



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 23
Number 3

Article 2

6-15-2001

C.S. Lewis, Literary Critic: A Reassessment

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Calin, William (2001) "C.S. Lewis, Literary Critic: A Reassessment," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 23 : No. 3 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol23/iss3/2>

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Abstract

Addresses “Lewis’s accomplishments as a medieval and Renaissance scholar; his contributions to theory, and where he can be placed as a proto-theorist; and how well his work holds up today.”

Additional Keywords

Lewis, C.S. Literary criticism; Medieval literature; Renaissance literature

C. S. Lewis, Literary Critic: A Reassessment

William Calin

MY field is French literature, especially the Middle Ages but also poetry from the Renaissance to the present. Over the last two decades I have also worked on medieval French, Anglo-Norman, and English in a European context, and on Scots and Breton. During all this time, indeed as far back as graduate school, C. S. Lewis the literary critic and scholar crossed my path; more accurately, I crossed his and took inspiration from his work and his example, the inspiration that only a few can give. This, simply to explain why and from what perspective this paper is written. In it I address three issues: Lewis's accomplishments as a medieval and Renaissance scholar; his contributions to theory, and where he can be placed as a proto-theorist; and how well his work holds up today—his legacy. My purpose is to show his extraordinary variety, range, and critical imagination; also that, much as he might object to the idea, Lewis is a genuinely modern man who, in criticism as in other domains, partakes of modernity and modernism.

Nevill Coghill quotes his friend C. S. Lewis as having exclaimed one day, "I believe [. . .] I have proved that the Renaissance never happened in England. *Alternatively* [. . .] that if it did, *it had no importance!*" (60-61). This, it would appear, when they were students. A few decades later, George Sayer quotes Lewis as declaring to *his* students: "I think I have succeeded in demonstrating that the Renaissance, as generally understood, never existed" (195). Finally, in the polemical "Introduction" to his massive *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (Excluding Drama)*, he observes that it is acceptable to employ the term "Renaissance" for the renewed interest in Latin and Greek. However, if "Renaissance" is meant to carry additional baggage, it should not be used, and he defines the Renaissance of those baggage-carriers who proliferate in Academe as "an imaginary entity responsible for everything the speaker likes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (55).

The convictions behind these *boutades* can be found in the famous inaugural lecture for the Chair in English at Cambridge (*De Descriptione Temporum*), where Lewis proclaims his belief in Old Western culture, which includes the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, for that matter what we call the baroque, the classical, and the rococo. For Lewis, the great divide in Western culture did not occur between Antiquity and the Middle Ages or between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Somewhat like Toynbee he situates it in the nineteenth century with the Industrial Revolution and the birth of our modernity. Austen and Scott partake of Old Western just as Chaucer and Spenser do, whereas Eliot and Lawrence do not.

Lewis prizes that earlier, pre-modern age which manifests such an extraordinary continuity of culture. By belittling and mocking the term "Renaissance," Lewis wishes in no way to denigrate the sixteenth century. On the contrary, the Renaissance, for him, is a period which, at its best, prolongs and embellishes so much of the best that is medieval: feudal loyalty and honor, chivalry, heroism, courtly love and the spirit of the courts, alchemy, astrology, high magic and high daemonology, and, of course, a vital, organic Christian faith. In sum, he exalts the Renaissance by emphasizing its medievalness.

I should like, therefore, to offer a paradox: that Lewis's denigration of clichés concerning the Renaissance and his vision of continuity make a greater contribution to Renaissance studies than to the medieval. It is surely not a coincidence that his most solid and most learned book, in my opinion Lewis's masterpiece, proves to be the *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*. A splendid piece of critical and historical revaluation is entitled *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. *The Allegory of Love*, for all its major and still valid contributions to medieval studies, could have been entitled *A Preface to The Faerie Queene*. The goal of this book is to trace the origins and evolution of the tradition of allegory and courtly Eros which shape Spenser's poem and without which it cannot be read or understood. (It should not be forgotten that Lewis wrote more, by far, on Spenser and Milton than on any other single author, medieval or modern.)¹ Finally, *The Discarded Image*, Lewis's most popular scholarly book among non-scholars and which most people deem to be very medieval, is subtitled *An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. In consequence, Lewis makes two contributions to medievalism: an influential twentieth-century vision of the Middle Ages, and recognition of a continuing medieval presence in the subsequent centuries of the Early Modern period, what French comparatists would call "la fortune du Moyen Age à l'époque de la Renaissance."

