

There is one more small thing which I am both hesitant to mention in this presentation, but also glad that I did it. For it was my own response to Cal Thomas's column in the secular media in my hometown of Bowling Green, Kentucky. I decided to send a letter to the editorial page of our local newspaper, *The Daily News*, regarding the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lewis's death on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, sharing there, in the 300 words I was given, what C.S. Lewis means to me and inviting others to email me. It was not a lot compared to what I have since researched as having been done in the syndicated columns, festivals, memorial services, documentaries or biographies, but it was something personal that many read that day and remembered that author, that "Lewis-guy", who had written books meaningful to them or their children like *Mere Christianity* or the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Plus, possibly for them it was more important than the distant reports that were to come about him at Poets' Corner that most of them

## Lewis in the Dock (Part 2) · Richard James

would never read. For this letter was written by someone they could actually contact in their own community which actually did happen. For that I am glad that I sent it and post it below to be read as the close of my paper:

*Bowling Green Daily News*  
Wednesday, November 20, 2013  
Letters to the Editor

"Reader's life changed years ago by C.S. Lewis"

British professor C.S. Lewis died 50 years ago on Nov. 22, 1963, the same day on which President John F. Kennedy died, and yet, most important for me, Lewis was also a spiritual guide and Christian apologist.

An old proverb tells us that "some people come into our lives and quickly go, but others stay awhile and leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same." This happened to me in 1963. In the fall of my first year at the University of Virginia, I was facing some serious doubts about my faith, and a friend suggested that I read a book called "Mere Christianity" by C.S. Lewis. Who would have thought that this advice 50 years ago would have left such an indelible influence upon my life today?

Someone who knew Lewis described him as "the most thoroughly converted man I ever met." Yet, like all of us, he had feet of clay.

But in spite of his flaws, what also impressed his friends was that he was the same person at work, at home and among them as he was at church. Called an "apostle to the skeptics," Lewis took to heart the scripture found in 1 Peter 3:15: "... always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

I, for one, am so thankful that he did.

Yes, over these past 50 years, the footprints of C.S. Lewis have been left on my heart and my

life has never been the same. But ultimately, not because he has pointed to himself, but because he has pointed me to Jesus Christ. Email me at [rvjames@kih.net](mailto:rvjames@kih.net) for further information about the works and legacy of C.S. Lewis.

Richard James,  
Bowling Green

### Closing:

- Edwards, Bruce. "Celebrating C.S. Lewis: The Man Who Invented Narnia" – The Bad Coffee Lecture Series at Fireside Books in Palmer, Alaska (November 17, 2013)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1431736137039619/> and

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.532301520187208.1073741827.102184649865566&type=3>

- James, Richard. "Reader's life changed years ago by C.S. Lewis". *Bowling Green Daily News* (November 20, 2013)

[http://www.bgdailynews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/reader-s-life-changed-years-ago-by-c-s-lewis/article\\_65a1fd90-4ae7-56cb-be50-34f31a7d45ed.html](http://www.bgdailynews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/reader-s-life-changed-years-ago-by-c-s-lewis/article_65a1fd90-4ae7-56cb-be50-34f31a7d45ed.html)

# George MacDonald and J.R.R. Tolkien on Faërie and Fairy Stories

Paul E. Michelson  
Huntington University

## I. INTRODUCTION

J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973) is justly famous for his 1939 Andrew Lang Lecture on Fairy-stories at St. Andrews University in Scotland, which became a highly influential turning point for imaginative fiction when it was subsequently expanded and published in 1947 as an essay "On Fairy-Stories", and then revised once more and published in 1964.<sup>1</sup>

What is less known, indeed almost unknown, is that George MacDonald (1824-1905) wrote an essay in 1893 entitled "The Fantastic Imagination," dealing with many of the same issues.<sup>2</sup> The modest purpose of this paper is to outline MacDonald's 1893 ideas on imaginative literature and compare them with Tolkien's as expressed five decades later. In addition, the paper will also draw on an earlier 1867 MacDonald essay "The Imagination: Its Functions and Culture," which is primarily focused on attacking the "science v. imagination" dichotomy common at the time, but does discuss similar ideas, particularly the concept of Sub-Creation.<sup>3</sup> Also considered will be Tolkien's 1967 preface to a planned but unpublished edition of MacDonald's *The Golden Key*.<sup>4</sup>

It would have simplified things considerably if MacDonald and Tolkien had consistently used "Faërie"—both were aware of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*—as the description of the kind of imaginative stories they had in mind. What follows will use *Faërie* in this sense, except for direct

quotations.<sup>5</sup>

## II. MACDONALD AND TOLKIEN ON FAËRIE

We begin with MacDonald's "The Fantastic Imagination," an essay that he explicitly described as representing his "now more matured judgment" of the subject.<sup>6</sup> His views had solidified owing to an important 1889 event which revolutionized the "Battle of the Fairy Tale" controversy between realist and imaginative literature. This was the appearance of Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book*.<sup>7</sup> Lang's publisher, Longmans, as well as Lang himself (1844-1912; a sometime Oxford don) were skeptical that there was a market for such a book, but it was so wildly successful that they published a sequel, *The Red Fairy Book*, in 1890, and then ten additional color books between 1892 and 1910. Tolkien later observed "The number of collections of fairy-stories is now very great. In English none probably rival either the popularity, or the inclusiveness, or the general merits of the twelve books of twelve colours which we owe to Andrew Lang and his wife."<sup>8</sup> Lang's book had tipped the balance to respectability for imaginative literature and MacDonald realized it.<sup>9</sup>

MacDonald opens "The Fantastic Imagination"—whose dialogic format will be retained in what follows—by lamenting the fact that there is "in English no word corresponding to the German *Mährchen* (sic)" which "drives us to use the word *Fairy tale*, regardless of the fact that the tale may have



nothing to do with any sort of fairy."<sup>10</sup> Tolkien later emphatically put paid to the idea that Fairy-stories were mostly about beings of "diminutive size" (an idea which he felt had "long ago achieved tiresomeness"). Tolkien pointed out that none of the stories in Lang's Blue Fairy Book were "primarily about 'fairies', [and] few [of the stories] refer to them."<sup>11</sup>

The error, of course, said Tolkien, was that "fairy-stories are not...stories about fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is Faërie, the realm or state in which fairies have their being. Faërie contains many things beside elves and fays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted. Stories that are actually concerned primarily with 'fairies'...are relatively rare, and as a rule not very interesting. Most good 'fairy-stories' are about the adventures of men in the Perilous Realm or upon its shadowy marches."<sup>12</sup>

Returning to this thought as he perused MacDonald's work in 1967, Tolkien emphasized: "...the truth is that fairy did not originally mean a 'creature' at all, small or large. It meant enchantment or magic, and the enchanted world or country in which marvellous people lived, great and small, with strange powers of mind and will for good and evil....The Fairy Queen was not a queen shaped like a little fairy, but the Queen of Fairy, a great and dangerous person, however beautiful, Queen of the enchanted world and all its people. A fairy tale is a tale about that world..."<sup>13</sup>

To deal with this situation, MacDonald admits that he is prepared to resort to the "old use of the word Fairy, by Spenser...where need must."<sup>14</sup> And so was Tolkien.<sup>15</sup> As late as 1967, he was still troubled by terminology. As he worked on a preface to MacDonald's *The Golden Key*, he "found it necessary to deal with the term 'fairy'—always necessary nowadays whether talking to children or adults..."<sup>16</sup>

What is a fairytale or Faërie? "Were I asked," MacDonald responds, citing an early 19th century romantic fantasy tale, "I should reply, Read *Undine*: that is a fairytale..."<sup>17</sup> But define it? "I should as soon think of describing the abstract human face, or stating what must go to constitute a human being. A fairytale is just a fairytale, as a face is just a face..."<sup>18</sup>

Thus, while those "who would not attempt to define a man, might venture to say something as to what a man ought to be," and while MacDonald had himself done so earlier in connection with fairytales, his "now more matured judgment" would allow him here only to "say some things helpful to the reading, in right-minded fashion, of such fairytales as I would wish to write, or care to read." This is because, as MacDonald puts it in one of his *Unspoken Sermons*, "Analysis is well, as death is well; analysis is death, not life."<sup>19</sup>

In other words, to define is to destroy, a sentiment shared by Tolkien, who warned us not to analyse Faërie too closely: "Faërie is a perilous land, and in it are pitfalls for the unwary and dungeons for the overbold....In that realm a man may, perhaps, count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very richness and strangeness tie the tongue of a traveller who would report them. And while he is there it is dangerous for him to ask too many questions, lest the gates should be shut and the keys be lost."<sup>20</sup> Thus, in common with MacDonald, Tolkien believed that Faërie could not be defined so much as experienced: "Faërie cannot be caught in a net of words; for it is one of its qualities is to be indescribable, though not imperceptible. It has many ingredients, but analysis will not necessarily discover the secret of the whole."<sup>21</sup>

How does Faërie relate to the natural world? "The natural world has its laws, and no man must interfere with them in the way of presentment any more than in the way of use," MacDonald wrote, "but they themselves may suggest laws of other kinds, and man may, if he pleases, invent a little world of his own, with its own laws; for there is that in

him which delights in calling up new forms—which is the nearest, perhaps, he can come to creation. When such forms are new embodiments of old truths, we call them products of the Imagination; when they are mere inventions, however lovely, I should call them the work of the Fancy: in either case, Law has been diligently at work."<sup>22</sup>

In his 1867 essay, MacDonald had attributed this to imagination, that is to the "faculty in man which is likest to the prime operation of the power of God, and has therefore, been called the creative faculty, and its exercise creation. Poet means maker. We must not forget, however, that between creator and poet lies the one impassable gulf which distinguishes...all that is God's from all that is man's...The imagination of man is made in the image of the imagination of God...where a man would make a machine, or a picture, or a book, God makes the man that makes the book, or the picture, or the machine." When we "consider the so-called creative faculty in man, we shall find that in no primary sense is this faculty creative." Imagination is "to man what creation is to God."<sup>23</sup>

In 1893, MacDonald continued in the same vein: "His world once invented, the highest law that comes next into play is, that there shall be harmony between the laws by which the new world has begun to exist; and in the process of his creation, the inventor must hold by those laws. The moment he forgets one of them, he makes the story, by its own postulates, incredible. To be able to live a moment in an imagined world, we must see the laws of its existence obeyed. Those broken, we fall out of it...Law is the soil in which alone beauty will grow; beauty is the only stuff in which Truth can be clothed; and you may, if you will, call Imagination the tailor that cuts her garments to fit her, and Fancy his journeyman that puts the pieces of them together, or perhaps at most embroiders their button-holes. Obeying law, the maker works like his creator; not obeying law, he is such a fool as heaps a pile of stones and calls it a church."<sup>24</sup>

Finally, in connection with such "an

imagined world", MacDonald observes, "In the moral world it is different: there a man may clothe in new forms, and for this employ his imagination freely, but he must invent nothing. He may not, for any purpose, turn its laws upside down....it would be wicked to write a tale representing a man it called good as always doing bad things, or a man it called bad as always doing good things: the notion itself is absolutely lawless. In physical things a man may invent; in moral things he must obey—and take their laws with him into his invented world as well."<sup>25</sup>

Tolkien would not have questioned any of this since these are concepts that he made crystal clear and a commonplace today in imaginative literature: the ideas of sub-creation, of primary and secondary worlds, and the inner consistency of reality. He wrote "Anyone inheriting the fantastic device of human language can say the green sun...To make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft. Few attempt such difficult tasks. But when they are attempted and in any degree accomplished then we have a rare achievement of Art: indeed narrative art, story-making in its primary and most potent mode."<sup>26</sup> The goal is "The achievement of... 'the inner consistency of reality'" with Art as "the operative link between Imagination and the final result, Sub-creation...."<sup>27</sup>

Secondly, for Tolkien, "fairy-stories as a whole have three faces: the Mystical towards the Supernatural; the Magical towards Nature; and the Mirror of scorn and pity towards man. The essential Face of Faërie is the middle one, the Magical."<sup>28</sup> MacDonald was a primary source for the Mystical face and is directly cited for this as such by Tolkien, "achieving stories of power and beauty when he succeeded, as in *The Golden Key* (which he called a fairy-tale); and even when he partly failed, as in *Lilith* (which he called a romance)."<sup>29</sup>

Next MacDonald raises the problem of meaning. "You write as if a fairytale were a

thing of importance: must it have a meaning?" the reader asks. MacDonald replies: "It cannot help having some meaning; if it have (sic) proportion and harmony it has vitality, and vitality is truth. The beauty may be plainer in it than the truth, but without the truth the beauty could not be, and the fairytale would give no delight. Everyone, however, who feels the story, will read its meaning after his own nature and development: one man will read one meaning in it, another will read another."<sup>30</sup>

But "Suppose my child asks me what the fairytale means?" MacDonald replies "If you do not know what it means, what is easier than to say so? If you do see a meaning in it, there it is for you to give him. A genuine work of art must mean many things; the truer its art, the more things it will mean. If my drawing, on the other hand, is so far from being a work of art that it needs THIS IS A HORSE<sup>31</sup> written under it, what can it matter that neither you nor your child should know what it means? It is there not so much to convey a meaning as to wake a meaning. If it does not even wake an interest, throw it aside. A meaning may be there, but it is not for you. If, again, you do not know a horse when you see it, the name written under it will not serve you much. At all events, the business of the painter is not to teach zoology. But indeed your children are not likely to trouble you about the meaning. They find what they are capable of finding, and more would be too much. For my part, I do not write for children, but for the childlike, whether of five, or fifty, or seventy-five."<sup>32</sup>

Tolkien strongly agrees with MacDonald on meaning as well. He concurs that Fairy-stories were not necessarily written for children and that meaning will differ with the reader. With MacDonald<sup>33</sup> he supports Lang's statement that "He who would enter into the Kingdom of Fairy should have the heart of a little child," though Tolkien qualifies this by noting that "They may have children's hearts...but they have also heads."<sup>34</sup> In the end, "Children are meant to grow up, and not to become Peter Pans. Not to lose innocence and wonder, but to

proceed on the appointed journey: that journey upon which it is certainly not better to travel hopefully than to arrive, though we must travel hopefully if we are to arrive...If fairy-story as a kind is worth reading at all it is worthy to be written for and read by adults. They will, of course, put more in and get more out..."<sup>35</sup>

MacDonald moves next to a hotly controverted issue: allegory. He is emphatic: "A fairytale is not an allegory. There may be allegory in it, but it is not an allegory. He must be an artist indeed who can, in any mode, produce a strict allegory that is not a weariness to the spirit."<sup>36</sup>

Tolkien is in full accord with MacDonald's views. As Tom Shippey notes, "the essence of an allegory" is making equations, something distinctly uncongenial to Tolkien's mind.<sup>37</sup> Two examples will suffice. In the foreword to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien wrote: "As for any inner meaning or 'message', it has in the intention of the author none. It is neither allegorical nor topical...I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory'; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author."<sup>38</sup>

Secondly, in a 1957 letter, Tolkien wrote: "There is no 'symbolism' or conscious allegory in my story. Allegory...is wholly foreign to my way of thinking." However, "That there is no allegory does not, of course, say there is no applicability. There always is...the tale is not really about Power and Dominion: that only sets the wheels going; it is about Death and the desire for deathlessness. Which is hardly more than to say it is a tale written by a man."<sup>39</sup>

If not allegory, then what? MacDonald writes: "A fairytale, like a butterfly or a bee, helps itself on all sides, sips at every wholesome flower, and spoils not one. The

true fairytale is, to my mind, very like the sonata. We all know that a sonata means something; and where there is the faculty of talking with suitable vagueness, and choosing metaphor sufficiently loose, mind may approach mind, in the interpretation of a sonata, with the result of a more or less contenting consciousness of sympathy. But if two or three men sat down to write each what the sonata meant to him, what approximation to definite idea would be the result? Little enough—and that little more than needful. We should find it had roused related, if not identical, feelings, but probably not one common thought."<sup>40</sup>

"But," a reader might protest, "words are not music; words at least are meant and fitted to carry a precise meaning!" MacDonald's reply is that "Words are live things that may be variously employed to various ends....A fairytale, a sonata, a gathering storm, a limitless night, seizes you and sweeps you away: do you begin at once to wrestle with it and ask whence its power over you, whither it is carrying you? The law of each is in the mind of its composer; that law makes one man feel this way, another man feel that way. To one the sonata is a world of odour and beauty, to another of soothing only and sweetness. To one, the cloudy rendezvous is a wild dance, with a terror at its heart; to another, a majestic march of heavenly hosts, with Truth in their centre pointing their course, but as yet restraining her voice....The best thing you can do for your fellow, next to rousing his conscience, is—not to give him things to think about, but to wake things up that are in him; or say, to make him think things for himself. Nature is mood-engendering, thought-provoking: such ought the sonata, such ought the fairytale to be."<sup>41</sup>

Does this mean, MacDonald is then asked, that anyone can, "imagine in your work what he pleases, what you never meant!" MacDonald replies, "Not what he pleases, but what he can. If he be not a true man, he will draw evil out of the best; we need not mind how he treats any work of art! If he be a true man, he will imagine true things...One difference between God's work

and man's is, that, while God's work cannot mean more than he meant, man's must mean more than he meant."<sup>42</sup>

The questioner returns, "But surely you would explain your idea to one who asked you?" And MacDonald responds: "I say again, if I cannot draw a horse, I will not write THIS IS A HORSE under what I foolishly meant for one. Any key to a work of imagination would be nearly, if not quite, as absurd. The tale is there, not to hide, but to show: if it show nothing at your window, do not open your door to it; leave it out in the cold. To ask me to explain, is to say, "Roses! Boil them, or we won't have them!" My tales may not be roses, but I will not boil them. So long as I think my dog can bark, I will not sit up to bark for him."<sup>43</sup>

MacDonald's aim is to bring the reader to life. "If there be music in my reader, I would gladly wake it. Let fairytale of mine go for a firefly that now flashes, now is dark, but may flash again. Caught in a hand which does not love its kind, it will turn to an insignificant, ugly thing, that can neither flash nor fly. The best way with music, I imagine, is not to bring the forces of our intellect to bear upon it, but to be still and let it work on that part of us for whose sake it exists. We spoil countless precious things by intellectual greed. He who will be a man, and will not be a child, must—he cannot help himself—become a little man, that is, a dwarf....If any strain of my 'broken music' make a child's eyes flash, or his mother's grow for a moment dim, my labour will not have been in vain."<sup>44</sup>

For his part, Tolkien famously summarized his position on the value and function of fairy-stories thusly: "If adults are to read fairy-stories as a natural branch of literature—neither playing at being children, nor pretending to be choosing for children, nor being boys who would not grow up—what are the values and functions of this kind?...First of all: if written with art, the prime value of fairy-stories will simply be that value which, as literature, they share with other literary forms. But fairy-stories offer also, in a peculiar degree or mode, these things: Fantasy, Recovery, Escape,

Consolation, all things of which children have, as a rule, less need of than older people."<sup>45</sup>

Tolkien's conclusion? "...in God's kingdom the presence of the greatest does not depress the small. Redeemed man is still man. Story, fantasy, still go on, and should go on. The Evangelium has not abrogated legends; it has hallowed them, especially the 'happy ending' [the Eucatastrophe].<sup>46</sup> The Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die, but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed. So great is the bounty with which he has been treated that he may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in Fantasy he may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. All tales may come true, and yet, at the last, redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike as the forms that we give them as Man, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen that we know."<sup>47</sup>

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Did MacDonald's essays influence Tolkien's ideas on Fairy-stories? We know that MacDonald's work impacted Tolkien in a general way. According to Humphrey Carpenter, the Curdie books were among Tolkien's favorites as a child.<sup>48</sup> In a 1938 letter, Tolkien wrote that *The Hobbit* was "derived from (previously digested) epic, mythology, and fairy-story—not, however, Victorian in authorship, as a rule to which George MacDonald is the chief exception."<sup>49</sup> This is reinforced by a manuscript version of his essay "On Fairy-stories," that contains a statement by Tolkien about Andrew Lang and George MacDonald: "To them in different ways I owe the books which most affected the background of my imaginations since childhood."<sup>50</sup>

Lastly, Tolkien recognized late in life that his mind was "stored with a 'leaf-mould' of memories" to which his ideas owed a great deal.<sup>51</sup> "A careful reading of Tolkien's essay 'On Fairy-Stories' alongside MacDonald's essays on imagination," Kreglinger writes, "show how deeply Tolkien's thinking about fairy stories was shaped by MacDonald,

especially in regard to the relationships among faith, imagination, and fantastic writing."<sup>52</sup> While we need to be careful not to assume too much about this influence, it seems safe to affirm that MacDonald was a primary ingredient in Tolkien's "leaf-mould".<sup>53</sup>

Did MacDonald and Tolkien agree completely on Fairy-stories? No. For example, in 1964 when he was working on the MacDonald preface, he told a correspondent that he was "not as warm an admirer of George MacDonald as C. S. Lewis was; but I do think well of this story of his." Tolkien felt MacDonald a little too prone to allegory and moralizing, while Tolkien himself was "not naturally attracted (in fact much the reverse) by allegory, mystical or moral."<sup>54</sup> Later he wrote Clyde Kilby that he was more or less glad in the end that the MacDonald project had collapsed because his re-reading of MacDonald had reminded him of why MacDonald "critically filled me with distaste."<sup>55</sup>

How well did George MacDonald and J. R. R. Tolkien succeed in their "indirect" method of defining Faërie? W. H. Auden provides a succinct summary in an "Afterword" to a 1967 re-edition of MacDonald's *The Golden Key*<sup>56</sup>: "Every normal human being is interested in two kinds of worlds: the Primary, everyday, world which he knows through his senses, and a Secondary world or worlds which he not only can create in his imagination, but also cannot stop himself creating. A person incapable of imagining another world than that given to him by his senses would be sub-human, and a person who identifies his imaginary world with the world of sensory fact has become insane....The Secondary worlds of myth and fairy tale, however different from the Primary world, presuppose its reality. As Professor Tolkien has said: 'If men could not distinguish between men and frogs, stories about frog kings would not have arisen. A Secondary world may be full of extraordinary beings...and extraordinary objects...but like the Primary world, it must, if it is to carry conviction, seem to be a world

governed by laws, not by pure chance....In recent times, under the influence of modern psychology, critics have acquired a habit of 'symbol hunting'.....to hunt for symbols in a fairy tale is absolutely fatal."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For details, see my paper "The Development of J. R. R. Tolkien's Ideas on Fairy-stories," *Inklings Forever*, Vol. 8 (2012), pp. 115-127; the comprehensive edition of J. R. R. Tolkien, *Tolkien On Fairy-stories*, Expanded edition with commentary and notes edited by Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson (London: HarperCollins, 2008); and Robert J. Reilly, "Tolkien and the Fairy Story," in Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo, eds., *Tolkien and the Critics. Essays on J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 128-150.

