

# The C. S. Lewis & Inklings Society

Newsletter 12 (November 2016)



## inklinations

The CSLIS is an academic society that promotes Inklings studies. See our website hosted by Oral Roberts University:

[http://www.oru.edu/academics/resources/cs\\_lewis/](http://www.oru.edu/academics/resources/cs_lewis/)

*Swæt we inclinga on ærdagum  
searopancolra snyttru gehierdon . . .*

*þara wæs Gloduig sum,*

*hæleda dyrost, brad ond beorhtword . . .\**

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### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On the weekend of March 31 – April 2, 2016, presenters from seventeen different college or university campuses across the U.S., both secular and private, convened at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual C.S. Lewis & the Inklings Society Conference at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas.



The theme of the conference this year, “**Is Man a Myth?**” took its cue from the book on Mr. Tumnus’s shelf to ponder not just the plausibility of “sub-created” worlds and their mythical inhabitants, but the ontology of ourselves, ostensibly the only meaning-making creatures in this cosmos. Now that God is “dead,” thanks to Nietzsche, there has also been the death

of the “author” in much of 20<sup>th</sup> century literary criticism (thanks to French critic Roland Barthes), and so the next to go is Man (humanity itself). For recent Bible translators who eschew masculine references to God, the gender construct of “man” is even more suspect.

Though Lewis’s title for the book on Tumnus’s shelf was somewhat tongue-in-cheek, we might pose this question a tad more seriously in light of the prevalent emphasis today on “socially constructed” selves that can be reconfigured, reinvented, for individual empowerment, rather than viewing oneself as a creature, a thing created, not to fashion identity for itself but to grow into the role fashioned for it to the delight of its Maker. Many of our brightest evangelical scholars today, such as Alan Jacob of Baylor U. (formerly at Wheaton) who wrote a Lewis biography called *The Narnian*, are wrestling with such issues of what it means now to be human. His forthcoming book deals exactly with that.

According to philosopher-theologian David Bentley Hart, Fellow at University of Notre Dame:

*“I cannot help but wonder, then what remains behind when Christianity’s power over culture recedes? How long can our gentler ethical prejudices – many of which seem to me to be melting away with fair rapidity – persist once the faith that gave them their rationale and meaning has withered away? Love endures all things perhaps, as the apostle says, and is eternal; but, as a cultural reality, even love requires a reason for its preeminence among the virtues, and the mere habit of solicitude for others will not necessarily long survive when that reason is no longer found. If... the ‘human’ as we now understand it is the positive invention of Christianity, might it not be the case that a culture that has become truly post-Christian will also, ultimately, become posthuman?”*



Simmons Great Hall: Eighth Day Books display

Myths, whether modern or ancient, are a potent way that human beings express beliefs about origins, identity, and destiny, and so the idea about Man being (or becoming) a Myth can be good or bad, depending on the point of view.

It seemed appropriate to lead off the conference first asking what the Inklings thought about Myths and what they were good for. To that end we held a workshop exploring the Inklings’ notions of good mythic fantasy. Leading this workshop was our special guest for Events, Jason Fisher. Our goal for this workshop was to help participants understand Lewis & Tolkien’s (and Williams’) brand of Fantasy, and their methods for crafting their own works of fiction wherein the reader finds herself discovering a Myth (or myths) at its core.

In a re-enactment of an Inklings meeting, Jack and Tollers revealed what they thought about successful faery-stories, fantasy worlds based on myth, and also the kind of sources that inspired them. After the dramatic reading, a Q&A session was held to field comments and reactions to the words of the Inklings.

Finally, we asked the audience to discuss in groups how we as literary critics might apply the Inklings’ concepts to current works of fantasy, or how aspiring writers might apply them in their own original creative works.





“A Mythical Inklings Meeting” with Jonathan Himes (C.S. Lewis), Charlie Starr (Warren Lewis), Peter Spaulding (Charles Williams), and Jason Fisher (J.R.R. Tolkien)

The CSLIS Executive Board were pleased to offer **cash awards for winning papers**. Congratulations to all! Please see Abstracts of these papers, and the entirety of each winning Creative entry, at the end of the newsletter.