How does he do this? *The Allegory of Love* insisted, for the first time in English studies, on the central, predominant role of allegory and of courtly love (what today we call *fin' amor(s)*), in the development of early Western literature. Never again could scholars characterize these two "forms of the spirit" as shallow convention or stylistic artifice. He traced the royal road of allegory from writers in Silver Latin, late Antiquity, and the twelfth-century Renaissance to the vernacular

explosion in Old French and, later, Middle English, insisting upon the two structures that allegory came to assume at its best: the *bellum intestinum* and the voyage or quest. He recognized *fin' amor* to have brought about one of the three or four greatest mutations in the history of civilization and defined its constituent traits. Then, with deftness and taste, he scrutinized the dynamic, ever-changing interplay of *fin' amor* and allegory in Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Roman de la Rose*, and English poetry from Chaucer to Spenser, insisting that the best in both Chaucer and Spenser is their medievalness, not a superficial and historically false anticipation of modernity.

A Preface to Paradise Lost does for Milton what *The Allegory of Love* did for Spenser, and Lewis does for epic what he had previously done for allegory and *fin' amor*. He categorizes epic as one kind of court poetry—public, aristocratic, festal, and ceremonial. Epic is couched in stock phrases and conventional diction. Neither colloquial vernacular nor the poet's personal speech is valorized but instead the "grand style" grounded in rhetoric and decorum. Virgil is the master of literary epic. Therefore, since Milton does not seek to express his soul but, instead, to choose and cultivate a genre, once it is chosen he cultivates Virgil. No less important, Lewis is one of the first to insist upon the importance of seventeenth-century theological speculation to understanding *Paradise Lost*. His is a Christian reading of Milton, valid, he would say, not because Lewis is Christian but because Milton is.² Lewis states that, from Milton's perspective and what ought to be the perspective of the informed modern reader, Satan cannot be the hero. He is a contemptible villain, riddled by a complex of self-contradictions and self-denials. In addition, the action of the poem centers not on Satan but on Adam and Eve, the latter guilty of pride and the former guilty of uxorious remissness. Lewis not only rehabilitates Adam and Eve—they are shown to be both important and interesting; he also rehabilitates *Paradise Lost* as a total work of art, and not two superb first books which then fall off into orthodoxy and boredom. In sum, Lewis defends his author's language from the strictures of Eliot and Leavis (Leavis 42-67); he defends his worldview and its artistic embodiment from the prejudice of 1930s agnostic university faculty in English.

Lewis's most controversial book (*English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*) redefines the focus and the parameters of early English literature. His was perhaps the first major voice to denounce the old Burckhardtian orthodoxy— clichés about a Catholic and folkloric, pious and primitive Middle Ages happily giving way to our freethinking, Hellenic, and modern Renaissance, superior to the Middle Ages

to the extent that enlightenment is superior to superstition and learning to ignorance. Lewis demystifies and undermines the humanist scholars, Burckhardt's heroes, whom he accuses of pedantry, ignorance, and lack of imagination. Because of them, English literature remained in the doldrums, as "drab" or worse than drab, up to the 1570s. In contrast, Lewis rehabilitates the Puritans, whom he sees not as prigs or ascetes but as young chic intellectuals, famous for their innovative ideas and intellectual rigor. According to Lewis, the only genuinely good literature from the early period was composed in Scotland by the Scottish Chaucerians (today we call them the Makars) (66-119); their success is to have adhered to a medieval tradition that is learned not popular and composed in a high courtly aureate style treating high moral issues. For example, Gavin Douglas is closer to Virgil and a better poet than Surrey or Dryden could ever be. Lewis then goes on to praise the "golden" style and golden achievements of Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, and others, the best of the Elizabethan age who illustrate finally, as do the Makars, the syncretic wholeness of the century (318-535).