<sup>2</sup>Published in George MacDonald, *A Dish of Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination, and on Shakespere (sic)* (London: Sampson Low, 1893). I have used the Project Gutenberg online edition, [www.gutenberg.org/files/9393/9393-h/9393-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/9393/9393-h/9393-h.htm); downloaded 24 February 2014. This piece has been given wider circulation by being included in George MacDonald, *The Complete Fairy Tales* edited with an introduction and notes by U. C. Knoepfelmacher (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), pp. 5-10. The essay was written as a preface to an American edition of MacDonald's tales. Also helpful on MacDonald and faëry are Frank Bergmann, "The Roots of Tolkien's Tree: The Influence of George MacDonald and German Romanticism Upon Tolkien's Essay 'On Fairy-Stories,'" *Mosaic*, Vol. 10 (1977), Nr. 2, pp. 5-15; and Gisela Kreglinger, "MacDonald, George (1824-1905)," in Michael D. C. Drout, ed., *J. R. R. Tolkien Encyclopedia. Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, paperback edition (New York/London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 399-400.

<sup>3</sup>Also republished in MacDonald's *Dish of Orts*, 1893, cited hereafter as MacDonald, "Imagination: Functions and Culture," 1867.

<sup>4</sup>See J. R. R. Tolkien, "Tolkien's draft introduction to *The Golden Key*," J. R. R. Tolkien, Smith of Wooton Major. Extended Edition edited by Verlyn Flieger (London: HarperCollins, 2005), pp. 71-75, cited below as Tolkien, "Golden Key," 1967. Flieger provides detail on this episode.

<sup>5</sup>For further discussion, see Tom Shippey, *The Road to Middle-earth*, revised and expanded edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), pp. 56 ff.

<sup>6</sup>MacDonald, "The Fantastic Imagination," 1893, in MacDonald, *Complete Tales*, 1999, p. 5. Hereafter cited as MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893.

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<sup>7</sup>Glenn S. Burne, "Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book: Changing the Course of History*," Perry Nodelman, ed., *Touchstones: Reflections on the Best in Children's Literature. Volume Two: Fairy Tales, Fables, Myths, Legends, and Poetry* (West Lafayette IN: Children's Literature Association, 1987), pp. 140-150.

<sup>8</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup>On MacDonald's contribution to fairy tales, see Gillian Avery, "George MacDonald and the Victorian Fairy Tale," in William Raeper, ed., *The Gold Thread. Essays on George MacDonald* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 127-139 and Michael Mendelson, "The Fairy Tales of George MacDonald and the Evolution of a Genre," in Roderick McGillis, ed., *For the Childlike. George MacDonald's Fantasies for Children* (Metuchen NJ: The Children's Literature Association and the Scarecrow Press, 1992), pp. 17-30.

<sup>10</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 31.

<sup>12</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, pp. 31-32.

<sup>13</sup>Tolkien, "Golden Key," 1967, pp. 73-74.

<sup>14</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 31. Though Spenser and Tolkien shared the heritage of Medieval literature, Tolkien, of course, rejected Spenser's allegorical approach. See Julaire Andelin, "Spenser, Edmund," in Drout, *Tolkien Encyclopedia*, 2013, pp. 624-625.

<sup>16</sup>Tolkien, "Golden Key," 1967, p. 69.

<sup>17</sup>On Udine, see Bergmann, "Roots of Tolkien's Tree," 1977, pp. 8 ff.

<sup>18</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup>George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons, Third Series* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1885), [www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/9057/pg9057.html](http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/9057/pg9057.html), accessed 19 May 2014. The full quotation is "...human science cannot discover God; for human science is but the backward undoing of the tapestry-web of God's science, works with its back to him, and is always leaving him—his intent, that is, his perfected work—behind it, always going farther and farther away from the point where his work culminates in revelation. Doubtless it thus makes some small intellectual approach to him, but at best it can come only to his back; science will never find the face of God; while those who would reach his heart, those who, like Dante, are returning thither where they are, will find also the spring-head of his science. Analysis is well, as death is well; analysis is death, not life. It discovers a little of the way God walks to his ends,

but in so doing it forgets and leaves the end itself behind. I do not say the man of science does so, but the very process of his work is such a leaving of God's ends behind. It is a following back of his footsteps, too often without appreciation of the result for which the feet took those steps."

<sup>20</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 27. One can find echoes of this in the work of C. S. Lewis, such as his essay "Meditation in a Tool Shed," C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock. Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 212-212, on the difference (and incompatibility) of "looking along v. looking at", and the distinction made by Samuel Alexander between enjoyment and contemplation that was critical to helping Lewis solve his search for joy. C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955), pp. 217-221.

<sup>21</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, pp. 32-33.

<sup>22</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, pp. 5-6.

<sup>23</sup>MacDonald, "The Imagination: Its Functions and Culture," 1867.

<sup>24</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 6. Compare "When we understand the Word of God, then we understand the works of God; when we know the nature of an artist, we know his pictures; when we have known and talked with the poet, we understand his poetry far better. To the man of God, all nature will be but changeable reflections of the face of God." MacDonald, "Wordsworth's Poetry," *Dish of Orts*, 1893.

<sup>25</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, pp. 6-7. On MacDonald and imaginary worlds, see Stephen Prickett, "The Two Worlds of George MacDonald," in McGillis, *For the Childlike*, 1992, pp. 17-30; and Richard Reis, *George MacDonald* (New York: Twayne, 1972), pp. 126 ff.

<sup>26</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 61.

<sup>27</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 59. See Verlyn Flieger, *Green Suns and Faërie. Essays on J. R. R. Tolkien* (Kent OH: Kent State University Press, 2012).

<sup>28</sup>"Manuscript B," in Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 226; and Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 44.

<sup>29</sup>Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories," in Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 44. Kreglinger, "MacDonald," in Drout, *Tolkien Encyclopedia*, 2013, p. 400, emphasizes that for MacDonald, "works of the imagination should always embody old truths, which are anchored for MacDonald in his Christian worldview." Compare C. S. Lewis: "What it actually did to me was to convert, even to

baptise...my imagination.... What I learned to love in Phantastes was goodness." C. S. Lewis, "Preface," to *George MacDonald. An Anthology* (New York: Dolphin Books, 1962), originally published in 1947, p. 26-27.

<sup>30</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup>Compare René Magritte's surrealist paintings "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" (1928-1929) and "Ceci n'est pas une pomme" (1964).

<sup>32</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup>In his 1867 essay, MacDonald writes: "we dare to claim for the true, childlike, humble imagination, such an inward oneness with the laws of the universe that it possesses in itself an insight into the very nature of things."

MacDonald, "The Imagination: Its Functions and Culture," 1867.

<sup>34</sup>"Manuscript A," in Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, pp. 185-188.

<sup>35</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 58. For Tolkien's whole argument on children and fairy-stories, see pp. 49-59. He blames Lang for perpetuating, in part, the idea that there is an association between children and fairy-stories. He maintains the same position in Tolkien, "Golden Key," 1967, p. 73: "fairy" is often "misused" to identify a story as "specially suitable for children."

<sup>36</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, pp. 7-8. Time and space does not permit consideration of how many critics have run amok on this topic. For a sample, see Robert Lee Wolff, *The Golden Key. A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), whose psychoanalytical approach can only be described as bizarre, and Cynthia Marshall, "Allegory, Orthodoxy, Ambivalence: MacDonald's 'The Day Boy and the Night Girl,'" *Children's Literature*, Vol. 16 (1988), pp. 57-75, who tries to resolve a number of issues simply by re-defining "allegory."

<sup>37</sup>Tom Shippey, *The Road to Middle-earth*, revised and expanded edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), pp. 43-44.

<sup>38</sup>J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 50th Anniversary Edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), p. xxiv.

<sup>39</sup>Tolkien to Herbert Shiro, 17 November 1957, in Tolkien, *Letters*, 2000, p. 262. For other comments on allegory, see Tolkien, *Letters*, 2000, pp. 41, 121, 145, 174, 220, and 246. On the other hand, Shippey, *The Road to Middle-earth*, 2003, p. 43, points out that it is more than a little ironical and amusing that one of Tolkien's best stories, "Leaf by Niggle", 1945, is an allegory.

<sup>40</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 8.



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<sup>41</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, pp. 8-9.

<sup>42</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, pp. 9-10

<sup>44</sup>MacDonald, "Fantastic Imagination," 1893, p. 10.

It certainly did this for C. S. Lewis, who wrote:

"MacDonald's work "gets under our skin, hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or even our passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are reopened, and in general shocks us more fully awake than we are for most of our lives." C. S. Lewis, "Preface," to Lewis, ed., George Macdonald. An Anthology, 1962, p. 18.

<sup>45</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, pp. 58-59. He concludes somewhat wryly that most of these "are nowadays very commonly considered to bad for anybody."

<sup>46</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, pp. 74-75, notes that "Death is the theme that most inspired George MacDonald," and leads up to the Eucatastrophe, but not quite. Cp. Bergmann, "Roots of Tolkien's Tree," 1977, pp. 11 ff., who writes that Tolkien "goes beyond MacDonald not only in terminology but also in the uses of the imagination."

<sup>47</sup>Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, pp. 78-79.

<sup>48</sup>Humphrey Carpenter, *Tolkien. A biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 22.

<sup>49</sup>Tolkien to the Editor of *The Observer*, February 1938, in J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, A selection edited by Humphrey Carpenter with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien, paperback edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), p. 31.

<sup>50</sup>Manuscript B of "On Fairy-stories," in Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 207. This statement was omitted from the published text.

<sup>51</sup>Tolkien to Graham Tayar, 4-5 June, 1971, in Tolkien, *Letters*, 2000, p. 409.

<sup>52</sup>Kreglinger, "MacDonald," in Drout, *Tolkien Encyclopedia*, 2013, p. 399.

<sup>53</sup>Bergmann, "Roots of Tolkien's Tree," 1977, makes a somewhat stronger claim, while Flieger and Anderson are content to observe that the 1867 and the 1893 MacDonald essays were "forerunners and influences on Tolkien's essay." Flieger and Anderson in Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, 2008, p. 98. Kreglinger, "MacDonald," in Drout, *Tolkien Encyclopedia*, 2013, p. 400, concludes: "MacDonald was certainly an important inspiration for Tolkien...and it is therefore justified to call MacDonald the true founder of modern fantasy."

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<sup>54</sup>Tolkien to Michael di Capua, Pantheon Books, 7 September 1964, in: Tolkien, *Letters*, 2000, p. 351.

Lewis, on the other hand, praised MacDonald in 1944, before the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, for writing "fantasy that hovers between the allegorical and the mythopoeic. And this, in my opinion, he does better than any man." C. S. Lewis, "Preface," to Lewis, ed., George Macdonald. *An Anthology*, 1962, p. 18. Lewis agreed, however, with Tolkien's low assessment of MacDonald from a literary point of view:

"certainly Macdonald (sic) has no place in its first rank—perhaps not even in its second.... Necessity made Macdonald a novelist, but few of his novels are good and none is very good." (pp. 18, 21)

<sup>55</sup>Tolkien's Note to Clyde Kilby," in Tolkien, Smith of Wootton Major, 2005, p. 69.

<sup>56</sup>Published as George MacDonald, *The Golden Key*, with pictures by Maurice Sendak, Afterword by W. H. Auden (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1967, Sunburst Book edition, 1984), pp. 81-86. The publisher that Tolkien had been writing for was Pantheon Books. Auden's afterword is dated December 1966. It is likely that the appearance of the Auden edition contributed to the abandonment of the Pantheon project.

<sup>57</sup>Also interesting is W. H. Auden, "George MacDonald," in W. H. Auden, *Forewords and Afterwords* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), pp. 268-273.

# Lisa Tetzner's Translation of C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

**Betsy Susan Morgan**

C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, published in 1950 by Geoffrey Bles in the United Kingdom and by Macmillan in the United States (Ford 253) has been translated 129 times (UNESCO). In 1957 Lisa Tetzner first published her translation into the German, *Der König von Narnia (Das Märchen 95)*.

Translation is not an exact science. It is more of an unsung art with constant considerations to be made. Maria Nikolajeva in her article "Translation and Crosscultural Reception" delineates that the translator must deal with the "source language (the language from which the translation is made) versus the target language (the language into which the text is translated), as well as the source reader/audience/culture and the target reader/audience/culture" (407). There are two opposite points of view in general translation theory. The first, the "equivalence theory" propagated by Göte Klingberg, maintains that a translation "should be 'faithful' to the original," while the second, the "dialogic theory," maintains that "the translator should take into consideration the target audience, whereupon changes may not only be legitimate, but imperative" (Nikolajeva 407). Adherents of the equivalence theory value being faithful to the text, while adherents of the dialogic theory want the reader of the translation to have a similar experience to that of the reader of the original. They would advocate, for example,

that foreign references should be "domesticated" (407, 409). As Maria Nikolajeva notes, however, "The strategies of a practitioner are likely to combine the two approaches" (407).

The Tetzner translation of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, while adhering relatively closely to the original Lewis text, does make changes in all sorts of ways. These changes cover all aspects of written communication. Tetzner makes changes in words, changes in sentence structure, and changes in paragraphing; she adds things, and she leaves things out. While the basic plot remains intact, the various changes can affect the tone and spirit of the novel and, perhaps, its underlying meaning.

## **Words**

Obviously, the most basic element of a translation is the word. Since English is a Germanic language (Hartmann 439), the translation between English and German is easier than it is between English and non-Germanic languages. Nevertheless, there are some things that just don't translate well. Colloquial expressions are the most obvious example. The first night at the professor's the boys come into the girls' room to talk over their situation, and Peter says, "We've fallen on our feet and no mistake" (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe 4*; hereafter *LWW*). In German he says, (Lewis, *Der König 8* ; hereafter *König*). "I believe, we have had pig."

(All translations from the German back into English are mine; page numbers refer to the original German language text.) According to *The New Cassell's German Dictionary* this is a colloquial expression for to "be in luck" or to "fall on one's feet" (419). Although this is not a literal translation, it is an accurate translation. Anthea Bell, a prolific translator of children's books from German and French has said, "It is the spirit rather than just the letter that the translator pursues" (232). In this case, a colloquial expression in English is translated into a colloquial expression in German, providing the meaning while maintaining the tone and the mood. It adheres nicely to the spirit of the original.

Other difficulties for a translator are cultural references. When Aslan and his followers go to the witch's castle to free the creatures turned by the witch into stone, he first restores the creatures in the courtyard. Then he instructs his followers, "Now for the inside of this house!" said Aslan. "Look alive, everyone. Up stairs and down stairs and in my lady's chamber! Leave no corner unsearched. You never know where some poor prisoner may be concealed." (*LWW* 171). The allusion "Up stairs and down stairs and in my lady's chamber" comes from an English nursery rhyme.

Goosey, goosey gander,  
Whither shall I wander?  
Upstairs and downstairs  
And in my lady's chamber.  
There I met an old man  
Who would not say his prayers,  
I took him by the left leg  
And threw him down the stairs.  
(Opie 26)

It is not surprising that German literature has no equivalent nursery rhyme. Tetzner has Aslan say, "Look around everywhere for the living – upstairs, downstairs, also in the room of the witch" (*König* 142-143). The translation conveys the meaning, but the playful tone is lost.

Another example of the difficulties of translating even simple words is revealed in

the scene in which Lucy first meets Mr. Tumnus. Here there is a peculiar problem caused by the odd pronouns Lewis chose to use. In the English version, when Lucy first meets the faun, Lewis waffles on the pronoun. When the faun is being described in chapter one, Lewis refers to the faun as "he." He says "a very strange person stepped out" and in his description, Lewis uses "he" throughout (*LWW* 9-10). However in chapter two, when the faun and Lucy begin to interact, Lewis describes the faun as an "it." "...the Faun was so busy picking up *its* parcels that at first *it* did not reply. When *it* had finished *it* made her a little bow....and then *it* stopped as if *it* had been going to say something *it* had not intended (*LWW* 11-12) (italics mine). However, when we shift from the narrator's perspective to Lucy's, the pronoun becomes "him." "'My name's Lucy,' said she, not quite understanding him" (*LWW* 11). When he says his name is Tumnus, and she calls him Mr. Tumnus, that seems to end the confusion and the faun becomes permanently a "he" or "him." It is significant that the confusion referring to the faun as an "it" or a "he" occurs at the same time that the faun is also confused and trying to place Lucy's identity. He asks her if she is a "Daughter of Eve," if she is "what they call a girl," and asks "You are in fact Human?" (*LWW* 11). Lucy becomes a human to him at about the same time that he becomes Mr. Tumnus and "he" to her. In German it is not possible for Tetzner to duplicate this confusion. The word for faun is "Der Faun" with a masculine article, so whether "it" is male or not, the pronouns are always the masculine "er" and "ihn," the German for he and him.

This confusion was actually an issue raised by Lewis's publisher about a later Narnia tale. Lewis wrote a letter on March 20, 1953 explaining the confusion. "My view about *He* and *It* was that the semi-humanity cd. (sic) be kept before the imagination by an unobtrusive mixture of the two" (*Collected Letters III* 307). In English, Lewis has the option of being ambiguous about a creature or an animal's "humanity." In German, however, that option does not exist. There is

a built in male word for "it" and a problem that is usually only an issue moving from German to English, becomes an issue moving from English to German.

There are other situations, where the choice of words on the part of the translator is not caused by the linguistic difficulties between the two languages, but rather is a stylistic choice on the part of the translator. In the opening paragraph, Lewis says about the children's reaction to the professor, "...they liked him almost at once" (*LWW* 3). In Tetzner's translation, she leaves off the "almost." Later that first evening, when the children are discussing the professor, Susan says, "I think he's an old dear" (*LWW* 4). In the German, the "I think" is left off. Lewis tends to express things tentatively. The children don't like the professor at once, but almost at once. Susan thinks he's an old dear, but she could be wrong. Tetzner removes the words that create ambiguity.

Another example of changes in word choice is caused by the fact that Lewis frequently chooses fairly plain or repetitive language, almost like the repetition in oral literature or in epic poetry. Tetzner seems unwilling to stick to Lewis's repetitive word choice. Lewis for the most part uses very simple words, especially when relaying speech. His preferred word is "said." In the first chapter, Lewis uses the word "said" eighteen times. Tetzner, on the other hand, uses the comparable German word, "sagte" six times, and one of those times, which we shall discuss shortly, it is used with a qualifier, which changes its simple meaning. Less than 1/3 of the time does Tetzner use the simple verbs that Lewis uses. Tetzner's choice to change Lewis's simple verbs causes more than a simple change in style or tone. It has other ramifications.

In chapter one, the first night the children are in the Professor's house, Edmund complains about the way Susan is talking. When she asks what he means, Lewis records "'Trying to talk like Mother,' *said* Edmund" (italics mine) (*LWW* 4). Tetzner, on the other hand, says Edmund "growled" (*König* 8), which has the connotation of being angry or

being resentful. When Lucy is startled by a noise, Edmund says, "It's only a bird, silly" (*LWW* 5). In German we have, "'Stupid Dolt,' said Edmund. "It is just a bird." (*König* 8). Tetzner has Edmund provide a much stronger, nastier reply than Lewis does. Then the next morning, when the children get up with hopes of exploring outside, it is raining. "'Of course, it *would* be raining!' said Edmund" (*LWW* 5). Tetzner makes the mild complaint stronger. She adds an adverb, so it becomes "Edmund said angrily" (*König* 9).

Edmund is from the beginning, a rather crabby, little kid, but Lewis goes to considerable pains not to paint him as the black sheep in the family. Paul Karkainen describes Edmund's behavior as a "slide" into evil; he becomes "more and more confused, wrongheaded, bitter, and unhappy" (Karkainen 22). Devin Brown in his book, *Inside Narnia*, says that Lewis is superb at realistically presenting characters' going astray. "His characters are not completely good one moment and then wickedly bad the next...the descent into transgression occurs step by step" (61).

Tetzner seems to want to portray Edmund in the initial chapters as worse than Lewis does. Lewis is interested in portraying the choices that lead Edmund astray. Through a series of incidents, stresses, bad influences, bad attitudes, but especially poor choices, Edmund becomes a traitor, but he is not a traitor in chapter one. He becomes a traitor in chapter nine, when he goes to the witch and tells her that his brother and sister are just up the river at the Beavers and that they are to meet Aslan at the Stone Table. C.S. Lewis spends considerable time tracing Edmund's choices and how formative they are. By the time Edmund reaches the Beavers', he has become so self-engrossed that he imagines the others are ignoring him (*LWW* 88). Even so, Lewis says "You mustn't think that even now Edmund was quite so bad that he actually wanted his brother and sisters to be turned into stone" (89) and spends a long paragraph explaining the circuitous paths his self-deception requires.

It is probably safe to say that Lewis spent this kind of time detailing Edmund's choices, because for him character is important. Edmund is arguably the most important character in the novel, because of the nature of the myth-making Lewis is creating.

There has been much controversy about *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as allegory. Many readers have considered the Narnia tales to be allegories. Lewis maintained in a letter to a schoolgirl in 1979 that this novel is a "supposal," (*Collected Letters III 1113*). Whether the novel is an allegory or not, one thing is apparent, if one considers it an allegory. In the Christian myth Jesus Christ dies for the sins of the whole world. All are sinners in need of redemption. In Narnia Aslan dies for the treachery of one person, Edmund. It should be Edmund who is killed on the Stone Table. Consequently, Edmund's choices lie at the heart of the redemption story. By not knowing in chapter one which child will prove to be the most flawed, we can watch Edmund's fall and rise as a kind of Everyman. It's not in his personality, his genes, or his destiny; it's in his choices.

It seems as if Lewis doesn't reveal to us first thing where Edmund is headed, because his primary interest is character development; Tetzner with more negative word choices clearly indicates where Edmund is headed, because she is more interested in plot; non-ambiguous characters make the plot more clear. Some minor word changes in her translation undercut the arc that Lewis creates of Edmund's slide into treachery and his rise back to compassion and acceptance of redemption.

### Sentences / Clauses

The second building block of communication is sentences. On the first page of the novel we have Tetzner omitting a sentence found in the original. Lewis starts by introducing us to the four children, and then in the second sentence he says, "This story is about something that happened to them when they were sent away from

London...." (*LWW 3*). Tetzner leaves out "This story is about something that happened to them." It is not a particularly graceful phrase, but Lewis frequently uses these authorial interjections. Tetzner prefers a more formal style, whereas Lewis prefers a style that makes you feel as if you were with him, and he is telling you the story personally. His graceless phrases are the phrases of common speech. Tetzner tends to edit out the repetitions and informality.

On the other hand, Tetzner is not averse to inserting sentences that don't exist in the English. When the children decide to explore the house, because of rain outside, Lewis says, "The first few doors they tried led only into spare bedrooms, as everyone had expected that they would; but soon they came to a very long room full of pictures and there they found a suit of armor" (*LWW 6*). Lewis goes on to describe other rooms, but the German translator stops to add to the sentence. "since they were well-behaved children, they closed the doors, without going in" (*König 9*). We can't really know why the translator interjected this sentence. Perhaps she wanted to give a reason why the children did not go into the rooms and look around. Or perhaps she wanted to insert a little aside on how young readers should behave, when guests in a stranger's home. Logically, however, it doesn't fit. If well-behaved children do not enter spare bedrooms, then there is no chance for them to enter the wardrobes in spare rooms either. A well-behaved child would probably not step into a wardrobe and rub her face against the fur coats. If well-behaved children do not enter wardrobes in spare rooms, we do not have a story.

Wardrobes are somewhat like refrigerators. They have handles on the outside, but no handles on the inside; Lewis makes five statements about the dangers inherent in this aspect of wardrobes. Lucy is careful to not do anything so foolish as to shut herself in a wardrobe.

Edmund, on the other hand, is not careful and he does do foolish things. When he follows Lucy into the wardrobe, he does

not think ahead as to how he is going to get out of the wardrobe, which prefigures how he does not think about his actions in his interactions with the White Witch. What Edmund is thinking about, instead of how not to get shut in a wardrobe, is that "he wanted to go on teasing [Lucy] about her imaginary country" (*LWW* 27). His desire to heckle clouds his judgment, just as his desire in Narnia to get back at Peter clouds his judgment.

Lucy and Edmund discover each other in Narnia after Lucy has been with Mr. Tumnus and Edmund with the White Witch. It should be a problem for both of them to return to the spare room, since Edmund has closed the wardrobe door. Lewis, however, seems to have forgotten. "Then suddenly they felt coats around them instead of branches and next moment they were both standing outside the wardrobe in the empty room" (*LWW* 43). Lewis doesn't actually say that they came out through the door.

The German translator, however, has not forgotten, and she inserts the following sentence. "Edmund had indeed foolishly closed the wardrobe door, but the others had looked into the wardrobe for the two and had not shut the door tightly" (*König* 39). In this case, Tetzner has inserted a sentence in order to remedy an oversight on the part of C. S. Lewis. Lewis's primary concern seems to be to reveal his characters by their actions. Tetzner just wants them to get out of the wardrobe.

Tetzner's added sentence solves a dilemma created by Lewis's error; unfortunately, it does not logically work in the fantasy. Lewis demonstrates throughout the story, and actually throughout the whole series, that no matter how much time one spends in Narnia, no time at all will elapse back in England. Peter and Susan do not believe Lucy, when she claims to have been gone a long time, because there was no time lapse in English time. However, this is what the Professor thinks is most believable about her story. As he explains to them, "...I don't think many girls of her age would invent that idea for themselves" (*LWW* 49-50). This

means, of course, that when Lucy and Edmund come back from Narnia, enough time could not have passed in England for Peter and Susan to have checked the wardrobe and left the door unlatched. In English time, Lucy and Edmund should be coming back a moment after they left.

Lewis is at times somewhat careless with his fantasy world. It's a magic wardrobe; when one needs to get in to Narnia, the back disappears and you get in. When you need to get out, the door will be unlatched. He seems to make assumptions that others do not. For example, one of his child readers named Phyllida wrote to him in 1953 and pointed out that the squirrel family and friends had been turned to stone by the White Witch while celebrating Christmas. Aslan only revives the stone statues in the witch's castle. The squirrel family is never mentioned. Lewis wrote back to her and said that she was quite right. "I thought people would take it for granted that Aslan would put it all right. But I see now I should have said so" (*Letters III* 361). In this case, Lewis seems to think that the magic in the fantasy world takes care of certain plot details, but readers like Lisa Tetzner and Phyllida want the loose ends tied up, not just in this world, but also in Narnia.

Just as Tetzner sometimes uses more forceful and emphatic words than Lewis does, she also sometimes prefers more forceful sentences. One of the most striking is that when the children first realize that the wardrobe has no back, Tetzner has the girls swearing. When Lucy first finds her way into the wardrobe, she is surprised to see the light from the lamp-post, "not a few inches away where the back of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off" (*LWW* 8). Tetzner removes this idea from a clause attached to the sentence about the light and gives it a sentence of its own. "The back wall of the wardrobe should be only a few centimeters away from her and was God knows where!" (*König* 11). Likewise when the four children hide in the wardrobe to get away from Mrs. Macready, they begin to notice that they are not really in a wardrobe. When Susan first realizes this, Lewis narrates,

"O-o-oh!" said Susan suddenly...."I'm sitting against a tree" (*LWW* 54). In Tetzner's translation we have "'O God!' screamed Susan suddenly....'I am leaning against a tree'" (*König* 48). In this last passage, we have the characteristic dropping of the verb "said," for a stronger one. We also have her using the word for God, when Lewis does not. Opinions, of course, vary on the interpretation of the Mosaic command, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (*King James Version*, Exodus 20:7), but the most orthodox is undoubtedly that if you are not praying to God, or talking about Him, you are using the name frivolously or "in vain." It is difficult to picture the young innocent Lucy, who seems to embody spiritual wisdom, or the young woman, who as queen will be known as Susan the Gentle (*LWW* 184), idly swearing when startled. Tetzner's swearing females come across more modern, tougher perhaps than the boys. Her Lucy and Susan sound more like refugees from the bombed streets of London they have just left. They seem discordant with the pastoral landscape they are in and the one they are about to enter.

### Conclusion

I tend to stand on the side of those who advocate for the equivalence theory of translation. As an English speaking American, I have thousands of children's books available for me to read. However, since less than 1% of books published for children in English are translations (Nikolajeva 405), I don't have very many opportunities to read about other countries, other peoples, other cultures. I would like the translator to provide a path to the author. I do not want translators to provide a path to themselves, their ideas, their agendas. I want them to stay as much as possible out of the way. I think C. S. Lewis would agree with me. He said about another famous children's book,

Consider Mr (sic) Badger in *The Wind in the Willows*—that extraordinary amalgam of high rank, coarse manners, gruffness, shyness,

and goodness. The child who has once met Mr Badger has ever afterwards, in its bones, a knowledge of humanity and of English social history which it could not get in any other way ("On Three Ways").

That is not the philosophy of one who thinks foreign references should be "domesticated."

Lisa Tetzner was a talented translator with an admirable fluency with English and with German. However, when she changes the underlying meaning of a story by using negative words, which create a scapegoat, instead of a small boy sliding into the dark side, and when she changes the personality of characters, by putting swear words into the mouths of girls the author portrays as relatively innocent, I don't believe she has created a path. She has created an obstacle course. I am glad there was no one in between me and my reading of C. S. Lewis.

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# What Lewis NEVER Wrote: Quotes Misattributed to the Oxford Professor Don

William O'Flaherty  
EssentialCSLewis.com

"Nothing can deceive unless it bears a plausible resemblance to reality."

- C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism*

## I. INTRODUCTION

As you may notice from this title, I intentionally made an error and corrected it. C.S. Lewis never held the title of "professor" when at Oxford. However, he did when he worked at Cambridge. When many of his books were published in the 1940's it stated that Lewis was "Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford."<sup>1</sup>

Of course, if one were to rank erroneous information on a scale of 1-10 ("1" being minor and "10" being major), then this mistake would rank on the lower end of that gauge. Yet, when it comes to truth, in an absolute sense, something is either correct or incorrect. Therefore, stating Lewis was an Oxford Professor is false.

In the same vein, when considering whether or not a quotation is by Lewis; it either is, or is not. It doesn't matter if you like the statement or not, or how close it may be to something he actually said. He either wrote it or he did not.<sup>2</sup>

Before considering some quotations incorrectly credited to Lewis, I want to briefly ponder a questionable quote that is obviously not by him to draw a parallel. The following statement is generally accepted and some believe it is in the Bible:

Money is the root of all evil.

Of course, something very close to this is in the Bible. However, a few important words are missing from that statement. Examining the KJV of 1 Timothy 6:10 we see the following: "*The love of money is the root of all evil*" (emphasis added).

Unlike the quotations examined in a moment, this misquotation from the Bible merely lacks some key words. Quotations falsely credited to Lewis are typically not similar in that way, that is, we cannot simply add a few words to make it into a statement by him.

What does this have to do with Lewis? I'm setting the stage for an understanding of why quotes I'll be examining are likely misattributed to him. In some examples the statement is close to what Lewis actually wrote.

In other cases it may not be anything related to what Lewis wrote, but it is a

statement that the people reading it believe is true. Referring back to the quotation falsely attributed to the Bible; people either are not noticing some words are missing, or actually believe the statement and having the Bible as the source adds weight to their conviction of its truth.

Thus, when someone shares the above incorrect quotation and states the Bible says it is true, those less familiar with Scripture will easily accept it as truth because a recognize authority is cited as the source.

When considering whether or not Lewis actually wrote something it is important to realize that this author is not directly addressing whether or not the statement is true. It is beyond the purpose of this paper to debate the accuracy of the quotation. Rather, the focus is merely to provide proof that Lewis is not the source of the material.

In what follows I provide a quotation that is not found in any of C.S. Lewis's published works. The actual source or likely source is presented for the questionable statement. In some cases I explore why Lewis would not have made such a statement. Finally, what Lewis actually wrote (or the closest thing to it) is presented.

## II. YOU DON'T HAVE A SOUL

The first quotation to consider is **"You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body."** In Imperfect Reflections, a blog by a person merely identifying as being by Mackenzie, the author points out that a character in Walter Miller's 1959 book *Canticle for Leibowitz* says "You don't have a soul, Doctor. You are a soul. You have a body, temporarily." Yet, there is actually an earlier source for this quote falsely attributed to

Lewis. Hannah Peckham, in a 2012 post on Mere Orthodoxy reveals her discovery that an 1892 monthly journal called *The British Friend* had a piece stating George MacDonald made a statement very close to the popular quotation we see today.<sup>3</sup>

"Never tell a child," said George Macdonald, "you *have* a soul. Teach him, you *are* a soul; you have a body."

While Lewis was a fan of MacDonald it is unclear if he was familiar with this article. However, we do know that in a book Lewis edited, *George MacDonald: An Anthology*, this quote is not present.

There are those who wish Lewis had made the statement because it appears to confirm a belief that the material world is not all there is. However, some are concerned that this quotation is supportive of gnostic notions which Lewis would clearly reject. Either way, the purpose of this paper is not to debate the meaning of the quotation or the truth of it, but to merely show that Lewis never wrote it.

What has Lewis said on the topic? Below is a passage from the fifth chapter of *The Four Loves*. There is also a lengthier section (not provided here) in chapter eleven of *Perelandra* that also touches on some elements expressed in the quotation in question.

Man has held three views of his body. First there is that of those ascetic Pagans who called it the prison or the "tomb" of the soul, and of Christians like Fisher to whom it was a "sack of dung," food for worms, filthy, shameful, a source of nothing but temptation to bad men and humiliation to good ones. Then there are the Neo-Pagans (they seldom know Greek), the nudists

and the sufferers from Dark Gods, to whom the body is glorious. But thirdly we have the view which St. Francis expressed by calling his body "Brother Ass." All three may be—I am not sure—defensible; but give me St. Francis for my money.

### III. NEVER TOO OLD

If you happen to be facing fewer years ahead of you than are behind you (like myself), than you likely wish the following statement is correct: **"You are never too old to set another goal or dream a new dream."** While many hope such a proclamation is true, falsely attributing it to Lewis doesn't make it any more accurate, but some find it more believable if a person as famous as Lewis stated it.

Growing up in the 1970's I recall hearing something similar to this quotation in relation to the fact that Kentucky Fried Chicken is a franchise that didn't start until Colonel Sanders was in his 60's. A notion like this can be great motivation to those wanting to find success later in life.

When exploring the actual source for this quotation I found it on a website by Les Brown, a motivational speaker that appears to credit him as the creator of the quote.<sup>4</sup> There is also a YouTube video that was posted 8/29/2012 by Les Brown where he shares the quote, but he doesn't claim he is the source.<sup>5</sup>

While Lewis believed in encouraging others his published writings do not contain any statement similar to this. His general style of writing is very different than this cliché-like expression. Also, there is very little reason Lewis would have said it. Although, those vaguely familiar with the fact that Lewis was in in 50's when his successful

Narnia series came out could think that proves he might have written something similar. However, prior to Narnia, Lewis was famous because of *The Screwtape Letters* that came out as a book in 1942 and it was chiefly this that led to him being on the cover of *Time* in 1947, well before Narnia was published!

So, what has Lewis said that might be related? As you will see it was not anything that would be considered all that motivational:

Progress means getting nearer to a desired goal and therefore means not being there already.<sup>6</sup>

Once a dream has become a fact I suppose it loses something. This isn't affectation: we long & long for a thing and when it comes it turns out to be just a pleasant incident, very much like others.<sup>7</sup>

Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality.<sup>8</sup>

### IV. BAD EGGS

A somewhat more recent quotation going around the Internet is actually vaguely related to what Lewis really wrote. This quote, **"No clever arrangement of bad eggs ever made a good omelet,"** is likely a witty paraphrase of a passage found in *The Great Divorce*.

After not locating the quotation in my electronic versions of Lewis's texts I sought out the help of the Lewis community in a secret Facebook group I started called Virtual C.S. Lewis Society.<sup>9</sup> About two hours after I posted my question Max McLean (founder and artistic director of Fellowship for Performing Arts) replied with a solution to my mystery.<sup>10</sup>

He pointed out that in chapter seven of *The Great Divorce* we have the following statement by one of the characters Lewis created:

What would you say if you went to a hotel where the eggs were all bad and when you complained to the Boss, instead of apologising and changing his dairyman, he just told you that if you tried you'd get to like bad eggs in time?

Lewis is known for his Irish dry sense of humor and you can find many funny statements by him in his writings. However, we know he did not write what appears to be a paraphrase of something similar. At this time it is unknown who created the version falsely attributed to him.

What follows are actual statements Lewis wrote that are quite humorous.

A good toe-nail is not an unsuccessful attempt at a brain: and if it were conscious it would delight in being simply a good toe-nail.<sup>11</sup>

Is an elephant more important than a man, or a man's leg than his brain?<sup>12</sup>

A man is still fairly sober as long as he knows he's drunk.<sup>13</sup>

Those who do not think about their own sins make up for it by thinking incessantly about the sins of others.<sup>14</sup>

You understand sleep when you are awake, not while you are sleeping.<sup>15</sup>

A cold, self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But, of course, it is better to be neither.<sup>16</sup>

## V. THINKING LESS OF YOURSELF

Another quotation that suffers from being a decent paraphrase of what Lewis actually wrote is this: "**Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.**" However, because he never wrote those words it is a disservice to falsely attribute it to him. Whenever I point this out to others I make it clear that I am not disagreeing with the rewording of what Lewis actually said. It is just that Lewis never wrote it that way.

As best as I can determine the earliest place this quotation came from is the 2002 edition of *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. On Day 19 in the chapter called "Cultivating Community" he makes this very statement without giving any credit to another source.

As already noted this statement is close to what Lewis wrote. Yet, despite his ability to create very quotable sayings, when he addressed that topic in *Mere Christianity* he didn't say anything this concise. In the eighth chapter of Book 3 ("Christian Behaviour"), entitled "The Great Sin," he deals with the subject of pride. There he says:

It is better to forget about yourself altogether.

And near the end of the chapter he states that a really humble person:

...will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all. If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realise that one is proud.

Elsewhere Lewis wrote the following that is related this topic:

A man is never so proud as when striking an attitude of humility!<sup>17</sup>

As long as one knows one is proud one is safe from the worst form of pride.<sup>18</sup>

No man who says I'm as good as you believes it. He would not say it if he did.<sup>19</sup>

## VI. MORE CLEVER DEVIL

The final quotation I'll explore suffers a similar shortcoming to the statement falsely attributed to the Bible that I mentioned at the beginning. It's **"Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil."**

This nearly sounds like Lewis, doesn't it? A valueless education might make you clever, but without morals you are closer to being like the devil. However, that is not really what this quotation says. The statement I just made Lewis would agree with.

The key concern is what's said after the first three words, "Education without values." When I was having difficulty noticing this quote as problematic I emailed Lewis scholar Dr. Bruce Edwards and this was his reply<sup>20</sup>:

But I don't even think it expresses truth. Neither Lewis nor I believe that there is such a thing as "education without values"

In other words, it's the opposite of his argument in *Abolition of Man*. Why would Lewis say an "education without values" is "useful"?

Once pointed out it seems very clear that Lewis would never make a mistake like this and advocate value-free education when stating it will only make you "a more clever devil." So, when you read something, whether it be attributed to Lewis or someone else, it is important to read it carefully. Unfortunately I don't yet know the source of this quotation.

What did Lewis actually say related to this? The following are two important samples of Lewis's thought on the subject. The first is from chapter three of *The Abolition of Man* and the second is from the first chapter.

A dogmatic belief in objective value is necessary to the very idea of a rule which is not tyranny or an obedience which is not slavery.

The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts. The right defence 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.

## VII. CONCLUSION

There are many other quotations falsely attributed to Lewis that I hope to address in the future. For now just be cautious about believing something is by him unless you see a reference to one of his books or articles.

As already noted there can be a variety of reasons why someone has incorrectly credited Lewis as the source of a quotation. A moment ago it was because they are not reading them carefully. Related to this is not being familiar enough with Lewis to know what he "sounds" like.

## What Lewis NEVER Wrote · William O'Flaherty

Earlier I noted that people often take their already held beliefs and either look for support or think they have support for them because of a quote that is alleged to be from a trusted source. Having somebody famous confirming notions they already hold is “icing on the cake.”

Finally, I want to suggest that this phenomenon, while very sad, also shows hope; that is, it confirms in some ways that we live in a culture looking for answers. But we are also in a very distracted culture that frequently doesn't pay careful attention to sources. This makes our job more difficult at times, but, if you stop and think about it, it also keeps us “employed.”

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>At least each of his book that were published after his talks on the BBC in the 1940's listed Lewis this way. My 1946 copy of *Christian Behaviour* also states on the inside of the back dust jacket that “since 1925 (he) has been Fellow and Tutor of Magdalen College, Oxford, where he lectures on English literature.

<sup>2</sup>I either own or have access to electronic (searchable) copies of nearly all his books, including his essays and letters. This is how I am able to either determine, or confirm Lewis never wrote something.