In *The Discarded Image* Lewis presents the mental structures or, as we say today, the mind-set of the Old Western culture. In contrast to the general perception that the Middle Ages was a simple and primitive era, he insists on the bookishness of those times: their emphasis on authority grounded in literacy and their sense of order, codification, and system. Along the way he rehabilitates late neo-Platonic paganism, as practiced by philosophers who were cultured, ascetic, and deeply spiritual. Recognizing the aura of Arthurian romance as an element apart from "the Model," Lewis also demonstrates how the fairies of the Celtic Otherworld were assimilated to the *Longaevi*, one of a number of rational species, including daimons, links between humans and angels. In the Epilogue (216-23) Lewis confesses his liking for and joy in the medieval-Renaissance model. It receded before other models just as our twentieth-century model will recede before others. No one model is more real or true than another; it proves only to be more coherent and to account for phenomena in a more satisfactory manner than its predecessor(s).

Although Lewis is not always given the credit, in addition to his panoramas of the history of literature and his contributions to scholarship, he was a superb practical critic. Virgil, Statius, Andreas Capellanus, Guillaume de Lorris, Guillaume de Digulleville, Chaucer, Lord Berners, Gavin Douglas, More and Tyndale, Renaissance pamphleteers and theological polemicists, the *Book of Common Prayer*, Du Bartas, Sidney, Spenser, Marlowe, Chapman, Drayton, and Milton—this roll of honor names the writers on whom Lewis wrote superbly crafted literary appreciations.

Lewis was, above all else, a sensitive, passionate, committed reader of books. We, his readers, sense the passion and the sensitivity on almost every page. More than most great critics of our century, Lewis makes his readers *love* the books that he discusses. It is not surprising, then, that so many of his appreciations have also served to rehabilitate neglected writers and currents. What is true for the *Romance of the Rose* and the Scots Makars is also true for a number of nonmodernist modern authors on whom Lewis also wrote: Scott, Shelley, Morris, George MacDonald, Kipling, and Charles Williams, among others.³ With MacDonald and Williams, Lewis was the first to call attention to their importance and to make something of them in the world of English literature.

What is certain in Lewis's achievement, and perhaps unique in the annals of modern scholarship/criticism, is the extent to which he reshaped the thought and redefined the parameters of the discipline for at least one generation, and not only in his vision of allegory, epic, and the Renaissance, but also, and no less so, in his readings of individual poets. Lewis reshaped and redefined how Anglicists think about Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton. Furthermore, today, like Auerbach and Spitzer, he is still quoted and footnoted; indeed, like Spitzer, a number of his readings remain among the best ever written on the subject. Perhaps for this very reason, his readings have ignited controversy. Whereas Spitzer launched almost all of his intellectual wars, for the most part it is others who chose to polemicize against Lewis. It is fascinating to observe the number of essays that seek to refute one or another stance of Lewis and cite him by name in the title.⁴ Lewis's adversaries may have leaped into the fray in part out of distaste for his Christian apologetics but also as a response (and, unconsciously, a tribute) to the striking, revolutionary, innovative character of his insights.

Can Lewis be considered in any meaningful sense a literary theorist? What can we say about the theoretical foundations of his work? Lewis himself would have scorned the term "theory" as it is now used, just as, in the 1950s, he scorned the term "criticism." Be this as it may, he did publish two books that can be designated theory. The first treats the writer in relation to the work of literature; the second treats the work of literature in relation to the reader.

In *The Personal Heresy: A Controversy*, in which he debates with the Cambridge don E. M. W. Tillyard, Lewis adopts a strikingly modernist stance, one in congruity with New Criticism and with our more recent theories of narratology and rhetoric. Lewis insists that poetry is never the expression of a poet's personality nor does it reveal his state of mind. It can express *a* personality—what today we call the speaker

or the implied author—or an old myth or what today we call an archetype. The poet is not a seer or vates; he is simply “a man who makes poems,” and “poetry is an art or a skill—a trained habit of using certain instruments to certain ends” (103). Therefore, the poet rarely seeks to bare his soul or propose a philosophy of life but rather he works within the tradition, cultivating conventional models and genres. And he writes a conventional language, high style or plain style and not his purportedly natural, colloquial speech; for all poetic language is a form of artifice. Paradoxically seconding Eliot, Lewis is convinced that the value of poetry and its reality lie not in the individual or personal, which he labels “the idiosyncratic,” but rather in the public and universal, given that the poet at his best makes us partake of a universal human experience which transcends himself and us.