Yet, there is actually an earlier source for this quote falsely attributed to Lewis. Hannah Peckham, in a 2012 post on Mere Orthodoxy reveals her discovery that an 1892 monthly journal called *The British Friend* had a piece stating George MacDonald made a statement very close to the popular quotation we see today.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Peckham found the quotation in an article entitled “BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN IN A YOKE OF BONDAGE.” (p. 157) by “W. H. F. A.”

<sup>4</sup>The page I first found ([http://www.lesbrown.com/english/motivational\\_quotes.html](http://www.lesbrown.com/english/motivational_quotes.html)) appears to be an older version of his website, as I also found another version of that page ([http://lesbrown.com/?page\\_id=34](http://lesbrown.com/?page_id=34)) that doesn't state the sources of any of the quotes.

<sup>5</sup>The YouTube video by Les Brown is found here: <http://youtu.be/eAGqBhQXWTE>

<sup>6</sup>Letter to Mr. Lyell from December 6, 1944. *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume 2.*

<sup>7</sup>Letter to Arthur Greeves from November 2, 1918. *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume 1.*

<sup>8</sup>From letter XXIX in *The Screwtape Letters*.

<sup>9</sup>Facebook allows you to create a “secret” group that only other members of the group can invite a person to join. I used this setting originally to limit the size of the group, but to also avoid having strangers ask to join the group. If you are reading this then you are likely one who seriously studies Lewis, so you can send me an email at [777email@gmail.com](mailto:777email@gmail.com) to ask to be added.

<sup>10</sup>This was done on May 10, 2014. His reply was “Probably a redaction from this bit in *The Great Divorce*. ‘What would you say if you went to a hotel where the eggs were all bad and when you complained to the Boss, instead of apologising and changing his dairyman, he just told you that if you tried you'd get to like bad eggs in time?’ Always gets a chuckle. See [www.CSLewisOnStage.com](http://www.CSLewisOnStage.com).”

<sup>11</sup>Letter to Hugh Kilmer from April 5, 1961 in *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume 3.*

<sup>12</sup>“Christian Apologetics” in *God in the Dock*.

<sup>13</sup>“Answers to Questions on Christianity” in *God in the Dock*.

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<sup>14</sup>"Miserable Offenders" in *God in the Dock*.

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<sup>15</sup>In Book 3, Chapter 4 of *Mere Christianity* ("Morality and Psychoanalysis")

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<sup>16</sup>In Book 3, Chapter 5 of *Mere Christianity* ("Sexual Morality")

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<sup>18</sup>Letter to Genia Goetz from May 15, 1952 in *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume 3*.

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<sup>19</sup>"Screwtape Proposes a Toast" (found in most editions of *The Screwtape Letters*).

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## **C.S. Lewis' Warnings on Education**

**Zachary A. Rhone**  
**Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

Upon hearing a boy say he might enjoy going back to school, C. S. Lewis remarked, "I was feeling, in a confused way, how much good the happy schoolboys of our own day miss in escaping the miseries their elders underwent," but Lewis also was not entirely disenchanted with the education he received, claiming the good results of his education were the unintended ones ("My First School" 23, 26). In the mid-1940s, Lewis admitted discontent with some of the shifts in British education. On the American side, the Great Depression caused rapid economic changes to educational budgets. Books and supply expenditures were reduced or eliminated; 10-25% of administrative and faculty salaries were cut; and the length of the school year was even reduced by a month (Judd 876). Youth who left school to find a job were unable to obtain employment and, furthermore, turned away from further education (877). The world entered a state of turmoil from political to personal levels, education included. As Charles H. Judd notes, "With the change in conditions . . . it is no longer possible for most young people to complete their preparation for mature life by securing at an early age profitable employment" (881-82); it may be difficult to believe that Judd was writing in 1942 when higher education has risen to such high demand since the 1960s and 1970s. In the mid-1940s, Lewis recognizes rising problems in the British educational system, warning

society of immanent ramifications in educational focus, socio-political demands, and social equality that, even today, apply to British and American educational systems.

Between the early twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, educational goals changed dramatically from student-learning to student-centered models: what the student should learn versus what the student likes to learn. Education, like politics and the family, observed tremendous shifts in the mid-twentieth century: from tradition to evolution, from local nuclearity to political universality. In 1942 America, Judd notes the "extremists" who sought for "complete abandonment of the conventional divisions of the curriculum" (882). New educational structures would remove courses in math, spelling, geography, and history and replace them with "such topics as arouse the interest of pupils," conclusively fusing disciplines normally diversified in separate subjects (882). Across the pond, Lewis decried the Norwood Report in both "The Parthenon and the Optative" and "Is English Doomed?" The 1941 Norwood Report resulted in the 1944 Education Act, essentially creating a division among children: academically-inclined students went to grammar schools; scientifically-inclined went to technical schools; and remaining students attended secondary schools. The division caused public concern, yielding a review of education in the 1963 Newsom Report (Gillard).



Norwood, et al. argued for a break away from traditional education to a student-centered approach: "The curriculum then must do justice to the needs of the pupil, physical, spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, practical, social. This is the problem which those who construct curricula have to face" (Norwood, et al. 60). They further called for a curriculum which integrates "the personality of the child . . . by the realisation of his purpose as a human being" (61); in terms of English courses, all examinations should be abolished because they could produce "much harm in its influence" (95). Lewis responds to the overall mentality in "The Parthenon and the Optative." The Parthenon is a kind of education which deals with the "hard, dry things like grammar, and dates, and prosody" while the Optative "begins in 'Appreciation' and ends in gush" (109). Lewis is challenging Norwood et. al's resistance to English examinations because they believe those examinations either test information outside of English or attempt to "test a pupil's appreciation of them by means of an external examination" (93). Lewis rebuts that, while "appreciation is a delicate thing . . . the questions were never supposed to test appreciation; the idea was to find out whether the boy had read his books. It was the reading, not the being examined, which was expected to do him good" ("The Parthenon" 110). Furthermore, removing examinations from the English curriculum—and humanities like it—would cause a chain reaction over time because, believes Lewis, "A subject in which there are no external examinations will lead to no State scholarships; one in which no school teachers are required will lead to no livelihoods" ("Is English Doomed?" 28), a trend that is quite evident in higher education today with little funding for the humanities, increasing job loss in literary studies, and decreasing English departments in America, nationwide.

Then, and today, a clear privileging takes place at the secondary and post-secondary levels. The subjects that currently few aspire to and many have difficulty with are discarded for reasons of impracticality,

economic profit, and, according to these mid-twentieth-century reports, the harmful emotions that examinations place on students. In the words of Screwtape, the basic principles of education are that "dunces and idlers must not be made to feel inferior to intelligent and industrious pupils" because these individuals simply have different interests, or, in Norwood terminology, the curriculum has failed to integrate them ("Screwtape Proposes a Toast" 293). It is not that Lewis disapproves of certain student types; rather, he recognizes a survival of the fittest in education. He simply observes that some students "will sit at the back of the room chewing caramels and . . . occasionally ragging and occasionally getting punished" because that is the education for which they work. To his benefit, he will learn that his place is not in academia: "The distinction between him and the great brains will have been clear to him ever since, in the playground, he punched the heads containing those great brains. . . . But what you want to do is to take away from Tommy that whole free, private life as part of the everlasting opposition which is his whole desire" ("Democratic Education" 35). Lewis believes that, if generic Tommy experiences an education which encourages him rather than educates him, then he will resent the inferiorities he may not have known he even had. "Democracy demands that little men should not take big ones too seriously," says Lewis, "it dies when it is full of little men who think they are big themselves" ("Democratic Education" 36).

That democracy alludes to a second warning Lewis offers against the changes in school: those which would inevitably establish problematic relationships among education, politics, and socio-cultural demands. He foresaw the rising entanglement of education with social and political demands. In "The Death of Words," he notes the current synonymy of *moral standards, civilized, modern, democratic, and enlightened* (107). Accordingly, all five terms might be applied to the developing educational reforms of the 1940s and beyond

(many, if not all, are, in fact, used). Lewis admitted to being a democrat not because of equal representation but because of checked power: "Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows" ("Equality" 17). Aristotelian democratic education does not mean "the education which democrats like, but the education which will preserve democracy" ("Democratic Education" 32). A democratic education, then, should check and balance the power and attention given to certain interests and people: "On the one hand the interests of those boys who will never reach a University must not be sacrificed by a curriculum based on academic requirements. On the other, the liberty of the University must not be destroyed by allowing the requirements of schoolboys to dictate its forms of study" ("Is English Doomed?" 27).

European education, notes Lewis, was based on the ancient Greeks, who greatly revered tradition unlike the "modern industrial civilization" ("Modern Man and his Categories of Thought" 62). *Provincialism*, or narrow-mindedness, is the term Lewis applies to the mentality which disregards tradition because it is out of date. Old texts, particularly the Bible, are discarded simply because they are old: "The tactics of the enemy in this matter are simple and can be found in any military text book. Before attacking a regiment you try, if you can, to cut it off from the regiments on each side" ("Modern Man" 62). Lewis finds recommending Christianity, for example, increasingly difficult because audiences always ask "if it will be comforting, or 'inspiring', or socially useful" ("Modern Man" 65). Modern individuals cannot seem to view something objectively; it must be practical—an historic sign of the peasant rather than the philosopher.<sup>1</sup> Such are the changes given to education in the mid-twentieth century and beyond—socio-cultural demands which see education for its practicality rather than personal betterment—for *moral standards*, *enlightenment*, and like words are no longer important in the academic realm.

Instead, practical education begins to

see pupils for their utility. As Screwtape says, "the differences between pupils—for they are obviously and nakedly individual differences—must be disguised" ("Screwtape Proposes" 293). Education shifts away from what may be too challenging for one student and, perhaps, even away from what may be too easy, disregarding the significance of knowledge in itself. As a result, asserts the excited demon Screwtape, "At schools, the children who are too stupid or lazy to learn languages and mathematics and elementary science can be set to doing the things that children used to do in their spare time" ("Screwtape Proposes" 293). Little did Lewis know that the 1963 Newsom report would encourage studies beyond the traditional forms: e.g., handicraft, rural studies, and needlework (Newsom, et al. 132-35). This democratic education attempts to appease desires, "evil passions," and envies, according to Lewis ("Democratic Education" 34). Yet, "Envy is insatiable," and equality is being applied where "equality is fatal"; it "is purely a social conception" (34). Lewis reminds his readers of the latent content unachievable in this utility-oriented, socially- and politically-constructed education; virtue, truth, nor aesthetics are democratic. A truly democratic education, on the other hand, is one which preserves democracy—which is "ruthlessly aristocratic, shamelessly 'high-brow'". In drawing up its curriculum it should always have chiefly in view the interests of the boy who wants to know and who can know" (34).

The problem of a democratic education which seeks to represent all people rather than educate people took little time from the 1941 Norwood Report to touch higher education in the 1963 Robbins Report, which called for not only co-ordination between schools and higher education institutions (269) but also a near-doubled enrollment at the higher education level from 1962 to 1974 from 216,000 to 390,000 students; and an additional increase to 560,000 students by 1981 (67-69). They asked that money be set aside to establish new institutions to defer attraction to Oxford and Cambridge (79-80). In the US, the Higher

Education Act of 1965 attempted to increase access to higher education for all people. It saw the birth of the Pell Grant, Educational Opportunity Funding, grants for teacher education, and the beloved federal and private student loans. Screwtape, timely enough in 1959, prophesies, "At universities, examinations must be framed so that nearly all the students get good marks. Entrance examinations must be framed so that all, or nearly all, citizens can go to universities, whether they have any power (or wish) to profit by higher education or not" (293). Political and socio-cultural demands drive the educational system to forfeit the elite element of higher education; students whose performance is sub-par may reach the university simply because the demand is to increase numbers. Lewis' cry for a "ruthlessly aristocratic, shamelessly 'high-brow'" education which preserves democracy is entirely ignored at both child and young adult academic levels. It may be worth mentioning that federal grant programs such as the GEAR UP program, enacted in the 1998 revision of the Higher Education Act of 1965, can be found simply by going to the homepage of the NCLB program. GEAR UP, an acronym for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, "is a federal program aimed at equalizing access to higher education for low-income students" which promotes information to students and parents about higher-ed institutions, individualized academic and social support for students, parental involvement in education, (that oh-so-specific!) educational excellence, school reform, and student participation in rigorous courses (Don't worry, *rigorous* is defined ten years later in another grant program; we'll get there!) ("National Evaluation of GEAR UP" 1). Ironically, though the executive summary of the first two years of GEAR UP provides explanations for use of funding, student environmental statistics, and educational reform objectives, it surprisingly contains no statistical data about how many GEAR UP children attended or even completed a higher education program.

Nonetheless, one of the driving forces for these demands is equality which, as Lewis observes, is a significant remedy for a broken machine; the final warning, however, is that when equality is valued not as a means but as an end, the medicine becomes a dangerously poisonous drug for the student and culture, alike. Lewis believed that equality, unlike wisdom and happiness, is not something innately good ("Equality" 17). Certain kinds of equality are, in Lewis' words, "necessary remedies for the Fall," but when equality is treated as an ideal rather than a medicine, "we begin to breed that stunted and envious sort of mind which hates all superiority. . . . It will kill us all if it grows unchecked" (18). Politically, for example, Lewis praises his nation for having a ceremonial monarchy while maintaining a democratic government, for "there, right in the midst of our lives, is that which satisfies the craving for inequality, and acts as a permanent reminder that medicine is not food" (20). Not admitting the obviousness of natural inequalities will inevitably either remove all required subjects or broaden the curriculum so much so that every child can pass without a problem; she can be "praised and petted for something – handicrafts or gymnastics, moral leadership or deportment, citizenship or the care of guinea-pigs, 'hobbies' or musical appreciation. . . . Then no boy, and no boy's parents need feel inferior" (33). Of course, the natural consequences of an education which facilitates "dunces" will be not only the "hatred of superiority" but also a "nation of dunces" (33).

This warning against equality-based education permeates Lewis' literature. When Lewis published *The Screwtape Letters* in 1941, the Norwood Report was only being released, as well. Lewis' short essays on education to follow over the next few years wrestled with the concept, but he did not make a large publication of his view until the follow-up to *The Screwtape Letters* in 1959: "Screwtape Proposes a Toast." Screwtape begins his discussion of the word *democracy*, particularly interested in encouraging his fellow demons to confuse human minds as to

the meaning of the word: “they should never be allowed to give this word a clear and definable meaning” (290). In two short paragraphs, he essentializes the first two warnings, followed by the core of the argument: “you can use the word *Democracy* to sanction in his thought the most degrading (and also the least enjoyable) of all human feelings. . . . The feeling I mean is of course that which prompts a man to say *I’m as good as you*” (290). The phrase is Screwtape’s way of masking the word *equality*, and the feeling is clearly a feeling of envy which “has been known to the humans for thousands of years.... The delightful novelty of the present situation is that you can sanction it—make it respectable and even laudable—by the incantatory use of the word *democratic*” (291). The clause, *I’m as good as you*, becomes the theme of the toast—as the key to the syntactic games and educational advice to come. Screwtape envisions the best way to ruin humanity. Intelligent, gifted children “who are fit to proceed to a higher class may be artificially kept back, because the others would get a *trauma*—Beelzebub, what a useful word!—by being *left behind*” (294, italics mine). One may recall the American No Child *Left Behind* Act which restrained the progress of some students to maintain an arbitrary national average. The NCLB has roots in 1965, alongside Higher Education reform, with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. I need not expound on the goal of the NCLB, “to ensure that all children have a fair, *equal*, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (italics mine) which includes “closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers” (*No Child Left Behind* 1.1001). Lewis, I believe, expresses the aim most effectively: “The bright pupil thus remains democratically fettered to his own

age-group throughout his school career, and a boy who would be capable of tackling Aeschylus or Dante sits listening to his coeval’s attempts to spell out A CAT SAT ON THE MAT” (“Screwtape Proposes” 294). As a result, says Screwtape, demons will no longer need to ruin humanity because humanity will pave their own roads to Hell.

Through the guise of Screwtape, Lewis perceives a necessary step in order to implement *I’m as good as you* into education, beginning with the economic liquidation of the Middle Class via taxation and rising costs of private education (294). As a part of Obama’s 2009 revisions to NCLB—yes, Obama has used the Act he slanders to his benefit—the Academic Competitiveness Grant and the National SMART (Science and Math Access to Retain Talent) Program demand a student have participated in “rigorous” courses—a term you may recall from the 1998 GEAR UP program. Even ten years later, respondents at higher-ed institutions had difficulty understanding what was meant by the term *rigorous* in order to award funds to students (*Academic Competitiveness and SMART Grand Programs* 41). To top it off, these grants that supposedly function on competitiveness boasted 282,300 first-time, first-year students would have been eligible for funding had the program existed in 2003, double of those who would have qualified in the 1995-96 academic year. That, apparently, is the spirit of competition: double the recipients. Additionally, this calculation relies solely on college preparation-based curriculums, meaning the program does not rely on student performance so much as school participation in the program. In fact, they exclude from calculations student populations who did not attend a participating school. I might add, according to these grants, competition and intelligence only occur in the maths and sciences, for these grant programs do not exist outside of them.

Government, as we can see, effectively steers education to its aims. Consequently, all education becomes state education,

controlled by the democratic ideal of equality. This new democracy, what Screwtape contextualizes as the *diabolic sense*, will sustain a “morally flaccid” nation with undisciplined youth, arrogance built upon ignorance, and emotional weakness due to “lifelong pampering. And that is what Hell wishes every democratic people to be” (“Screwtape Proposes” 295). Through such measures, true democracy will be crushed in the face of diabolic democracy and its *I’m as good as you* equality. Such education cannot teach traditional virtues, values, or ethics—none of these are part of an equality-based system. Lewis is clear in positing that where absolute equality could exist, obedience does not—which begs the question if such equality may be achieved if it resists the obedience necessary to create it: “The man who cannot conceive a joyful and loyal obedience on the one hand, nor an unembarrassed and noble acceptance of that obedience on the other, the man who has never even wanted to kneel or to bow, is a prosaic barbarian” (“Equality” 18). So much for being civilized—or, if one prefers different verbiage, *moral, modern, democratic, or enlightened*.

“Where men are forbidden to honour a king,” writes Lewis, “they honour millionaires, athletes, or film-stars instead: even famous prostitutes or gangsters. For spiritual nature, like bodily nature, will be served; deny it food and it will gobble poison” (20). *I’m as good as you* ignores the virtues of a good leader for conspicuous entertainment: *The Apprentice, The Voice, Scarface, Lady Gaga, Charlie Sheen*, as a few examples. The relationship of this worship to education may seem unclear, but the praise of these shows, characters, and appearances resist the uplifting of those similar shows, characters, and appearances which display human maturity—the heroes of an age. Clearly, popular examples of astute minds and virtuous characters are difficult to find in order to compare to the previous examples. In 1963, Newsom, et al. argued that English and humanities are not taught appropriately because they are taught as ends in themselves rather than as integrative into other

disciplines (152). The problem now, however, is that disciplines such as these, after suffering integration into other disciplines, have nearly disappeared and been declared unconventional. In an age of utility, barbarians do not need literacy; in an age of literacy, barbarians are still needed for their utility. Perhaps, had Lewis’ voice been heard and understood, some of the catastrophes in teaching, testing, and cultivation may have prevented the current state of education, both in England and the US.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1818, Mary Shelley's narrator in *Frankenstein*, for instance, remarks, "The untaught peasant beheld the elements around him, and was acquainted with their practical uses. The most learned philosopher knew little more. He had partially unveiled the face of Nature, but her immortal lineaments were still a wonder and a mystery. He might dissect, anatomise, and give names; but, not to speak of a final cause, causes in their secondary and tertiary grades were utterly unknown to him" (41).

## Through the Lens of *The Four Loves*: The Idea of Love in *The Screwtape Letters*

Paulette Sauders  
Grace College

It is my contention that when C.S. Lewis wrote his non-fiction book *The Four Loves* and published it in 1960, he had not been thinking about love in all of its manifestations for just a short time before it was written. Instead, all of the fictional works he wrote over the years, beginning in at least 1938, have some focus on love and reflect his definitions and descriptions of the various kinds of love and their perversions that he systematically describes so well in *The Four Loves*. In fact, Corbin Scott Carnell wrote, “To awaken a desire for love and goodness—this was Lewis’ purpose in almost everything he wrote. . .” (161). He does this in his fiction through his various characters and their actions.

This is most clear in his plotted novels like *Till We Have Faces*. But he also includes characters and actions that reflect *The Four Loves* in such fantasy novels as *The Great Divorce* and *The Screwtape Letters*. Evan Gibson calls these two novels: stories “in which the ideas overshadow the form” (102). So far as purpose is concerned, Gibson wrote that *The Great Divorce* presents “the reason for hell” and *The Screwtape Letters* presents “the strategy of hell” (110).

However, in the Preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis states that his purpose in writing the book is “not to speculate about diabolical life but to throw light from a new angle on the life of men”

(xii). He does this by having Screwtape, a devil in a high position of authority in hell, write letters of advice to his nephew Wormwood, a novice tempter from hell, on how best to keep the human in his charge from knowing and serving God.

In *The Screwtape Letters*, written in 1941, the characters are seen only through the eyes of the demon Screwtape and his nephew Wormwood, so they are sometimes distorted and not well developed. They appear as Screwtape wants them to be. Nevertheless, Lewis works through Screwtape’s pen to repeat his ideas about love that were first revealed in his essays, “The Weight of Glory” and “Equality” and were later summarized in *The Four Loves*.