In *An Experiment in Criticism* Lewis makes a case for replacing the traditional question in criticism, “Is this a good or bad book?” with the question, “What kind of reading does this book encourage?” He insists that the various categories of reader and reading cross social and professional boundaries, and that the professor of literature is as capable of reading badly, of reading for external reasons, as the housewife or the retired laborer. He also stands opposed to the notion of rigid boundaries between “the classics” and “popular books,” given that some works in the high art category may be there due to fashion and taste whereas some works in the low art category may contain elements of myth—the numinous—and, therefore, give rise to good reading. In essence, good literature permits good reading and bad reading, depending on the reader, whereas bad literature can allow only bad reading. Lewis is especially cogent on bad reading, whether by the unliterary—people concerned uniquely with an exciting story, suspense, and some sort of vicarious happiness, what he calls “castle-building”—or by the literary, those who seek a mirror of “real life” and/or a deep philosophy for living (27-39, 74-87). Here and throughout *An Experiment in Criticism* Lewis anticipates the more recent schools of reader response (Iser), sociology of literature (Escarpit, Williams), and aesthetics of reception (Jauss). In my opinion, however, *An Experiment in Criticism* holds up less well than *The Personal Heresy* because certain issues treated at length in *Experiment*—debunking realism, for instance—are no longer of interest today, and because the sociology of literature has made enormous strides in the quantifiable, empirical study of publics and their relationship to authors and to the publishing industry. Furthermore, alas(!), today most of the bad readers no longer read; they watch television or play videos, and a cultural studies industry is now devoted to fathoming their cultural practices.

It ought to be apparent from my discussion that Lewis was so much more than a traditional academic scholar in English and that his writings on literature anticipate or coincide with some of the major developments in theory since the 1930s. As I have said, *The Personal Heresy* adopts a strikingly modern critical and New Criticism stance in its insistence that the object of literary study has to be the book and not its author, and the way the book adheres to and works upon tradition and convention and not its purported originality. Throughout his career and especially in *An Experiment in Criticism* Lewis precedes Northrop Frye by proclaiming that literature is an independent entity, and that the critic must never presume that an approach or a discipline external to literature—say, anthropology or psychoanalysis—can tell us something authoritative about a work of literature. The same is true for the sources. Like Frye, Lewis declared his hostility to evaluation. As we have seen, *An Experiment in Criticism* anticipates more recent developments in reader response and sociology of literature. Finally, Lewis coincides with the *Annales* school of historians in his lifelong passion for the *mentalités* (mind-set, mental structures) of the past, structures which shape the literature and which modern scholars must know in order not to misread.⁵ I mention all this not because such anticipations necessarily enhance Lewis's value as a critic. The modern approaches come and go. Theorists strive, viciously on occasion, to get on top; after a few years they discover the workings of Dame Fortune's Wheel and what it means to be down and out. Far too often we see a colleague five years out of date denounced as a dinosaur or a fool by one only two years out of date.⁶

What is C. S. Lewis's legacy? Inevitably, after a period of decades, some of Lewis's pronouncements can and ought to be corrected. It is revealing, however, that so much of his work holds up and that the correctors and revisers prove to be more in error than Lewis himself. This is as true in the domain of literary history as in the other facets of his life. Here I note liberal Anglicans outraged because Lewis actually believes in the incarnation and resurrection and gives succor to poor benighted Evangelicals who, otherwise, might see the light⁷; feminists outraged over the fact that the portrayal of Jane Studdock in *That Hideous Strength* does not conform to the current gender-studies consensus on American campuses⁸; and, most curious of all, delicate, refined, prissy outrage from the English academic Establishment because Lewis didn't play their game by their rules, because, as an Ulsterman from the middle class, he behaved, according to Dame Helen Gardner, with "exaggeration and extravagance" (418).⁹

More interesting are the attacks on Lewis the literary critic from a religious

perspective. Some, who accused him of imposing his Christian beliefs onto the criticism of Milton or, for that matter, Tyndale, obviously forget how important it is for the critic to sympathize with an author's worldview and, historically grounded, to see what the outsider sees not. Spitzer and Auerbach, agnostics of Jewish descent, offered, throughout their careers, superb Christian readings of Christian texts. Resembling them, and in this he was superior to D. W. Robertson and the Robertsonian school of exegetical criticism (Robertson, Huppé, Fleming), Lewis gave a Christian interpretation to obviously Christian books, *Paradise Lost* the most notable. On all other texts he wisely abstained. It is this restraint, paradoxically, which angers Peter Milward, who blames Lewis the critic for not being Christian enough. Milward wrote an entire book to challenge Lewis's scholarship and criticism. According to Milward, Lewis fails to recognize the all-pervasive Christian spirituality which dominates the Middle Ages, this in contrast to a purportedly more secular Renaissance. Leaving aside Milward's curious hypothesis that Lewis's not being Christian enough comes from his Ulster Protestant background (only an English Jesuit could declare that, because Lewis was a Protestant, he downplayed the importance of the Reformation), Milward's disagreement with Lewis lies for the most part in the fact that Milward accepts Burckhardtian clichés as truth and, in consequence, accuses Lewis of violating the truth because he refutes the clichés.

At one time, when Robertsonian exegesis (which declared that there is no such thing as courtly love) was predominant in English circles, apologists for Lewis conceded they would have to scrap much of *The Allegory of Love*.¹⁰ Today, it is the extreme Robertsonian formulations which have been scrapped whereas Lewis's book remains. Today, most of us would say that *fin' amor* did exist then and was as important as Lewis said it was. Given the number of courtly French romances which end in marriage and the intense scrutiny of love and marriage in Chrétien de Troyes, we do have to modify one of Lewis's four constituent traits defining the concept.¹¹ Obstacle, not adultery, lies at the core of *fin' amor*. The romance of married love thus occurs in France and Germany long before *The Kingis Quair* and *The Faerie Queene*; and the romance of adultery lives on, magnificently, on the Continent, which may explain why young English gentlemen fancied the grand tour.

Greater knowledge of French and Italian humanism would also have caused Lewis to nuance *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*. The Humanists did help inspire great humanist poets: Du Bellay and Ronsard, and Bembo and Tasso, to cite the most eminent. Similarly, most scholars today would prefer the designation

“high style” and “plain style” to Lewis’s overly judgmental “golden” and “drab.” And they would supplement his superb study of cosmology in *The Discarded Image* with chapters on medieval-Renaissance Christian typology, political theory, and rhetoric.¹²

For my part, differing from his adversaries, I wish only to supplement and to nuance some of Lewis’s formulations, which, magnificent as they are, are grounded in a finite command of the non-English materials and which, because they are so magnificent, far-reaching, and innovative, would have to be supplemented and nuanced a generation later in any case. Similarly, and for the same reasons, we can revise, that is, improve upon some of Lewis’s relatively negative judgments on individual writers. I cite, at random, Prudentius, Alan of Lille, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Jean de Meun, Langland, John Knox, and the Spenser of *The Shepherd’s Calendar*.¹³

This raises a fascinating question. The only aspect of Lewis’s criticism which bothers me and which I find genuinely dated, is his penchant for value-judgments, for constantly informing the reader which books are masterpieces, which are mediocre, and which are awful. We don’t do that sort of thing anymore. And the C. S. Lewis who does it is the same C. S. Lewis who devotes a section of *An Experiment in Criticism* to denouncing critical evaluation and all those—he calls them Vigilants—who make distinctions within the domain of good literature.¹⁴ This would not be the only example of *le maître* contradicting himself.¹⁵ The explanation for this contradiction can be found in the “contextualization” of Lewis’s work after he left Oxford for Cambridge. In *An Experiment in Criticism* Lewis was combating the influence of F. R. Leavis and the then dominant Leavisite current in British universities. Leavis’s home base was Cambridge. According to Carpenter (230-31), Lewis had been told that one of the reasons for offering him a Chair in English was to counteract Leavis. In fact, going back to the 1930s, Lewis’s *Rehabilitations* of 1939, with its laudatory readings of Shelley and others, may well have been a conscious rebuttal to Leavis’s *Revaluation* published three years previously. Lewis would say that the Leavisite Vigilants condemned major English authors—Milton, for example—and entire periods—Romanticism, in fact all English poetry from Shelley to the Georgians—and, thereby, they close doors to readers and students, whereas he, Lewis, holds the doors wide open. In more general terms he denies the validity of granting value to some books and refusing it to others on the basis of criteria or a set of privileged conditions such as realism or the New-Critical paradox, tension, and ambiguity. Similarly, when he tells students

“Don’t read criticism,” although Lewis appears to will his own books onto remainder piles outside Blackwell’s, he alludes again to Leavis and his disciples, who fetishized the term “critic.” Lewis would have called himself a scholar or an historian.