In the Preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis discusses the perverted Need-love that he has personified in all of his novels, and he writes, “Even in human life 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. . . .” The other fellow’s “little store of passion must of course be suppressed to make room for ours. If he resists this suppression he is being very selfish.” Lewis adds, “On Earth this desire is often called ‘love’” (xi).

Additionally, just as Lewis wrote in his sermon “The Weight of Glory” in 1941 that the word *unselfishness* has been

substituted for *Charity* and *Agape* love, he has Screwtape tell his nephew that the devils and their “Philological Arm” have substituted in most men’s minds “the negative ‘unselfishness’ for the Enemy’s (by whom he means God’s) positive charity.” Because of this change, the devils “can, from the very outset, teach a man to surrender benefits, not that others may be happy in having them, but that he may be unselfish in forgoing them” (*Screwtape Letters* 121).

Screwtape urges Wormwood to try this on his “patient”: Make him feel he has to be unselfish rather than full of Gift-love or Charity toward others. Screwtape explains that for a time, practicing unselfishness will result in self-smugness for being so good and self-sacrificing, but after awhile will result in frustration--and ultimately selfishness and possessiveness. To illustrate this, Screwtape points to the example of “the sort of woman who lives for others--you can always tell the others by their haunted expression” (123).

In the section on perverted Affection in *The Four Loves*, Lewis uses the same kind of example when he discusses the woman, Mrs. Fidget, who “lived for her family.” Her family members were to have “no worries, no responsibility...”; she would do everything for them (75). In that book, he also writes that perverted Affection or Need-love can become selfish, greedy, and possessive when one feels the need to have others dependent on him or her (178).

Besides the woman in *The Four Loves*, this idea of self-sacrifice posing as a kind of love and turning into possessiveness is found in Pam (Michael’s mother) in *The Great Divorce*, who says, “I gave up my whole life” for Michael (92), and in Robert’s wife in *The Great Divorce*, who tells how she “sacrificed (her) whole life to him!” out of what she calls love (85), we well as in Orual in *Till We Have Faces*, who could not believe that Psyche would not want to stay with her after all she had done for her. In nearly all of his fiction, Lewis dwells on this tendency of man (or woman, since most of his characters who possess this attitude are women) to

substitute self-sacrifice for real love, which Lewis calls *Charity*.

Likewise, in *The Screwtape Letters*, when “the patient falls in love with a fine Christian woman,” Screwtape and Wormwood consider ways to turn this relationship to their own advantage. Screwtape writes that, in order to discourage true romantic love (Eros), Wormwood should encourage them “to ‘live for each other’ in such a twisted manner as to result in constant irritation and hidden grudges . . . and what they call self-sacrifice . . .” (Kilby 71).

In addition to self-sacrifice, which is really possessive Need-love or perverted Affection, according to Lewis, Screwtape discusses Eros and Venus with Wormwood, and once again Lewis’s consistent views about love can clearly be seen.

Screwtape recognizes that true Eros or romantic love “produces a mutual complaisance in which each is really pleased to give in to the wishes of the other” (121). He knows that God also asks of lovers “charity which, if attained, would result” similarly in giving to each other and giving in to each other (121). But Screwtape tells Wormwood not to let the humans know that God desires Charity, too—that Eros “is not enough, that charity is needed” also (124). Clyde Kilby paraphrases Screwtape’s words to Wormwood about their plans to keep charity from “the patient” thusly: “the patient is fervently in love now and supposes that it will always continue thus, not knowing that another and deeper permanent love will follow, provided he and his beloved practice the Enemy’s [God’s] intentions of sacraments and charity” (71).

This idea is also clearly stated in *The Four Loves* when Lewis writes that Eros cannot last except with charity (160). God wants “mutual self-sacrifice” between lovers, but not the kind that results in a self-righteous feeling of having given in to the other (*Screwtape* 122). Instead, Screwtape encourages Wormwood to use romantic love in his patient’s life either “to distract his mind from the Enemy [God]” (125) or to make him feel he can marry, without bad consequences,



any heathen, fool, or wanton he wishes so long as he thinks he's "in love" (84).

He also urges him to make the humans think that "loyalty to a partnership for mutual help, for the preservation of chastity, and for the transmission of life [is] something lower than a storm of emotion" (83-84). In other words, he pushes what Lewis believes to be the mistaken but modern belief that the emotion of being in love itself is all important, rather than the stability and trust of a good marriage.

Even Screwtape knows that God intended that affection and "being in love" would be the result of a good marriage, but Satan's goal is to make humans think that marriage must consist of "a storm of emotion" with no commitment of will and a worshipping of "being in love."

Lewis discusses the worship of "being in love"—the worship of Eros—in *The Four Loves* when he writes, "It is in the grandeur of Eros that the seeds of danger are concealed. He has spoken like a god. His total commitment, . . . his transcendence of self-regard, sound like a message from the eternal world (151). And, about Eros, Lewis adds, "Of all loves, he is, at his height, most god-like; therefore most prone to demand our worship. Of himself he always tends to turn 'being in love' into a sort of religion" (154), and "The real danger seems to me not that the lovers will idolize each other but that they will idolize Eros himself" (*Four Loves* 155). Thus, *The Screwtape Letters* clearly reflects the ideas found in *The Four Loves* about Eros and its danger—worshipping "being in love."

Associated with Eros is Venus, which Lewis defines in *The Four Loves* as "sexuality" (132) and as "sexual desire without Eros" which "wants it, the thing in itself" while, in contrast, "Eros wants the Beloved" (*Four Loves* 134).

Screwtape advises Wormwood to turn "being in love" into thoughts of sexual intercourse or Venus (83). In his discussion of Venus, Screwtape calls her "infernal Venus," and "visible animality," as well as "prostitute or mistress" (93). Screwtape tells

Wormwood that he should draw his "patient" toward desiring Venus so that he "desires to desire brutally" and that this desire can be used "to draw him away from marriage . . ." (93).

However, Screwtape and Wormwood fail in their endeavors to pervert the romantic love or Eros that "the patient" feels for his fiancée. Instead, their romantic love grows, and his girlfriend frequently invites him to her home where he gets to know her family members. The family grows to love him with family Affection or *storge*. The patient is a new Christian, but his fiancée and her family are "far advanced in His service," so they are different from him in many ways (112). But her family has accepted him "because they are charitable and made the best of this because he is now one of the family" (112).

The patient's fiancée, additionally, has a good sense of humor and laughs often with the patient, illustrating the comment in *The Four Loves* that "lovers are always laughing at each other" (151). Lewis writes that people must not take themselves and Eros and Venus too seriously. Instead, Lewis says, jokes and laughter are good for promoting all kinds of love (142-145). So the reader can understand why Screwtape encourages Wormwood to try to undermine the patient's fiancée's sense of humor and her "sense of the ridiculous" (*Screwtape Letters* 124).

While it is hard for Screwtape to write anything good about the fiancée's family, he does admit that the family is full of "disinterested love," and he is curious about it (102). He cannot understand why they do not merely pretend to love for some ulterior motive, but rather love honestly out of charity and concern for others.

Their charity or Gift-love, Screwtape says, is like God's disinterested love. So we see in the family a personification or example of the highest kind of love according to *The Four Loves*. In that book, Lewis says that "Divine Gift-love—Love Himself working in a man—is wholly disinterested and desires what is simply best for the beloved" (177).

Screwtape calls Charity "irresistible and all-excusing 'Love'" (*Screwtape Letters*

93) and explores its characteristics as he tries to understand God and His Gift-love. Screwtape writes to Wormwood, “The good of one self is to be the good of another. This impossibility he calls *Love*, and this same monotonous panacea can be detected under all He does and even all He is—or claims to be” (81).

Screwtape concludes that, though he hates to admit it, God “really loves the hairless bipeds [humans] He has created, and always gives” good things to them. He even “gives back to them with His right hand what He has taken away with His left” (65). As an example of this, Screwtape points out to Wormwood that God

wants to kill their animal self-love as soon as possible; but it is His long-term policy, I fear, to restore to them a new kind of self-love—a charity and gratitude for all selves, including their own; when they have really learned to love their neighbors as themselves,

they will be allowed to love themselves as their neighbors. (64-65)

Along the same lines, Lewis discusses in *The Four Loves* God’s pattern of taking away some of our human loves in preference to His Gift love, but then giving the human loves back again. For example, he writes, “For when God rules in a human heart, though He may sometimes have to remove certain of its native authorities altogether, He often continues others in their offices and, by subjecting their authority to His, gives it for the first time a firm basis” (166). Lewis adds, “When God arrives (and only then) the half-gods can remain.’ Left to themselves they either vanish or become demons. Only in His name can they with beauty and security ‘wield their little tridents’” (166).

In order to subvert and pervert the patient’s tendencies toward True Charity or Gift-love, Screwtape suggests to Wormwood, “When they [humans] mean to ask Him for charity, let them, instead, start trying to manufacture charitable feelings for themselves and not notice that this is what they are doing” (21).

In this discussion, it becomes clear that even Screwtape understands that true Gift-love comes from God and cannot be artificially manufactured by humans. As Lewis says in *The Four Loves*, “such a Gift-love comes by Grace and should be called Charity” (178).

Screwtape and Wormwood, in summary, discuss how to make their “patient” feel “unselfish” rather than loving toward others and especially toward his fiancée—something Lewis treats in *The Four Loves*. The two demons decide how to turn romantic love into worshipping “being in love” or into Venus—pure sexuality, and Lewis presents the two goals as dangers and perversions of Eros, true romantic love. When Screwtape mentions the fiancée’s family members, he calls their feelings for the patient “disinterested love”—the exact words Lewis uses to describe Gift-love in *The Four Loves*.

Thus, through the characters about whom Screwtape and Wormwood write, and through their discussions of human nature and ways to keep their patient from God and His Gift-love, *The Screwtape Letters* reflects Lewis’s consistent ideas about love, explained 19 years later in *The Four Loves*.

Through the Lens of *The Four Loves*: The Idea of Love in *The Screwtape Letters* · Paulette Sauders

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# The Good Catastrophe: Tolkien on the Consolation of the Happy Ending

John Stanifer  
Morehead State University

When evaluating any writer's legacy, the most rewarding questions to ask are not always the obvious ones. Questions like "What is the meaning of such-and-such work?" and "How did this or that event in the writer's life influence their writing?" are helpful, but such questions have a tendency to keep the reader's attention focused internally on the writer or the work itself. Just as important are the external questions that explicitly call our attention to the world outside of the writer. Examples of external questions include "How does this writer help us to better appreciate the works of *other* writers?" and "How does this writer's worldview equip us to face the world at large?"

Scholars have been asking such questions about J.R.R. Tolkien for decades. In his oft-quoted and much-discussed essay "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien coined a term that has enabled a deeper understanding of what makes fairy-stories—and other types of stories, for that matter—so attractive and so powerful. The term is "eucatastrophe" and consists of the Greek prefix "eu" meaning "good" and the word "catastrophe" meaning "catastrophe." It is tempting to define this term by resorting to a more familiar phrase like "happily ever after" or simply "happy ending," but Tolkien does not quite allow us to get away with this. "Eucatastrophe" refers not to the ending of a fairy-story in and of itself, but to the "sudden, joyous turn" leading

to that happy ending. Eucatastrophe is "a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur" (86). Tolkien insisted that the joy this sudden turn invites in the reader "is not essentially 'escapist,' nor 'fugitive' . . . It does not deny the existence of . . . sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance" (86).

Much has been made of Tolkien's description of the eucatastrophe concept and of how it helps us understand the effect a good story can have on the reader. Richard Fehrenbacher argues that eucatastrophe is the "major narrative trope" in *The Lord of the Rings* and cites "Gandalf's resurrection after his duel with the Balrog" and "Sam and Frodo's rescue by eagles on the slopes of Mount Doom," among other episodes from the text, in laying out his case (104-105).<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that Tolkien's description of eucatastrophe is easy to grasp in its fullness, much less is it the final word on the subject. Derek Shank insists that "the eucatastrophe is precisely the point where words fail us, where any attempt at explication by the critic is in vain. All Tolkien can hope to accomplish is to re-create . . . the same effect that he himself has felt" (158). In spite of this so-called impossibility of explaining the eucatastrophe, critics continue to apply the term to more recent literary bestsellers such as J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Susan Johnston calls the structure of eucatastrophe "essentially Christian" and echoes Tolkien's

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own statements that connect the eucatastrophe of the fairy-story with “the mere Christianity of the Inklings, which takes the narrative of Christ’s Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection as explicitly a structure of hope” (68). Johnston labels the *Harry Potter* series as “fundamentally hopeful, in a very specific Christian sense” (69).

Such arguments are helpful but have tended as a whole to focus on a very narrow range of literature. The eucatastrophe may be present in the best fairy-stories, and it may be present in *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *Harry Potter*. What is the curious scholar to do with other genres and mediums that Tolkien was either unable or unwilling to consider for his readers? What of film and television? If we dare to venture a short distance outside the box of Western literature and civilization, will we find the eucatastrophe in the popular entertainment of the East? I believe the answer to that last question is a resounding yes. The eucatastrophe is a device well-known to cultures around the globe. While it may not be known by that name, it is a literary rose that smells as sweet, whether found in the West or the East. Of course, there is not enough time or space in this context to prove that the eucatastrophe is a device that is universally acknowledged. On the other hand, it is possible to demonstrate that the eucatastrophe is present in a much wider cultural context than Tolkien gave it. Fairy-stories and fantasy novels are just the beginning. I will use select examples from Japanese film and Korean TV drama to show the extreme versatility of the eucatastrophe or “sudden happy turn” as Tolkien defined it.

First, I think it is important to establish that the eucatastrophe is not limited by genre. One example, a little closer to Tolkien’s geographical context than Japan or Korea, is the 1869 novel *Lorna Doone* by British writer R.D. Blackmore. *Lorna Doone* is not a fairy-story or a fantasy novel, at least in the sense that is apparently intended by Tolkien in “On Fairy-stories” and in his personal correspondence with his son Christopher.<sup>2</sup> In his original preface to the

novel, Blackmore offers a short explanation of the genre he chose:

This work is called a “romance,” because the incidents, characters, time, and scenery, are alike romantic. And in shaping this old tale, the Writer neither dares, nor desires, to claim for it the dignity or cumber it with the difficulty of an historic novel.

And yet he thinks that the outlines are filled in more carefully, and the situations (however simple) more warmly coloured and quickened, than a reader would expect to find in what is called a “legend.” (3)

*Lorna Doone* is a romance in the vein of Sir Walter Scott’s novel *Waverley*. It is thus a mixture of history and fabrication. There are no elves or wizards or fairy godmothers here except in the folklore of the locals. What readers do get is a major eucatastrophe. The main thread of *Lorna Doone* is the love story between John Ridd the farmer and Lorna, the last surviving member of an aristocratic family. After many trials, John succeeds in rescuing Lorna from the Doones, the tribe of robbers who kidnapped Lorna as a child. For his bravery in clearing out the Doone stronghold, John is rewarded with a knighthood enabling him to marry the highborn Lorna. The eucatastrophe comes in when Carver Doone, John’s rival for Lorna’s affections, shoots Lorna at the altar on her wedding day. Everyone assumes Lorna is dead—all except John’s cousin Ruth, who immediately leaps to Lorna’s aid with her medical expertise. After a miserable period of waiting, the turn comes at last thanks to Ruth’s ministrations. The eucatastrophe in *Lorna Doone* is explicitly Christian. First, when Lorna is shot, John refers to her as “the young death in my arms” and describes her using several other images of death (649, ch. LXXIV). When Ruth takes over, one of her first actions is to call for Spanish wine and pour it into Lorna’s mouth using a christening

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spoon, all while Lorna lies senseless on the door of the church pulpit (656, ch. LXXIV). When Lorna begins to show signs of recovery, John expresses his feelings in terms of his religious faith: “I felt my life come back, and glow; I felt my trust in God revive; I felt the joy of living and of loving dearer things than life; who feels can never tell of it” (661, ch. LXXV). “Who feels can never tell of it” recalls Shank’s assertion that the eucatastrophe cannot be adequately pinned down with words alone. For the last few decades, scholars have largely ignored *Lorna Doone*, though it once enjoyed a wide readership. Still, Max Keith Sutton has noted this important similarity between Blackmore and Tolkien: “Promising disaster, with quotations from Greek tragedy sometimes on the title page, [Blackmore’s] stories move from ominous beginnings and acts of violence toward providential ends—the ‘eucatastrophe’ or good turn of fortune that J.R.R. Tolkien admired in fairy tales and brilliantly created at the climax of *The Lord of the Rings*” (38).

It is outside the scope of the present argument to discuss why Tolkien chose to embed such an intriguing concept as the eucatastrophe within an article specifically devoted to fairy-stories, leaving out so many other literary genres and mediums. Suffice it to say that we need feel no obligation to keep the concept strictly within the confines of fairy land. Now that I have shown a compelling example of how the eucatastrophe can spill over from one genre to another, I would like to extend the argument further by using examples from popular Japanese films and Korean television series to affirm the amazing cultural and geographical dexterity of the concept Tolkien so eloquently codified.

The first example I have chosen is the 2005 Japanese film *Train Man*. Hector Garcia classifies *Train Man* as a “worldwide Japanese pop culture phenomenon” and charts the story from its humble beginnings as a “series of messages on the largest Internet forum in Japan” to a film, a TV series, multiple literary and graphic novel adaptations, a stage play, and so on (125). *Train Man* is allegedly based

on the true story of a 22-year-old geek or “otaku” who decided to break out of his antisocial cocoon and intervene one night on the subway when a drunken businessman began harassing the other passengers, including a young office woman. The young woman expresses her gratitude for Train Man’s assistance by sending him a set of expensive Hermes tea cups. Lacking the confidence to interact with women, Train Man seeks advice from the denizens of his favorite Internet chat room. From shaving cream and hair salons to sport coats and dress shoes, Train Man learns the ropes from his anonymous benefactors and gathers up the courage to invite the young woman to dinner. The relationship proceeds smoothly until Train Man reaches the point where he relies so much on the advice of his online peers that he loses his confidence and tells the woman—always referred to as Hermes and never by her real name—that he just doesn’t think their relationship is going to work out. In the climax of the film adaptation, after Train Man’s friends have lectured him into believing that he might still have a chance with Hermes, he pursues her into Akihabara, the Japanese equivalent of Silicon Valley. As in fairy-story, Train Man believes that sorrow and failure are very real possibilities. Train Man begins to comb the innumerable electronics stores of Akihabara, since he knows that Hermes has gone out to buy a computer using advice he had previously offered her. His lowest point comes when he loses his glasses and trips over a bicycle lying in the road, landing on his face. Train Man stays on the ground, assuming final defeat until a familiar pair of women’s shoes enters the frame and pauses in front of his prostrate form. This leads into a scene in which both parties confess their true feelings and Train Man admits that he had always assumed he would die alone, never getting close to another human being. Though all of this bears an undeniable resemblance to the framework of countless romantic comedies in film and literature, the marks of the eucatastrophe are clearly present. Train Man’s defeated mindset

leading into his final pursuit of Hermes and his providential encounter with her in the streets of Tokyo's densely packed Akihabara district are nothing if not a sudden joyous turn, a miraculous grace never to be counted on to recur. After thinking he had lost the greatest opportunity of his life, Train Man is rewarded with the fulfillment of his hopes, and the story closes in happiness.

Christophe Thouny has pointed out one of *Train Man's* mythological dimensions, which contributes to the effect of the eucatastrophe at the end: "The story starts in the space of transit . . . the commuter train that gives its name to [Train Man] and brings the goddess Hermes, the messenger of the gods" (122). The sheer unlikelihood of locating a specific person in the absurdly crowded Akihabara district of Tokyo may lead some to accuse the filmmakers of using a *deus ex machina* to reunite Train Man and Hermes. Jeffrey Allinson, in his exploration of how the eucatastrophe has been used through film, would likely deny the truth of this accusation. In the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Film*, Allinson asserts the following:

*Eucatastrophe* is not synonymous with *deus ex machina* . . . which is an implausible or inept plot device used to escape a storytelling quagmire, nor is it used merely for commercial appeal. Rather, eucatastrophe makes the bold claim that the arc of human history ultimately curves towards justice, restoration, and hope. From this perspective, rescue comes not from a conveniently inserted god but is part of the very fabric of a fictive world. The approach is easily distinguished from films that seek to demonstrate the gritty reality of human existence, such as one might find in film noir. (175)

At heart, *Train Man* is a film of hope and restoration, allowing for sudden unlikely turns and a series of major transformations in

the life of its protagonist. The initial response to *Train Man* suggests that the story hit a nerve: "The [*Train Man*] phenomenon spurred spin-off events and discussions on the Internet and television shows and was the topic of numerous feature articles in weekly and monthly magazines, many of which suggested a need to reevaluate the negative view of otaku practices" (Fisch 133).