When I first read C. S. Lewis, I was—like so many others—entranced, enchanted, carried to another level. I was also deeply moved by his claim to be the last Old Western man, the last dinosaur in the old culture of the West. Except that I whispered: “No, you’re not. I am!” After having, over the years, cited this anecdote in class, from time to time a student will whisper: “No, you’re not. I am!” From this I am happy to report that we dinosaurs are reproducing ourselves—carefully, slowly, and painfully—but we are.

It has to be said, however, that Lewis’s joy in the medieval and his denial of the modern do not make of him a Medieval Man; they demonstrate how much he partakes of medievalism, therefore, how much he is truly modern, for there is no trait more characteristic of modernism than distaste for modernity and the adoption of a culture from the distant past to counter modernity (see Chandler and Moreland).¹⁶ According to this formulation, Lewis is superbly, authentically Edwardian and of the school of Chesterton not the School of Chartres (see Hannay 181 and Milward 103-08). Which makes me a disciple of Auerbach and not Abelard. One strength of the school of Auerbach, Curtius, and Spitzer lies, I have argued elsewhere, in the fact that they prized the medieval and the modern and worked splendidly, with enthusiasm, in both areas, actually publishing on the Romance literatures—French, Italian, and Spanish, plus Latin—from the early Middle Ages to the present. In comparison, Lewis appears a trifle thin. We can regret his distaste for Eliot and his incomprehension of the most vital artistic life of our century—from Picasso and Proust to today.¹⁷ We can also note, with a smile, that the English Honour Course syllabus that he and Tolkien introduced at Oxford ended with the year 1830. I often tell my students: If you cannot engage positively with your own contemporary literature and culture when you are twenty, what will you be like when you are sixty?

In the words of the great Scots poet Hugh MacDiarmid, these objections are “penny wheep” (short ale) and a ridiculously low price to pay for Lewis’s accomplishments, for what makes him the greatest English-language critic and scholar of the early literature and, as a critic and writer on literature, at the university and in the public sphere, second only to Northrop Frye over all.

Lewis’s criticism does for us what he believes good literature to do for good readers—to take us out of ourselves and enlarge our being, to make us experience

what is common to mankind as a whole and not just to ourselves, to grant us a sense of the numinous and the universal. Beholding his best work, as when we behold Auerbach's *Mimesis* or Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, we can feel wonder and awe, the wonder that mathematicians sense for a supremely great (and beautiful) theorem. Also, because of his medievalism and because he locates the Middle Ages and a medievalized Renaissance at the heart of the Western experience, he helps us reclaim our history and our culture, a sweep of books and centuries that surpass infinitely the peripheral and the ephemeral, 2500 or 3000 years of aesthetic creation which are perhaps the only decent thing we have done on this planet.

Ernst Robert Curtius called upon us, the descendants of the medieval clerks, to do our part in passing the torch of culture, to maintain, for ourselves and our descendants, the tradition of great books that extend from Homer and Virgil to the present. Curtius, alluding to Virgil, called this tradition the *exempla maiorum* (5), which we can translate as the deeds of the ancestors or the stories of the great ones or the models from the masters. If we are clerks, even more so is C. S. Lewis, the "grete clerk" of our English-speaking world. By defending and illustrating the old culture, by striving to do what Lewis and the others did, only then will we be worthy to renew with the old warriors and clerks, with the heroes and lovers of *geste* and the poets who gave them life.¹⁸

Notes

¹On Spenser, *Allegory* 297-360, *English Literature* 348-93, the posthumous *Spenser's Images*, and five articles collected in *Studies* 121-74. On Milton, *Preface* and "A Note on *Comus*" (*Studies* 175-81).

²See especially *Preface* 62-72, 82-93.

³In articles published in 1939, 1946, 1947, 1948, and 1956. The Shelley, Scott, Morris, and Kipling pieces can be found in *Selected Literary Essays* 187-250. The two on MacDonald and Williams have not yet been re-edited in a Lewis collection.