Directors and scriptwriters in the Korean television industry have a similar fascination with the eucatastrophe. The "Hallyu" or "Korean Wave" is a term that refers to the increasing popularity of Korean pop culture overseas. "Javabeans" and "Girlfriday," the online names for two Korean-American women who blog regularly about Korean culture—especially Korean TV dramas—have written a book that clarifies many aspects of the Korean TV drama or "K-Drama" phenomenon. In the introduction to this book, it is explained, "By the early 2000s, the Korean Wave had amassed a huge international following, and now grosses billions of dollars annually . . . online access to content has enabled an immediacy of consumption abroad, to the point where international fan response is practically in real time with Korean response" (ch. I). The 2011 K-Drama *City Hunter* contains a typical example of the use of the eucatastrophe in this medium. The series consists of twenty episodes that follow the trials of a South Korean black ops agent who is hell-bent on taking revenge for the lives of his men who were assassinated by their own government during a raid on North Korea. The agent intends to kill the men who are responsible for ordering the assassination, but his adopted son argues that a far more effective plan would be to expose the crimes of these men publicly so that the citizens of Korea will know the truth and punish the men accordingly without necessarily killing them and starting a cycle of needless revenge. In the final episode, the black ops agent makes an assassination attempt on the South Korean president—who happens to be one of the five officials who ordered the killing of the agent's men—and the agent's adopted son throws

himself in the path of the bullet to save the president. The closing frames of the climactic shooting scene depict the father and his adopted son in a bloody circle symbolizing, among other things, the end of their quest for revenge, and at first the viewer is left pondering the possibility that both have died. In the epilogue, the adopted son's love interest is seen strolling through Incheon International Airport, presumably preparing for a flight out of the country. Suddenly, she turns around and finds herself face-to-face with the man she loves, who is alive and well despite the bullet he took to the chest. The violence of the preceding shooting and the unexpected survival of the son instantly morphs the tone of the finale from utter bleakness to redemption and the possibility of future happiness, as is reflected not-so-subtly in the smiles exchanged between the two young people. To borrow Tolkien's words from "On Fairy-stories," this kind of ending "denies . . . in the face of much evidence . . . universal final defeat . . . giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief" (86). Death gives way to life, sorrow to joy, in an unexpected act of grace on the part of God—or in this case, the screenwriter or sub-creator.

Such eucatastrophic endings abound in the realm of Korean TV drama. I will mention one more very quickly. The 2013 drama *You Who Came from the Stars* features the romance between an actress and a man from another planet who takes the form of a human being. The tension in the series revolves around the man's impending departure to his home planet, since delaying that departure apparently means giving up the opportunity to return home altogether. Numerous twists and characters spice up the basic plot, but in the end, the significant point is that the man is forced to return to his planet or die. The actress who loves him is devastated, naturally. Three years go by, and the actress is attending an award ceremony, when she looks into the crowd and sees her lover approaching. Somehow, he has gained the ability to return from his planet. The

actress begins to sob, just before what one online reviewer described as "the kiss of the century" takes place (hjlyon). Again, the words of Tolkien are relevant in this context: "It is the mark of a good fairy-story . . . that however wild its events . . . it can give to child or man that hears it, when the 'turn' comes, a catch of the breath . . . near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears as keen as that given by any form of literary art" (86). In what should probably be read as a forecasting of the joy the main characters experience in the ending—as well as an apt definition of the eucatastrophe's effect on the audience—the actress's apartment contains a couch with several pillows that the audience glimpses during many scenes set there. On these pillows are sewn the words of the prayer of Moses from the Old Testament book of Numbers:

The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face toward you  
and give you peace. (Num 6.24-26)

Grace and peace are exactly what most of the characters are left with in *The Lord of the Rings*, *Lorna Doone*, *Train Man*, *City Hunter*, and *You Who Came from the Stars*. The eucatastrophe is a device that exceeds not only the fairy-story genre; it also exceeds the geographical and cultural bounds of Western literature to embrace non-Western film and television. That sudden turn, that catch of the breath, and that beat of the heart accompanied by tears and the Consolation of the Happy Ending is a powerful and versatile device capable of touching hearts and minds all over the world.



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<sup>1</sup> Fehrenbacher notes the obvious parallels between *Beowulf* and the Rohan sections of *The Lord of the Rings*, but he also points out an intriguing difference. Where the worldview of *Beowulf*'s Danish warrior society is essentially pessimistic, foretelling death and destruction, Rohan experiences the eucatastrophic trajectory of Tolkien's vision, becoming almost an anti-*Beowulf* symbol by end of story.

<sup>2</sup> See Tolkien's letter to his son on October 28, 1944, for a discussion of the eucatastrophe that is very similar to the content of "On Fairy-stories." The letter can be read in the collection of Tolkien's correspondence edited by Humphrey Carpenter (98-102).

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# A Look at the Lewis Trilemma

**Mark Taylor**  
**Taylor University**

## *Introduction*

The Lewis Trilemma is considered one of C.S. Lewis's great contributions to the field of Christian apologetics, and is an argument taught to many young Christians seeking to defend Jesus of Nazareth from being whitewashed as merely a "great moral teacher." The Trilemma, as presented by Lewis, states that it is impossible to reject the claim of Jesus' divinity while simultaneously considering him a great moral prophet. Since he claimed to be God, he must either be a liar, insane, or honestly declaring his divinity. He could neither be lying nor insane, and therefore is actually God.

Modern scholarship has not been kind to the Trilemma; the argument does not seem to have held up under the scrutinizing eyes of Christians and non-Christians alike. The main objections raised are to the reliability of the gospels as historical witnesses, Jesus' inability to be mistaken or insane, and to the interpretation of Jesus' claim to divinity. Because of these perceived weaknesses, the argument to many is only the antiquated apologetic tool of a bygone Christian thinker.

These objections, however, miss Lewis's point. The Trilemma, as he presented it, was never meant to be a proof for the deity of Christ. Many have mistaken it for such, resulting in a profusion of arguments against a claim he never made. How his opponents have gone wrong here will be the primary concern of this paper; Lewis should not be

blamed as owner of the straw man others are rigorously burning. Lewis's argument has not failed; on the contrary, the Trilemma, when properly purposed, remains a powerful Christian apologetic tool.

## *Lewis's Claim*

As an example of a critic of the Trilemma, take the claim of William Lane Craig, a well-known Christian philosopher, who wrote that the Trilemma fails because it is guilty of committing the fallacy of False Dilemma: it is untrue that only the options presented by Lewis are available to us. Craig suggests that "there are other unmentioned alternatives, for example, that Jesus as described in the gospels is a legend."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, theologian John Hick has argued against the Trilemma by stating that the scholarly consensus has found that the historical Jesus did not claim divinity in the first place, which effectively "rules out the once popular form of apologetic which argues that someone claiming to be God must be either mad, or bad, or God."<sup>2</sup> Professor Richard Dawkins in *The God Delusion* offers a scathing critique of the Trilemma with basic concerns similar to Hick and Craig:

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<sup>1</sup> William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 1994, (Wheaton: Crossway Books), 39.

<sup>2</sup> John Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, 1993, (London: SCM Press) 29.

A common argument, attributed among others to C.S. Lewis (who should have known better), states that, since Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, he must have been either right, insane, or a liar... The historical evidence that Jesus claimed any sort of divine status is minimal. But even if that evidence were good, the Trilemma on offer would be ludicrously inadequate.<sup>3</sup>

Other critiques include the assertion that Jesus could merely be a hypocrite or somewhat insane. But again, none of these objections are actually addressing Lewis's point.

In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis presents the Trilemma in this way:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.<sup>4</sup>

At the argument's start we find what has been consistently overlooked by critics. It is here that Lewis states the type of person he is addressing with his reasoning: the person who says, "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher." Anyone who makes such a statement fills in the missing premises so that criticisms such as Craig's, Hick's, or Dawkins's are refuted.

If someone believes that Jesus was a great moral teacher, two beliefs follow as implicit. First, one must believe Jesus actually existed. For if Jesus did not actually exist then he would be a mere myth; but a character in a story cannot be called literally virtuous. Thus, Jesus could not be considered a legend by anyone calling him a great moral teacher. The reason mythology and moral greatness are mutually exclusive is that humans require an example after which to follow. The fictional offers no true moral models to men and women because what the fictional does is not difficult. Right action for a character in a book is not a deep struggle of the will to live honorably – it is an effortless construct done at the stroke of a pen. It is easy to invent good moral teachings and easier still to invent a fiction wherein that morality is followed to the letter by some virtuous person. But a fictional character should no more be praised for his or her morality than a rock should be praised for being dense. They both have an equal choice in the matter.

On the other hand, if there were a man who lived, who was born like the rest of us, who fought hypocrisy and the religious corruption of his day, who cherished even those considered the filth of society, who taught others to love all people and died by the hands of those who lived otherwise – if such a man lived, *he* would be truly worthy to be called a great moral teacher. As great as Jesus was, he was still a human like the rest of us – he was someone who lived and can be followed. Anyone who is called a "great moral teacher" must at very least be like Jesus and have lived a real moral life. This is a rule humanity has lived by: men and women have honored and revered great people like Martin

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 2006, (London: Bantam Press), 92.

<sup>4</sup> C S Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Simon & Schuster), 55.

Luther King Jr., Florence Nightingale, or Mother Teresa, not merely because their stories were pleasantly moral, but because they were real. These men and women persevered and showed moral greatness despite the hardships of life, just as we seek to do. Moral teachers *must* be real. If anyone is going to say Jesus was a great moral teacher, they must also hold that he and his actions are not merely legends.

The second implicit belief in claiming Jesus to be a “great moral teacher” is that the story of the gospel must be largely accurate. Though Jesus is mentioned in various other writings, the New Testament offers the only comprehensive account of his life. The Bible is the only source of information available to show Jesus was a “great moral teacher.” If the gospel narratives are fabricated or inaccurate, on what other basis could one claim Jesus as good? A claim to the morality of Jesus must be an affirmation of the validity of the gospel accounts as historical.

There does remain one alternative to someone wishing to adhere to belief in Jesus’ greatness as a moral teacher while rejecting as historical his claim to divinity. A person might say, “I’m willing to accept the gospel accounts of Jesus’ life, but I simply reject all the bits about his claiming to be God as the mere embellishment of legend.” This is a viable option, but seems remarkably *ad hoc*. Isn’t it a case of special pleading – and curiously convenient – to reject only those parts of the gospel narratives which are inconsistent with one’s own position? Perhaps such a move would be sensible if good reasons existed for specifically doubting only these portions, but it seems odd that someone would largely embrace the historicity of the accounts while specifically excluding these problematic passages.

#### *Was Jesus Insane?*

The Lewis Trilemma is only aimed at those who admit to the moral greatness of Jesus, and that admission assumes the historical reality of Christ and the accuracy of the gospels which tell his story. Since this is the case, the Trilemma can now work itself

out: if Jesus claimed to be God, was he insane, evil, or honest? Obviously Jesus could not be evil, as he would not be moral at all if he were – let alone a ‘great’ moral teacher. No, if we admit that Jesus was the peak of virtue, it is not an option to believe he knowingly lied about his divinity. But what if he unknowingly lied? What if, as the Trilemma questions, Jesus of Nazareth was insane? On closer inspection we will find that this is really not an option either.

Theologian Peter Kreeft has pointed out that the disparity between a claim about reality and the truth about reality is the measure of insanity.<sup>5</sup> If I were to believe my name was Abraham Lincoln, people might be concerned but would probably not doubt my overall sanity. If I thought I were Abraham Lincoln himself, people would really question whether or not I was a sane human being. If I believed I were a penny with Abraham’s Lincoln’s face on it, people would know without a doubt that I was insane. *Insanity is not just about having incorrect beliefs about reality; it is about how big the gap is between those beliefs and the real world.* As the gap widens, we are more and more certain of a person’s derangement. The difficulty with the claim to divinity is that – assuming it is a mistaken belief – there is an infinite gap between that claim and reality, because it is a claim by a finite being to be an infinite one. We cannot get away with saying Jesus was mistaken in this claim to divinity – he would have to have totally lost his sanity in a serious way. As Lewis put it, he would be a lunatic “on a level with a man who says he is a poached egg.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, if someone asserts, in any sense, that Jesus was sincerely ‘mistaken’ about his divine identity, that is tantamount to calling him absolutely and utterly insane. Of course, the problem with such an assertion is that it is impossible. Jesus doesn’t fit the profile.

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Between Heaven and Hell*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press), 43.

<sup>6</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Simon & Schuster), 55.

The mentally unstable do not act as Jesus did. Throughout his story, Christ was cool, calm, and collected; indeed, his combined serenity and sagacity in the midst of a hostile environment have been a quality for which he has been admired. As a youth he astounded the scholars of his day; as an adult he ably and agilely succeeded against the rhetorical traps set against him by the intellectual elite. Such a man could hardly be considered mentally unstable. But more importantly, even if he doesn't seem insane to us, what did his contemporaries believe about him?

The conversation between the people of Jesus' day went very much as it does in our own. It is recorded in John 10:

Many of them were saying, "He is possessed by a demon and has lost his mind! Why do you listen to him?" Others said, "These are not the words of someone possessed by a demon."

Like today, one side accused him of being insane for his shocking theological statements, but the other side, as now, responded by saying something to the effect of, "He doesn't *sound* insane." Furthermore, this is one of only two<sup>7</sup> instances where someone insults Jesus' sanity (the second reference, as with this one, seems to be more of an insult than a real charge of insanity). If the insult in John 10 were a serious analysis of his mental state, one would think it would be brought up again and again by his enemies to undermine his credibility and reputation. But what we actually see is the opposite: the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders consider Jesus to be fully responsible for his actions and teachings – they believe he is truly blaspheming by claiming to be God – and they do not just dismiss him as insane. Surely if there were even a hint of instability they would have pounced on it and kept it constantly before the public eye. A lack of such a defamation campaign suggests that not

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<sup>7</sup> John 7:20

even his enemies seriously considered that Jesus might have been insane.

That the Jews never seriously questioned his sanity is telling, but it is even more significant that a (mostly) independent observer also did not assess Jesus' mental state as unstable. Pontius Pilate, the Roman judge who presided over Christ's case, made several attempts to dismiss Jesus and clearly thought him innocent. If there had been even a shred of evidence that Christ was mad, surely Pilate would have dismissed him on those grounds. That he did not do so is evidence that he apparently didn't believe that option was open to him. And to be sure, dismissal on the grounds of insanity *was* an option to a Roman official. In the history *Wars of the Jews*, Flavius Josephus recounts the story of a man who – like Jesus – prophesied against Jerusalem and the temple, drawing the ire of the elite Jewish class.<sup>8</sup> As with Jesus, they took him to the Roman ruler (the procurator Albinus) who in turn had him severely whipped. But after the whipping, Albinus inspected the man and, deciding he was insane, released him. Again, this was not the response of Pontius Pilate. Upon inspecting Jesus, the Roman governor did not release him on the grounds of insanity, nor did he calm the crowd by saying that they shouldn't take a madman seriously. Rather, the whole scene seems to take for granted that Jesus is quite sane – that he could and should be tried for statements he has made while being sound of mind. From his consistent character as a wise and brilliant teacher, and from his treatment by his contemporaries, it is clear Jesus could not have been the entirely insane man he would have been if his claim to divinity was in error.

*How do we Know Jesus Claimed to be God?*

Given the premise that Jesus lived and that the gospels are largely accurate, and that

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<sup>8</sup> Flavius Josephus, "The Wars of the Jews," *BibleStudyTools.com*, accessed March 29, 2014, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/war-of-the-jews/book-6/chapter-5.html>.

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Jesus was not insane or lying, what else remains to be proved? It still needs to be shown from the gospel account that Jesus claimed divinity. Everything breaks down if Jesus did not actually make such an assertion. On this matter the Bible speaks through two testimonies: the testimony of Jesus himself and the testimony of his disciples.

The testimony of Jesus concerning his divinity is fairly plentiful, as he made strong statements about the subject on several occasions. The most blatant declaration comes from the gospel of John, where the following story is recounted:

“I and the Father are one.” The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, “I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?” The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.”<sup>9</sup>

This story is especially important, because it ensures that modern readers are not misunderstanding Jesus’ claim out of context; those who heard the words of Christ were of his time and culture, and they explicitly understood him to be claiming divinity (and attempted to stone him for it). Not only did Jesus claim to be God, but elsewhere in John he also refers to himself as the Son of God. Even the opponents of Christ thought he was claiming godhood. Of course, it might be argued that these opponents of Christ were his enemies, and so they should not be trusted to properly understand his teachings. But what is important here is not that they believed Christ to be making a claim to divinity, but that Christ does not deny it. Surely this would have been the easiest way to counter the charge of blasphemy. Furthermore, of even greater weight than that of his opponents, there is the testimony of the disciples which is the same as that of

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<sup>9</sup> John 10:30-33, NIV.

Christ and the Jews who rejected him. These disciples certainly were qualified to interpret the teachings of Jesus, as they spent years in his company. These same disciples believed Jesus was God, and portrayed him as such in their writings. Furthermore, their martyrdom discredits the assertion that the portrayal of his divinity was intentionally fabricated by those same disciples: who would be martyred for their own con? The three most relevant of the disciples for this discussion are John, Peter, and Thomas.

The ‘beloved’ disciple, John was one of the three disciples closest to Jesus. He wrote:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, *and the Word was God...* and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.<sup>10</sup>

John clearly claims that God became incarnate in human flesh, and that incarnation was Jesus Christ.

In the same way, Peter, the designated head of the Church, also upheld Christ’s divinity. He confessed Christ to be “the Son of the living God”<sup>11</sup>; significantly, Jesus directly affirms this profession. Peter further affirmed that not only he, but the other disciples believed in Christ’s deity:

Simon Peter answered [Jesus], “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God!”<sup>12</sup>

Afterward, Peter would go so far as to link the identity of Christians to Christ’s deity by addressing his letter “to those... of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John 1:1, 14; emphasis mine.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 16:16.

<sup>12</sup> John 6:68-69.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Peter 1:1.

The third disciple, Thomas, was a zealous follower willing to die for Christ, and who made perhaps the most explicit claim to belief in his divinity, calling him “My Lord and my God!”<sup>14</sup> It is telling that Jesus directly affirmed his statement by saying in response that those who believe this truth by faith will be blessed.

From the account of Jesus himself and his disciples, it can hardly be doubted that the Bible depicts Christ as having claimed divinity. Not only did he make such an assertion, but he did so blatantly, drawing the hatred of the Jews because of the perceived radical blasphemy of such a claim.

#### *Conclusion*

C.S. Lewis’s Trilemma is impotent only insofar as it is misunderstood or misused. It is not a proof for the divinity of Christ and using it as such is like using a curling iron for baking. The Trilemma cannot speak to those who never viewed Jesus as morally great in the first place, and was never meant to. But for those who do believe in Jesus as one of the greatest moral teachers of all time, the implications of such a belief are inescapable. A claim to the virtuousness of Christ is a claim to the accuracy of the accounts which describe that virtue. A belief in the accuracy of those accounts is also a belief in the accuracy of their depictions of Jesus’ claim to divinity. Thus, if one claims that Jesus was morally great, it must be accepted that he truly claimed to be God. As has been shown, it is not possible for him to be lying about that claim, and there is no evidence that his sharp mind was plagued by the deep mental illness that would accompany his being mistaken about godhood, and therefore he must have been honest and correct in his assertion of divinity.

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<sup>14</sup> John 20:28.

# A Brief History of the New York C.S. Lewis Society

## Robert Trexler

In 1968, there were no C.S. Lewis Societies. With the exception of one or two books, there were no published studies of C.S. Lewis. It would be four years before Hooper and Green would publish the first biography. But in September of 1969, Henry Noel in New York City had an idea that would launch the first C.S. Lewis Society.

What led to that idea began in 1950 when Henry lived in France. A lifelong agnostic, he was attending a French school that used Lewis' book *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS* to teach good English style. When he returned to the States in 1954, he wrote, "I remembered it and became haunted; I had to write Geoffrey Bles (the British publisher) to obtain a copy and I bought *SURPRISED BY JOY* merely because I wanted more English of that quality."

In the early 1960s Henry got the books out and read them again and then started buying all Lewis' books. In 1963 he was baptized. After noticing the frequent references to Lewis in *National Review* magazine, he sent them this announcement which they inserted in the "Notes and Asides" section of the September 23, 1969 issue: "I invite all those living in or near NYC who are

longstanding admirers of Lewis' books, or who, for whatever reason, cherish feelings of affection and gratitude toward his memory, to get in touch with me ..."

Henry received over 40 inquiries from that advertisement. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, fourteen of those responders met on Staten Island and agreed to form the society. A month later they met again and accepted a charter. From the very beginning it was decided to publish a monthly bulletin which would include a report of the meeting as well as other news and essays.

In the February 1970 bulletin it is recorded that Walter Hooper wrote a letter to the Society regarding copyright concerns. The Society wrote back to assure him that there would not be any "indiscriminant reproduction of CSL's works." In March, Hooper wrote to say he would be in New York in the summer and, indeed, he first visited the early Society members in the home of Jim and Alejandra Como that year. By May 1970 there were 97 members in 20 states and 3 countries. There were no subscription fees the first year - costs were covered by donation.



Notable early members included Warnie Lewis, Owen Barfield, Walter Hooper, Clyde Kilby, Thomas Howard, Peter Kreeft, and Roger Lancelyn Green. A letter from Green appeared in the December 1970 issue:

**“I was very pleased to receive your letter, and most honoured and flattered by your proposal to make me an honorary member of the NYCSL Society. Thank you so much, I accept the honour with delight ... and I hope one day to be able to visit you, perhaps in 1972 when I may be able to come to New York. [...] your notes and reports make me wish I could be present at all your meetings [...] Work on the biography is proceeding very slowly: there is so much material to cover in the way of letters, diaries, etc. for the earlier part of his life --- and so many people who knew him and recall things about him in his later years. Of course, Walter and I can do little more than lay the foundation stone for all the books about Lewis and his works that will be written in years to come: but we must try to supply as firm and comprehensive a foundation as possible.”**

The speaker in May 1970 (our 7<sup>th</sup> meeting) was Jane Douglas whose personal remembrance of Lewis was printed in the Bulletin. Many of you are familiar with the seminal book, C.S. LEWIS AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE, edited by Jim Como and published in 1978. All but two of the essays in

that book were by people who knew Lewis personally - - - and one-third of the remembrances were first published in the Society bulletin.