⁴Among others, Bennett, Loomis, Milward ("Judgment"), Piehler, Sharrock, Stoll, and Vinaver. See also McBride.

⁵In *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (32) Lewis states that the historian of literature's "business is with the past not as it 'really' was (whatever 'really' may mean in such a context) but with the past as it seemed to be to those who lived in it . . ."

⁶How to "place" Lewis vis-à-vis current critical practice remains, inevitably, an open question. Edwards sets Lewis against new criticism, deconstruction, and reader-response, approaches which Edwards finds antipathic to Lewis (and himself). Downing, on the contrary, in a most perceptive essay sees ways in which Lewis resembles postmodern thinkers.

⁷See the essays published in *Studies in the Literary Imagination* by Hartt, Jones, and Pittenger.

⁸A particularly startling example is the three chapters in *Filmer* 88-131, that denounce Lewis for alleged anti-feminism.

⁹Gardner, one of the most eminent Donne scholars of the century, may have been angered by the fact that Lewis reserved his greatest praise for “golden” poets such as Sidney and Spenser.

¹⁰For example, *Adey* 43-46; *Christopher* 23-24; *Kerby-Fulton* 258-59; *Kollmann* 4.

¹¹They are Humility, Courtesy, Adultery, and the Religion of Love (*Allegory* 2).

¹²Gardner (427) observes that, in *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, Lewis devotes eight pages to magic and only two to education.

¹³Kerby-Fulton alludes several times to Lewis’s less than enthusiastic response to *Piers Plowman*.

¹⁴Chapter 9 (88-94) and chapter 11 (104-29). Note that some readers of Lewis are convinced that he only praises books and says the best about them. According to McGovern:

His efforts were in rehabilitation rather than in reevaluation [. . .] It is hard to find in Lewis’s published work an attempt to lower a reputation [. . .] Broadly characterized, Lewis’s practice was to say all that could be said about an author’s strengths, and to say no more than had to be said about his weaknesses” (4).

¹⁵Is it an example of contradiction? Schakel (111-16, 163-67) offers a challenging thesis of evolution in Lewis’s aesthetics, from the 1930s to the 1960s.

¹⁶I have argued that such modernist anti-modernity medievalism is not limited to the Right wing. On the Continent, especially, we find a leftist medievalism.

¹⁷On Lewis’s relations to Eliot, see Carnell (129-31), Terreault, and Weatherby.

¹⁸This paper, in an earlier version, was the keynote address at the Fifteenth International Conference on Medievalism, Hope College, September 2000. I wish to thank Professor Peter Schakel for his suggestions and insights.

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2001 Mythopoeic Award Winners

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award, Adult Literature
Midori Snyder, *The Innamorati* (Tor, 2000)

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award, Children's Literature
Dia Calhoun, *Aria of the Sea* (Winslow House, 2000)

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies
Tom Shippey, *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*
(HarperCollins, 2000; Houghton Mifflin, 2001)

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies
Alan Lupack and Barbara Tapa Lupack, *King Arthur in America*
(Boydell and Brewer, 1999)

The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature is given to the fantasy novel, multi-volume, or single-author story collection for adults published during 2000 that best exemplifies "the spirit of the Inklings." Reissues (such as paperback editions) are eligible if no earlier edition was a finalist. Books from a series are eligible if they stand on their own; otherwise, the series is eligible the year its final volume appears. The Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature honors books for younger readers (from "Young Adults" to picture books for beginning readers), in the tradition of *The Hobbit* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Rules for eligibility are otherwise the same as for the Adult Literature award. The Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies is given to books on Tolkien, Lewis, and/or Williams that make significant contributions to Inklings scholarship. For this award, books first published during the last three years (1998-2000) are eligible, including finalists for previous years. The Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies is given to scholarly books on other specific authors in the Inklings tradition, or to more general works on the genres of myth and fantasy. The period of eligibility is three years, as for the Inklings Studies award.

The winners of this year's awards were announced at the banquet during Mythcon XXXII, which was held in Berkeley, California, from August 3-6, 2001.

A complete list of finalists for the literature awards, text of recent acceptance speeches, and selected book reviews are available at:

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