Keep in mind that the publication of the Bulletin was accomplished without the benefits of a computer, internet, or email. The July 1974 issue details how much effort this took:

**“Robert Merchant is the person who secures a reporter for each meeting. The report is mailed to him in New Haven, he edits it if necessary and sends it to Jim Como. If there was a paper read at the meeting, this is sent directly to the editor. Letter excerpts are mostly from the files of the corresponding secretary and are sent to the editor from time to time. [...]**

**When Como has assembled the material, if there is time, he sends it for typing to Elmira, NY to Madge Mattichak, an expert typist [...] When it is returned, Como does the paste-up job and sends the finished sheets to McGovern, who takes them to the printer, later gathers them up, collates and staples the issues and mails them out. [...] The list of subscribers is in New Haven.”**

Our first Lewis Weekend conference was held in 1977 with Walter Hooper as our featured speaker. There have been eight weekends in all and speakers have included Jim Como, Ralph McInerny, William Griffin, Joe Christopher, Douglas Gresham, Joseph

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Pearce, David Downing, Lou Markos, Chris Mitchell and Peter Kreeft.

Kreeft's talk, C.S. LEWIS AND THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD, was printed in bulletin #175, May 1984 (there are now 450 bulletins), and he began with these words:

**“Back in 1967, when I was writing a little forty-eight page booklet on C.S. Lewis for the Wm. B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, I wrote them a letter with my completed manuscript saying I had enough file drawers that I could easily expand this little introductory booklet into a full-length book in a few months: would they be interested in looking at such a manuscript? Did they think Lewis was a major enough Christian thinker to justify an original philosophical and theological evaluation of him. Their reply was: No, we think the Lewis craze has peaked. This is the age of the secular city. No one will be reading Lewis ten or twenty years from now, much less books about Lewis.” (#6)**

There have been four editors since 1969: Gene McGovern, Jim Como, Jerry Daniels, and I began my tenure as editor 15 years ago this month. The content has been quite consistent through the years, but I changed the bulletin from a monthly to a bi-monthly publication to allow more time to complete the work and more pages to allow for lengthier essays. It was made clear to me from the beginning that the bulletin is not intended as a strictly academic journal, but its

purpose is to be a record of the Society's meetings, including published talks, essays, book reviews, news and letters.

In one issue, a member wrote to suggest that the Bulletin be changed into a quarterly publication, like a scholarly journal. As this letter from Charles Huttar published in November 1988 suggests, this was not a popular idea. He wrote, “I second those who hope the Bulletin stays as it is. Part of its real value is its unpretentiousness - - - refreshing monthly evidence that Lewis is important not just to academic professionals like me, but to real people. His stature is already beyond the power of a specialist journal to enhance it.”

Sometimes the letters send to us are my favorite part. For example, here is a letter from a young girl:

**“Dear C.S. Lewis, I love the books you wrote about Narnia. I know you are no longer alive, but I had to write to people who still believe in you. My teacher, Mrs. Farigno, told us we were going to have a book election and that all of us (everyone in my 6<sup>th</sup> grade class) would pick an author and give a presentation about his life and work. Then we would all vote. I'm very sorry you didn't win, but you did win 5<sup>th</sup> place. I wish very much you had won. I campaigned very hard for you. I love to read your books because they are magical, imaginative, exciting and there is a lot of adventure.”**

**Love, - a girl named Anna M. Lang  
The Rudolph Steiner School,  
New York**

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Our monthly meeting format has stood the test of time and remains virtually unchanged from the early years. There is a short reading from Lewis by one of the members, a time for announcements, introductions (when each person states their name and if they are a first-time visitor they are asked to name their first Lewis book or their favorite, or both). Then the speaker is introduced, we listen to the talk or participate in a moderated discussion, and then break at 9pm for refreshments.

We always meet on the second Friday of the month except August when we don't meet. In July we have a "From the Floor" meeting when people can bring up any topic of interest, and in particular we solicit criticisms of Lewis' writing or ideas. Believe it or not, we have one member who does not enjoy the Narnia books and it is an ongoing mystery why TIL WE HAVE FACES is the favorite of many and the least favorite of many more. For the past 12 years it has been our tradition to have a radio theater reading of one of Dorothy L. Sayers' radio plays from THE MAN BORN TO BE KING. It's one of our most popular and well-attended meetings where we sing Christmas carols on West 11<sup>th</sup> Street before coming inside for the play

The early meetings were held in member's homes. Then for a short while meetings were at a Baptist Church, then Madison Ave. Presbyterian Church until June 1972, then six years at the Rudolf Steiner School, a few months at the Salisbury Hotel, and finally, 1980, at The Church of the Ascension in Greenwich Village, where we have met for the past 34 years.

Many people attending the Taylor Conference today have been speakers at our monthly meeting: Charlie Starr, Michael

Ward, and Will Vaus. Our meeting schedule is on the new Society website and we love to welcome visitors. Meetings are open to the public and we serve coffee and cake afterwards.

Time does not allow me to mention many other memorable events and speakers. But I wanted to read a portion of a letter sent by Walter Hooper on the occasion of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**"I expect most of those who read this will be familiar with the history of the NYCSL Society and that of the Oxford Inklings. If you look at the beginnings of the Inklings you find Lewis, Tolkien and the others already in possession of the great imaginative ideas which over the years were developed in the company of one another. What I would call their best thoughts were not arrived at after years of meeting, and they certainly didn't bloom as a result of finding themselves the subject of doctoral dissertations. The best was there at the beginning and it came out over the years because of one another.**

**I feel sure the same is true of our Society. [...] We've developed, but I'm sure that whatever good we've received is not a result of ingenious theories about Lewis ... This stuff is not the same as enjoying the best that Lewis had to give, and I can think of few things that sadden me**

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**more than seeing a young person approaching Lewis through all this detritus, missing thereby those very things which caused the NYCSL Society to be founded, the Inklings to change the world, and CS Lewis groups to keep showing up everywhere. What all these groups have is the capacity to spread around the best God gave Lewis. I urge you my friends, not to exchange it for those things which never brought anyone together in charity [...] and which never lead anyone to enjoy what W.H. Lewis said his brother liked so much - - - “pastime with good company.” Thank you for giving me so much of your good company over these many years.**

As I read this letter, I realized that Walter has also described my pleasure in participating in the Taylor colloquium over the years. It is wonderful to be in the good company of friends you can “look along” with at those things that bring us great delight.

When I submitted my proposal for a talk, I suggested that I would end with some opinions about what makes for a successful Lewis Society or reading group. Primarily, I would say not to be intimidated or concerned if you or your members do not have literature degrees – neither did some of the Inklings. And, as Walter points out in his letter, this is not the essence of a Lewis Society - - - the essence is a genuine love of C.S. Lewis. Actually, I suspect the letter from “a girl named Anna M. Lang” captures this feeling

more effectively, and certainly more succinctly, than any master’s thesis.

If you want some ideas for starting a Lewis Society or reading group, I recommend Will Vaus’s book *SPEAKING OF JACK: A C.S. LEWIS DISCUSSION GUIDE*. But the most important secret for success is to imitate what we are experiencing his weekend - - - enjoying one another’s company and the company of C.S. Lewis and his friends.

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*[Note: You can become a subscribing member of the New York C.S. Lewis Society on their website: [www.nyclsociety.com](http://www.nyclsociety.com). Subscriptions in the USA are \$10 per year for six issues.]*

# **“The Fairy Way of Writing”: Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and C.S. Lewis’s “Habit of Mind”**

**Susan Wendling**

While readers of C.S. Lewis have commonly noted his early love for myths, fairy tales and epic poetry, the fullest impact of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* on Lewis’s personal worldview as well as on his imaginative and professional writings has yet to be noted. Since “learning about Spenser leads us into Lewis’s inner life” (1), let’s begin by reviewing briefly the responses of Lewis to this longest epic poem in the English language. With his lifelong love of Spenser established, we can then examine two key components embodied in *The Faerie Queene* itself: 1) its ancient neoplatonic worldview with its fusion of classical images of Nature with the poet’s imagination; and 2) its use of the Celtic “Faerie” realm to symbolize the highest spiritual significance of mere historic Britain. After exploring these two aspects of *The Faerie Queene* we can more readily see how Spenser’s “habit of mind” was utilized by Lewis in his own imaginative writings, as well as in his literary criticism and his philosophy of Myth.

## **LEWIS’S RESPONSES TO SPENSER**

In a letter to his boyhood friend, Arthur Greeves, Lewis writes that after reading the poem on weekends for about six months, he has “at last come to the end of the Faerie Queene: and though I say ‘at last,’ I almost wish he had lived to write six books more as he hoped to do—so much have I enjoyed it” (2). This reveals that Lewis in his

adolescence has transcended our modern objections and difficulties: the difficulty with poetic and even archaic language, resistance to long narrative poems, and finally, the modern failure to understand how allegory works. Yet, on the most basic level *The Faerie Queene* offers adventure. To quote Doris Myers:

. . . Its premise is that before Prince Arthur became king he made an extended journey to Fairyland, a parallel world . . . ruled by Gloriana, the fairy queen. In *The Faerie Queene* Arthur was supposed to accomplish great deeds for Gloriana, deeds somehow related to those of twelve other knights. . . . As allegory, its premise is that each knight’s adventures set forth one of the twelve virtues . . . (3).

Let us now hear Lewis’s own middle-aged voice in 1941 in an essay “On Reading *The Faerie Queene*”:

Beyond all doubt it is best to have made one’s first acquaintance with Spenser in a very large—and, preferably, illustrated—edition of *The Faerie Queene*, on a wet day, between the ages of twelve and sixteen; . . . those who have had this good fortune . . . will never have lost

touch with the poet. His great book will have accompanied them year by year . . . To them I need not speak; the problem is how to find substitutes for their slowly ripened habit of mind . . . (4).

Lewis goes on to describe the poem’s “medieval” beauties:

. . . What he [Spenser] had always liked was the Middle Ages as he imagined them to have been and as they survived in his time in the pageant, the morality play, and the metrical romance. . . . [thus] he was enabled to produce a tale more solemn, more redolent of the past, more venerable, than any real medieval romance—to deny, in his own person, the breach between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance . . . (5).

These quotes from Lewis himself reveal the various elements of *The Faerie Queene* summed up by Gene Edward Veith: “Here was golden language, allegory and romance. Here too was the appeal of fairy tales and a self-contained fantasy world, all bound together in an imaginatively realized Christianity” (6). In other words, growing up with Spenser provided Lewis with a model of thought, a “habit of mind” which was fundamentally syncretistic. Lewis thus learned from Spenser that just as the poet taught lessons of moral truth through images of great beauty, he could likewise in his own imaginative writings both enchant and instruct. Before we consider further evidences of Lewis’s Spenserian “habit of mind,” however, we need to hear what Lewis himself has to say about Spenser’s fusion of both Christian thought and Platonic thought. This philosophical syncretism is known as “Neoplatonism” and is much beloved by Lewis.

### NEOPLATONIC THOUGHT IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

At the conclusion of his essay *Edmund Spenser, 1552-99*, Lewis tries to explain to his readers how Spenser writes “primarily as a (Protestant) Christian and secondarily as a Platonist” (7). Lewis then states that “both systems are united with one another and cut off from some—not all—modern thought by their conviction that Nature . . . is not the only thing that exists. . . . Christians and Platonists both believe in an ‘other’ world” (8). When the poet, through his imagination, aspires for that “other world” which is the Source of all Beauty (the “First Fair”), he produces “beauty making beautiful old rhyme” which is called “golden and sweet” by Lewis in his OHEL volume. Quoting Sidney, a “dazzling” contemporary of Spenser, Lewis reminds that “the poet, unlike the historian, is not ‘captived to the truth of a foolish world’ but can ‘deliuer a golden’”(9). Speaking against our modern tendency to subjectivize “influences” or “inspiration,” Lewis reminds as well that in the sixteenth century the “pneumatology” of the prevailing ancient “spiritual cosmology” required the word “genius” to be understood literally as “an objective, created, personal being” (10). Thus, the poet does indeed call down fire from heaven to make this “foolish” though lovely world “more lovelie” (11). Perhaps thinking of Spenser’s allegories of the Virtues in *The Faerie Queene*, he tells us that the poet’s aim is *both* ethical and aesthetic: “But this is part of the loveliness, for virtue is lovely, not merely obligatory; a celestial mistress, not a categorical imperative” (12). In discussing “the endless quest” on which Spenser sent his hero Arthur, Lewis defends the utter reality of such quests in Neoplatonic terms reminiscent of his own descriptions of Sehnsucht: “To a Christian Platonist these formless longings would logically appear as among the sanest and most fruitful experiences we have; *for their object really exists and really draws us to itself*” [italics added] (13).

Another aspect of Spenser’s Elizabethan Neoplatonism, pointed out by Dame Frances Yates, a leading Renaissance

scholar, is the fusion of cosmic, astral themes with its moral allegory of the virtues being celebrated in each of the books of *The Faerie Queene*. The complexity and beauty of these fusions are revealed allegorically, of course, but remain philosophically Neoplatonic:

... the planetary themes of the poem should be seen as arranged . . . in an order deliberately selected to express the idea and purpose of the poem, the presentation of an ideal portrait of a religious and moral leader, of Queen Elizabeth I . . . That portrait has a variegated planetary and angelic colouring. Lighted by a Sun of Christian religion and Christian Charity (Book I), it includes red glints of Martial firmness (Book II). The white Chastity of the Moon (Book III) expresses the purity of the Virgin Queen’s reform. Mercury (Book IV) includes all colours and can reconcile opposites with spiritual alchemy. The Justice of Saturn (Book V) represents the wise rule of Astraea. And with Venus (Book VI) this complex movement, or religion, or personality, takes on the colouring of a courtly cult, a court ruled over by the messianic figure whom the poem as a whole celebrates (14).

Although such alchemical and astrological fusions are part of Neoplatonic philosophy, we know that Lewis loved the ancient cosmology found embedded in literature and was deeply read in such matters. In his first published scholarly book, *The Allegory of Love* (1936), in his massive magnum opus the OHEL volume (1954), as well as in the posthumously published *The Discarded Image* and *Spenser’s Images of Life*, Lewis shows his readers that literary history can illuminate Neoplatonic thought, allegorical method, and changing psychologies of Love. As Veith so aptly summarizes: “To enter into this by now quite

alien sensibility by way of romantic allegory, Lewis shows, is to enter a universe charged with meaning and mystery, where every fact of existence carries multi-leveled symbolic depths” (15).

Keeping in mind that most scholars do see Lewis as a “Neoplatonist Christian” (16), perhaps a specific example should here be cited. The reference—of the spiritual reality behind the image of Venus—occurs in his commentary on the Arthurian poetry of his close friend Charles Williams, specifically, his poem *The Calling of Taliessin*. Lewis identifies the figure of Nimue, the “mother of making,” as “that energy which reproduces on earth a pattern derived from ‘the third heaven,’ i.e. from the sphere of Venus, the sphere of Divine Love” (17). Continuing, he notes that what resides in the third heaven is called by Williams “the feeling intellect.” Carefully differentiating Wordsworth’s understanding of the feeling intellect as being a subjective state in human minds, Williams is, according to Lewis:

... thinking of an objective celestial fact . . . [which] exists as a permanent reality in the spiritual world and by response to that archetype Nimue brings the whole process of nature into being. *Williams is here . . . reproducing the doctrine of the Renaissance Platonists that Venus—celestial love and beauty—was the pattern or model after which God created the material universe . . .* [italics added] (18).

Published in 1974, along with Williams’ own Arthurian poetry cycle and his unfinished manuscript, *The Figure of Arthur*, such comments reveal Lewis’s own consistent use of “the old [Neoplatonic] model” in his own thinking. Of course, it is also significant that upon recognizing this ancient and true spiritual reality, he would then cite Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, iii, vi. 12,” [where] the sphere of Venus is “The house of goodly formes and faire aspect Whence all the world

derives the glorious Features of Beautie” (19).

### SPENSER’S USE OF “FAERIE” AS SPIRITUAL SYMBOL

Keeping these details of ancient spiritual cosmology in mind, we can now move on to explore the significance of the poem’s setting: Faerie itself. It seems so basic to readers: that the settings for this iconic epic poem, are both historical England and its mythical Celtic “Otherworld” of Faerie. In his fascinating 1918 article, “Spenser’s Fairy Mythology,” Edwin Greenlaw unpacks the implications. It is worth quoting him on the ancient story of King Arthur, the prophecy regarding his return as the “true king,” his association with the realm of Faerie, and the association of a “fairy bloodline” with the “true ruler” of Britain:

The traditional Arthur was a British king about whose birth many mysterious legends clustered, and who, at the end of his life, was received in *Faerie*, after that last great battle in the West, to be healed of his grievous wound by Morgain . . . After a long sojourn in *Faerie*, he was to come again and rule Britain. . . . Spenser’s use of this tradition about the fairy sovereign gives the clue to the idea on which the entire poem rests. . . . To state the proposition concisely: *Spenser conceives the Tudor rule as a return to the old British line; he conceives Elizabeth Tudor as the particular sovereign, coming out of Faerie, whose return fulfils the old prophecy.* . . (20).

Greenlaw goes on to delimit the critical importance of Spenser’s “chronicles” which blend the “histories” of the line of “British kings” with the “line” given in the “Fairy chronicles” seen in the prophecy of Merlin given to the character of Britomart in Book III. The identification of both the old British line and the “fairy line” with the present

actual 16<sup>th</sup> century historical sovereign, Queen Elizabeth I, is further made by Spenser in the Prologue to Book II st. IV, where the English realm is called the “lond of Faery” and in this “antique ymage” the Queen is asked to see her “great auncestry.” By this means Spenser is able to enrich the “real history” of Queen Elizabeth’s conflict with Philip of Spain with the Arthur-Gloriana story. In Book III, ii, 7-8, Britomart says that she has come from her “native soyle, that is by name The greater Britaine,” to “Faery lond,” where she has heard that many famous knights and ladies dwell:

. . . That is, fairy land, for the moment is Wales, the last stronghold of Britain. This is quite in agreement with the entire conception. Avalon, Fairy Land, Wales, is ruled by a *fee* who became the protector of Arthur, healed his wound, and preserved him until the time for his return, in the Tudor house, to worldly empire . . . (21)

Although Spenser’s “Faerie” provides “the entire conception” for the unifying structure of his epic poem, Frances Yates also uncovers a kind of “British Israel mystique” (22). Yates claims that there was a highly charged atmosphere of sacred destiny and “religious mission” found in Elizabeth’s court and particularly the circle of her court astrologer, Dr. John Dee, who, according to Yates, was the “great formative influence on Spenser” (23). She believes that *The Faerie Queene* “expresses a ‘prophetic moment’, after the Armada victory, when the queen appeared almost as a symbol of a new religion, transcending both Catholic and Protestant in some far-reaching revelation, and transmitting a universal Messianic message . . .” (24). In other words, just as ancient Israel was the carrier of God’s message to humanity, so Britain was to be the carrier of a second coming of God’s Kingdom on earth.

Since Lewis was deeply read in English literature as well as the Florentine



Neoplatonists, he of course would have been aware of this “millenarian underground.” The idea of the heavenly City somehow being incarnate on earth as part of humanity’s redeemed destiny is at least part of the meaning of Logres or “spiritual Britain” preparing for some sort of second Advent. Having loved Spenser’s poetry for almost his entire life, it is therefore no surprise that Lewis himself utilizes this idea of mythic “history” for his own mature fictional writings and literary criticism. Indeed, in his seminal 1944 essay, *Myth Became Fact*, he relates how the “cosmic Christ” is “heaven” and how the kingdom needs to be incarnated on earth:

. . . Now as myth transcends thought, Incarnation transcends myth. The heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact. The old myth of the Dying God, *without ceasing to be myth*, comes down from the heaven of legend and imagination to the earth of history . . . By becoming fact it does not cease to be myth: that is the miracle . . . If God chooses to be mythopoeic—and is not the sky itself a myth—shall we refuse to be *mythopathic*? For this is the marriage of heaven and earth: Perfect Myth and Perfect Fact (25).

He further explains the relation of myth to reality when he says “what flows into you from myth is not truth but reality . . . and, therefore, every myth becomes the father of innumerable truths on the abstract level” (26).

## CONCLUSION

As we conclude our exploration of Lewis’s lifelong responses to Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, it is easy to see that his love for this poem bore rich fruit. As Maria Kuteeva puts it “Lewis’s imaginative stories can indeed be considered as a form of his own ‘creative mythology’. . . The study of classical and medieval literature [particularly as embedded in *The Faerie Queene*] had a

profound effect on Lewis as a myth-maker. As a result, both mythological and cosmological aspects of his imaginary world seem to be deeply rooted in the beliefs of those periods” (27). Gene Edward Veith flatly states that “What Spenser does with Faerie Land, Lewis does with Narnia” (28). Rather than this-equals-that schematic allegorical codes, Lewis’s images function sacramentally to bring his readers face to face with Reality itself, thus becoming “landscapes of spiritual testing” (29).

Professionally, his repeated readings of Spenser must have also been the foundation for his work as a literary critic, scholar and lecturer. He gives a central place to his praise of Spenser in his first professional work, *The Allegory of Love* (1936), saying that there is a harmony of Spenser’s mind, such that “his work is one, like a growing thing, a tree” with its branches reaching to heaven and its roots to hell. And, “there is a place for everything and everything is in its place. Nothing is repressed; nothing is insubordinate. To read him is to grow in mental health” (30). The last chapter of *Allegory* treats *The Faerie Queene* as “the final defeat of courtly love by the romantic conception of marriage” (31). 15 years later, he returns to reassess Spenser for his magnum opus, the OHEL volume, saying that he had not previously “sufficiently emphasized the originality and fruitfulness of this structural invention [of Faerie Land]” (32). According to Lewis, it solves all the problems of writing about states of the heart, Spenser’s real concern, for “all the states become people or places in that country” (33). When Lewis lectured on Spenser at Cambridge University in the 1950’s, these lecture notes were gathered up and published posthumously as *Spenser’s Images of Life*. Partly because Spenser is embedding medieval values in his visionary epic and carrying them forward into his own time, Renaissance England, Lewis most famously believed that there was more to connect these periods of history than to separate them, therefore proclaiming that “the Renaissance never happened.”

Time prevents detailing the philosophical impact of Spenser’s entwining of mythic “fairy” history and British everyday “literal” history. This fusion of Myth and History presented as spiritual Reality played a key role in Lewis’s conversion to Christianity in 1931. Lewis clearly outlines his belief of images functioning mythopoeically to bring us the experience of Reality in his essay *Myth Became Fact* (1944). He tells us there that we must be “mythopathic” in our understanding and not to fear the “mythical radiance resting on our theology” (34). It seems that for Lewis, reading *The Faerie Queene* was his lifelong preparation for showing us this necessary truth.

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# Cartographer of the Divine: C.S. Lewis as *Doctor Ecclesiae*

Donald T. Williams  
Toccoa Falls College

## INTRODUCTION:

When George Sayer's first meeting with his new Oxford tutor C. S. Lewis ended, another Oxford faculty member named J. R. R. Tolkien was waiting to see Lewis next. How did the new fresher get on with Lewis, Tolkien wanted to know. Rather well, Sayer figured, adding that he thought Lewis was going to make quite an interesting mentor. "Interesting?" Tolkien replied. "Yes, he's certainly that. You'll never get to the bottom of him" (Sayer xx).

This essay is not going to get to the bottom of Lewis either. It mainly deals with Lewis's theology, only one of many aspects of his rich and fertile thought. It won't even get to the bottom of that. It will, though, try to indicate why Lewis matters, not just as a Christian fantasy writer and apologist, but as a *theologian*, a teacher of the church.

Lewis's theology is, somewhat surprisingly, a relatively neglected aspect of his influence. There is only one book currently on the market that tries to survey Lewis's theology as a whole (Vaus), and it consists almost entirely of summary (albeit accurate), with relatively little analysis or critique. Other book-length studies focus on Lewis's approach to only one doctrine (e.g. Christensen, bibliology; Payne, pneumatology; Brazier, Christology), or one area (e.g., apologetics, Purtil, Burson and Walls, Markos), or one idea (e.g. Reppert, the

argument from reason). We do not yet have a book that looks at Lewis's presentation of Christian doctrine as a unified whole and asks what are its strengths and weaknesses as a guide to biblical faith. That is the hole I hope eventually to try to fill.

It is a strange hole to find in Lewis studies. For while he was not a professional theologian, Lewis might well have gotten more Christian doctrinal content into more heads than anyone who was a professional theologian in his day or since. He saw himself as a "translator," putting abstruse theological ideas back into the language of the people because the professional theologians had forgotten that these truths were *for* the people of God. He said, with excessive self-deprecation, "If the real theologians had tackled this laborious work of translation about a hundred years ago, when they began to lose touch with the people (for whom Christ died), there would have been no place for me" ("Rejoinder" 183). The place was there, and we may be glad for the way Lewis filled it.

Lewis then may be the most important *amateur* theologian ever. Many people (including famously Charles Colson) testify to having been brought to Christ by Lewis's writings, and many more to having been preserved in the faith by discovering him in a period of doubt and questioning. The "Broadcast Talks" which became *Mere Christianity* made Lewis the second most

recognizable voice on the BBC in the 1940's (after Winston Churchill), and his influence has only grown. Half a century after his death, almost all his books are still in print (those which briefly go out tend to cycle back in), and his popularity, especially with American Evangelicals, shows no signs of fading.

As an evangelist (indirectly), an apologist, an expounder, and an incarnater in fiction of the faith, Lewis was one of the most imaginatively winsome and logically forceful ambassadors for Christianity we have seen. For that very reason it behooves us to cultivate a critically sound judgment about his influence. What is the theology that lies behind the popular apologetics, the Narnia books, and the Space Trilogy? How biblical is it? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Where does Lewis succeed in explaining and portraying the truth about Christ, and where in those presentations should we wary or withhold our judgment? Those are all questions that need to be answered. We will try to explain why in the following pages.

### THE LIFE:

Who was this man who became the most important amateur theologian in the history of the church? The outlines of his life are well known. C. S. Lewis was born in 1898 in Northern Ireland. He lost his mother to cancer as a young lad and was sent to a series of horrible boarding schools where he lost the nominal faith of his childhood. He was tutored by William T. Kirkpatrick, who taught him logic, classical languages, and an uncompromising love of debate and loyalty to truth. He served in the trenches of World War I and was wounded in action. He took a triple first at Oxford, in classics, philosophy, and English. While there his reading and his friends undermined his atheism (the story is told in full in *Surprised by Joy*), and he reluctantly became a theist and then a Christian. He became tutor in English at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he became known as a Christian apologist, founded with

J. R. R. Tolkien the writers group The Inklings, and was president of the Socratic Club, devoted to debates between Christians and atheists. He became Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge. At both schools he wrote literary scholarship that is still read today. He married Joy Davidman and lost her to cancer, inspiring a play and movie very loosely based on their love story. He wrote the Narnia books, one of the most popular series of children's books of all time, and one of the most enjoyed by adults as well as children. He died on November 22, 1963, the same day President Kennedy was shot.

The story is told in detail elsewhere (best by Green and Hooper, by Sayer, and by Lewis himself in *Surprised by Joy*). What interests us here is the consistent manifestation in it of two traits which rarely appear in such strength in the same person, and which in combination are what make Lewis a theologian still worthy of our attention half a century after his death, despite his lack of formal training in that field. They were a fertile imagination alive to the beauty and mystery of life, along with a sharp logical mind capable of deep critical analysis. It was precisely this combination that, in his atheist phase, would not let him rest content in his unbelief. He writes in his autobiography of the frustration of believing only in atoms in motion while caring only about gods and heroes and the great myths (*SBJ* 174). A lesser man might have just given up on the gods and myths and become cynical. Lewis could not. He wrote to his friend Arthur Greeves on 23 May 1918:

Faeries must be in the woods  
Or the satyr's merry broods,  
Tritons in the summer sea,  
Else how could the dead things be  
Half so lovely as they are? . . .

Atoms dead could never thus  
Move the human heart of us,  
Unless the beauty that we see  
Part of endless beauty be. (*L* 1:373)

“Atoms dead could never thus / Move the human heart of us.” Lewis saw a contradiction in the philosophy he had accepted—not yet a contradiction in its logic (that would come later), but a contradiction between his reductionistic, materialist philosophy and life itself. It would take him some time to realize how to resolve that impasse, with many false starts. He wrote to Greeves on 29 May 1918, “The conviction is gaining ground on me that after all Spirit does exist. . . . I fancy there is Something right outside time & place, which did not create matter as the Christians say, but is matter’s great enemy: and that Beauty is the call of the spirit in that something to the spirit in us” (*L* 1:374). The full Christian resolution would be some time in coming. But when it came it would come in the form precisely of a healing of the troubling dichotomy: He would write his brother, Warnie, on 24 Oct. 1931 that William Law’s *Appeal to All that Doubt or Disbelieve* is “one of those rare works which make you say of Christianity, ‘Here is the very thing you like in poetry and the romances, only this time it’s true’” (2:5).

Poetry . . . true. Yes.

The thing to see here is that it was the dual impulse to both imagination and reason, plus the compulsion to find some kind of unity between them that would not be in conflict with life as we actually experience it, that drove Lewis long before he concluded that the answer to this problem is found in Christ.

We can see it coming already: rational apologetics that is full of apt analogy that could only come from the imagination, and imaginary worlds of haunting beauty that contain as integral components set pieces of logical reasoning like Puddleglum’s refutation of the Green Witch. We step from one to the other seamlessly. And that is why Lewis’s theology matters: it is a theology for a Christian life that refuses to be reduced either to cold reason or passionate emotion, and also refuses to compromise either to get the other. With whatever flaws we may discover it to have, it is a theology that flows from the drive to wholeness. Its ability to lead us in

the direction of wholeness is a significant reason why we are still reading it. And it is the reason why we should also want to study it.

## THE STUDY AND ITS DIFFICULTIES:

The task we have set before us, a critical study of Lewis’s theology, is not an easy one. One might think it would be, given the admirable clarity of Lewis’s prose and the aptness of his analogies. But a few difficulties arise to complicate things.

### A. Polarization

The first is that, ironically given his commitment to “mere” Christianity, Lewis is a surprisingly polarizing force. It is hard to get an objective handle on him. He has attracted on the one hand an almost idolatrous kind of admiration from a certain kind of Evangelical and been the subject of writings from that group that can only be called hagiography. In reaction to this, on the other hand, one finds a certain kind of scholar who thinks he will get instant academic “street cred” if he can find fault with Lewis. He gets almost canonized by the one group and sometimes glibly patronized by the other.

Meanwhile, people of almost every theological persuasion—fundamentalist, Evangelical, neo-orthodox, liberal, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox—want to enlist Lewis on their “side.” One can read tortured attempts by all these groups to claim that Lewis was really one of them—or would have been had he just lived a bit longer! Emotions get involved pretty quickly in some of these turf battles because there is genuinely a lot at stake. This situation alerts us to the danger that many people are more interested in *using* Lewis than in truly understanding him. It is a real temptation because where Lewis is really an ally, he is a formidable one. I will try to resist the temptation to make Lewis more of a conservative Evangelical Protestant (to give full disclosure about my own position)

than he really was. He is often an ally of that camp, as it rightly perceives—but not always. To honor Lewis, in other words, we have first to honor truth.

## B. Fiction

A second difficulty arises from the fact that Lewis's most popular books, and among his most theologically influential, are fiction. They are fiction, but they are not (except for *The Pilgrim's Regress*) allegory, despite many careless statements by Lewis's readers to the contrary. An allegory is a work of symbolic fiction in which there is a fairly simple correspondence between items or characters in the story and what they represent in the "real" world. (I know there are more sophisticated allegories in which the relationships are not *that* simple—but I'm giving a rough definition here to make a point.) For example, in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the characters have names like "Mr. Worldly Wise Man" or "Faithful." It is not hard to tell what they represent, and their words and actions are intended as direct illustrations of the concepts that they picture. One is on pretty safe ground then talking about Bunyan's theology based on *Pilgrim's Progress*. But Lewis's fictional writings are mostly not like that. Aslan is not simply Christ; he is Christ as he *might* have been *if* God had created a world of talking animals and been incarnated there.

Lewis referred to the things that happen in Narnia or the Space Trilogy as "supposals" as distinguished from "allegories." He explained to Edward T. Dell in a letter of 4 Feb. 1949, "You must not confuse my romances with my theses. In the latter I state and argue a creed. In the former, much is merely supposed for the sake of the story" (L, 2:914). Similarly, he wrote to a Fifth-Grade Class in Maryland on 24 May 1954:

You are mistaken when you think that everything in the book "represents" something in this

world. Things do that in *Pilgrim's Progress* but I'm not writing in that way. I did not say to myself "Let us represent Jesus as He really is in our world by a Lion in Narnia": I said, "Let us *suppose* that there were a land like Narnia and that the son of God, as He became a Man in our world, became a Lion there, and then imagine what would happen." (3:479-80; cf. 3:1004; emphasis in the original)

In the same vein, Lewis wrote to Tony Pollock on 3 May 1954: "Behind my own stories there are no 'facts' at all, tho' I hope there are truths. That is, they may be regarded as imaginative hypotheses illustrating what I believe to be theological truths" (L 3:465).

The most important passage for understanding the relation of the fiction to Lewis's theological beliefs may be this one:

I saw how stories of this kind could steal past a certain inhibition which had paralyzed much of my own religion in childhood. Why did one find it so hard to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or about the sufferings of Christ? I thought that the chief reason was that one was told one ought to. . . . But supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons? ("Sometimes" 37)

The fiction then is relevant to understanding Lewis's theology; there is theology there, sneaking past watchful dragons to appear in potency. But one has to be careful about deriving theology from fiction. On the one hand, the children learn to know Aslan in Narnia so that they might learn his other name here. "There I have another name. You must learn to know me by that

name. This was the very reason you were brought into Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little you may know me better there” (VDT 270). Therefore, we are intended to see parallels between Aslan (or Maleldil) and Christ. But we cannot assume that any given detail in the stories necessarily carries a doctrinal meaning. Rather, we should expect the parallels to be on the level of major motifs: incarnation, sacrifice, substitution, etc. As Lewis reminds us, “The only moral [or doctrinal lesson] that is of any value is that which arises inevitably from the whole cast of the author’s mind” (“Three Ways” 33). We want to know the theology that lies behind Narnia and the Field of Arbol. But if Lewis gave us an accurate description of what he was doing, we should expect first to find it *taught* it in expository works like *Mere Christianity* and *Miracles*, and then see it *illustrated* by Narnia and the Space Trilogy. And his description was accurate, for it is consistent with the nature of the kind of fiction he wrote.

### C. “Mere” Christianity

A third complication arises from Lewis’s strategy of focusing only on what he called “mere Christianity.” In the book of that name he deliberately tries to avoid giving any advice to people who are hesitating between two “rooms” of the “house” of Christianity; he only wants to get them into the “hall.” (He does tell them to look for truth rather than nice paneling or a charismatic doorkeeper, but gives no guidance as to which room best fits that criterion.) This is a strategy he tried to follow in all of his writing and public speaking on behalf of the faith. As he wrote to Edward T. Dell on 29 April 1963, “A great deal of my utility has depended on my having kept out of all dog-fights between professing schools of ‘Christian’ thought” (L 3:1425).

My point here is not to criticize Lewis for this strategy. It was what he took to be his calling, and he was certainly right that it contributed in significant ways to his usefulness. It has its advantages, and I follow

it in some circumstances myself. But it does present some challenges for those wishing to study Lewis’s theology. For Christian doctrine is not just a random set of unrelated propositions, but an integrated whole in which every part is related to every other part and all find their center in the very character of the God who revealed Himself in Christ to the Prophets and the Apostles. To leave something out because it is controversial or thought (by some) not to be central, is not necessarily just to leave something out; the omission might have an unintended effect on what is left in. And while many denominational differences are indeed over tragically peripheral matters, not all are. Some on both sides have thought that some of the questions at issue between Protestants and the Church of Rome, for example, go right to the heart of what the Gospel is.

Lewis’s “mere Christian” stance then was both an asset and a liability to his ministry, and both sides of that equation need to be taken into account. It is something we must remember in evaluating his teaching. One of the problems it creates is that it opened up space for speculation by those who would like to enlist Lewis as allies for their own traditions. Fortunately, he sometimes allowed himself in private correspondence to take positions he would not have taken publicly, and we can use these moments to fill in gaps in the picture. They not only serve to eliminate certain unfruitful speculations; they can also provide context that illuminates his public theology at certain points. Thus the new expanded three-volume edition of Lewis’s letters is indispensable to anyone who wishes to get a complete view of Lewis’s thinking.

### D. Volume

Another challenge is the sheer volume of Lewis’s writing. Popular apologetics, fiction, poetry, works of literary scholarship, letters, volumes of essays collected by Walter Hooper—there are well over forty books all



told, and none of them irrelevant. For Lewis's mind, and consequently his work, was all of a piece. His friend and fellow Inkling Owen Barfield said that the unity of Lewis's thought came from a quality Barfield called "presence of mind." By this he meant that "somehow what [Lewis] thought about everything was secretly present in what he said about anything" (qtd. in Edwards, *Pineapple* 2). He did not expound Christian doctrine in his literary scholarship, but his views there were informed by the same Christian world view that he expounded directly elsewhere. When we add to that the fact that he was often commenting on Christian writers, trying to win a sympathetic hearing for writers like Milton, for example, we realize that there is nothing in his body of writing so technical or obscure that it might not contain something relevant to our topic. One of the fringe benefits of this study then will be the way in which it illustrates the truth of Barfield's claim.

## CONCLUSION:

By calling C. S. Lewis an "amateur" theologian I do not mean to imply that he was not a good one or in any way an unimportant one. The word should be taken in its etymological sense of one who does something, not for a living, but for the *love* of it. Love for God, love for God's truth, love for God's people: apart from these loves, no one should presume to handle sacred things. In this sense, all the laity should be theologians and all the clergy amateurs.

That Lewis had the right loves for the job is evident. His love of God helped him to keep himself out of the center and Christ in it. He wrote to Mary Margaret McCaslin on 2 Aug. 1954, "I'm shocked to hear that your friends think of following *me*. I wanted them to follow Christ. But they'll get over this confusion soon, I trust" (L 3:501). His love of the truth made him value faithfulness: "If any parts of the book are 'original,' in the sense of being novel or unorthodox, they are so against my will and as a result of my

ignorance" (*Problem* viii). His love of God's people sent him to the BBC and to many RAF camps during the Second World War and made him work hard at the task of "translation." His love of good English didn't hurt either. He wrote to Jocelyn Gibb on 11 July 1959:

So many people, when they begin "research," lose all desire, and presently all power, of writing clear, sharp, and unambiguous English. Hold onto your finite transitive verb, your concrete nouns, and the muscles of the language (*but, though, for, because*, etc.). The more abstract the subject, the more our language shd. avoid all unnecessary abstraction. (L 3:1069)

All these loves, combined with the drive for the integration of reason and imagination we discussed above, contributed to Lewis's greatness as a writer and as a theologian. I think they also helped him see clearly what is at stake in our theology:

Here is a door, behind which, according to some people, the secret of the universe is waiting for you. Either that's true, or it isn't. And if it isn't, then what the door really conceals is simply the greatest fraud, the most colossal "sell" on record. Isn't it obviously the job of every man (that is a man and not a rabbit) to try to find out which, and then to devote his full energies either to serving this tremendous secret or to exposing and destroying this gigantic humbug? ("Man or Rabbit" 111-12)

Lewis so devoted his energies, and he can help us to do so too.

I've been talking throughout this essay about why we should care about Lewis as a theologian and care about his theology. Perhaps I can best sum it up by applying to him words he wrote about John Milton. For

in the final analysis, we only honor Lewis's memory to the extent that we do not really care that these ideas were Lewis's. We will only please his departed spirit if we care about them to the extent that they are *true*. And so I think he would be pleased if we see him as a guide who can point beyond himself, as Beatrice did for Dante, and as Milton did for Lewis himself:

We are summoned not to hear what one particular man thought and felt about the Fall, but to take part, under his leadership, in a great mimetic dance of all Christendom, ourselves soaring and ruining from Heaven, ourselves enacting Hell and Paradise, the Fall and the repentance. (PPL 60).

In that spirit, let us begin.

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**Donald T. Williams** holds a BA in English from Taylor University, an M.Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and a PhD in Medieval and Renaissance Literature from the University of Georgia. He is the author of nine books: *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Nashville: Broadman, 1994), *The Disciple's Prayer* (Camp Hill, Pa.: Christian Publications, 1999), *Mere Humanity: G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, and J. R. R. Tolkien on the Human Condition* (Nashville: Broadman, 2006), *Credo: An Exposition of the Nicene Creed* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2007), *The Devil's Dictionary of the Christian Faith* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), *Stars Through the Clouds: The Collected Poetry of Donald T. Williams* (Lynchburg: Lantern Hollow Press, 2011), *Inklings of Reality: Essays toward a Christian Philosophy of Letters*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lynchburg: Lantern Hollow Press, 2012), *Reflections from Plato's Cave: Essays in Evangelical Philosophy* (Lynchburg: Lantern Hollow Press, 2012), and (with Jim Prothero), *Gaining a Face: The Romanticism of C. S. Lewis* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholar's Press, 2013). He has also contributed essays, poems, and reviews to such journals as *National Review*, *Christianity Today*, *Touchstone*, *Modern Reformation*, *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *Philosophia Christi*, *Theology Today*, *Christianity and Literature*, *Christian Scholar's Review*, *Mythlore*, *SEVEN: An Anglo-American Review*, *Christian Educator's Journal*, *Preaching*, and *Christian Research Journal*. An ordained minister in the Evangelical Free Church of America with many years of pastoral experience, he has spent several summers training local pastors for Church Planting International in East Africa and India, and currently serves as R. A. Forrest Scholar and Professor of English at Toccoa Falls College in the hills of NE Georgia. Material on literature, theology, the Inklings, and other topics can be found at his website, <http://doulomen.tripod.com>. He blogs at [www.lanternhollowpress.com](http://www.lanternhollowpress.com).

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