### Academic Papers

Undergraduate:

First Prize: “Choice or Control: Fear and Female Characterization in *That Hideous Strength* and *A Wrinkle in Time*”  
Author: Elissa Branum, Senior History Major, John Brown University”

Honorable Mention: “J. R. R Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*: Environmentalism, Industrialization, and Christian Stewardship.” Author: Christie Goodwin, Grove City College

Scholar Papers:

First Prize: “Myth and Metafiction in George McDonald’s *Phantastes*: Mythopoeic Reading as Spiritual Sanctification”  
Author: Dr. David S. Hogsette, Writing Program Director and Professor of English, Grove City College

Honorable Mention: “Mythical Memory: The Theme of Tolkien’s Life and Works.” Author: Truett Billups, Independent Scholar

### Creative Writing

First Prize: “Mythopoeia in Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines*”  
Author: Joshua Place, Sophomore Biology Major, John Brown University



At the optional excursion to Crystal Bridges Museum

**The plenary speakers** this year were Dr. Devin Brown and Dr. Charlie W. Starr, both of whom delivered stirring keynote speeches.

Brown started with an inspiring chapel talk “God’s Wild Mercy” which offered his personal testimony on how “easy times are not always good, and hard times are not always bad.”



Devin Brown (Photo by Larry Fink)

His banquet speech “Is Man Mythic?” brought in examples from Middle-earth and Narnia that show the ways that myths, although dressed up in the guise of fantasy, can impart important truths on what it means to be human and made in God’s image. To put a positive spin on the conference theme, if “Man” is not yet a myth, s/he ought to become one. Brown’s final presentation, “C.S. Lewis: Man or Myth?” was a whimsical review of the ways Lewis portrayed himself in fiction or used pseudonyms, but Brown also looked seriously at Lewis’ enduring relevance as a Christian witness.



Charlie Starr

Charlie Starr’s keynote speech, “Mr. Tumnus’s Library: Reading C. S. Lewis through the Books He Never Wrote” was a tour-de-force of scholarship and insight. Here is a small sampling of its contents:

Lucy enters Tumnus’s cozy cave and looks about the room as he prepares their refreshments. Along a wall she surveys a shelf filled with books from which the reader is given four representative titles: *The Life and Letters of Silenus; Nymphs*

*and Their Ways; Men, Monks, and Gamekeepers; a Study in Popular Legend, and Is Man a Myth?* Not to give away too much (Dr. Starr’s interpretations of these titles and what Lewis hints at with them will be elaborated upon in a forthcoming book!), Starr explained that the first two titles would appeal to Tumnus in the era of winter under the White Witch’s tyranny, when dryads could not dance in the woods and naiads were frozen in rivers; at least Tumnus could read about them. These book titles almost forecast how Sylvan creatures like Bacchus and Silenus triumph over human or mechanistic “progress” at the conclusion of certain Narnian tales. The other two titles, by putting the question about mythic creatures the other way around, suggest how backward human beings may be concerning ultimate things: A world of talking animals like Narnia has no need of gamekeepers, and there are no monks, or organized religion, because Narnians have Aslan himself among them. The book *Is Man a Myth?* is a humorous spin on age-old questions about the existence of certain fabled creatures, since in Narnia, humans from Earth have not been seen for ages due to the White Witch’s rule: humans are indeed not mythic, in the sense of being merely fabulous or ‘untrue’; however, we actually ought to attain mythic status if we want to ‘matter’ in the age to come. Thus we see in Mr. Tumnus’s Library hints of the way that Lewis uses myth to help us understand our human predicament, as well as our “mythic” potential.

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### 20<sup>th</sup> Annual CSLIS Conference

The next CSLIS Conference will be hosted at Oral Roberts University, Tulsa OK, April 6 - 8, 2017.

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We are pleased to announce our keynote speakers, Philip and Carol Zaleski, authors of *Fellowship: The Literary Lives of the Inklings: J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams*, along with many other books and articles

Papers related to the works of C.S. Lewis, the Inklings, George MacDonald, Dorothy L. Sayers, and G. K. Chesterton are invited.

There will be a competition for the best undergraduate, graduate, and best faculty/scholar paper presented at this conference. Monetary awards will be given as determined by a committee of three jurors from the executive board members of the CSLIS.

All paper presenters must be members of the CSLIS and be prepared to present the paper at the conference.

Membership forms can be downloaded at [http://www.oru.edu/academics/resources/cs\\_lewis/](http://www.oru.edu/academics/resources/cs_lewis/).

### Starting Local Chapters of CSLIS

If you enjoy the fellowship and scholasticism at our annual conferences, why not continue such activities year-round? Local chapters of CSLIS help you stay in touch with Society members you meet at conferences while promoting interest in the Inklings within your local community. By starting a local chapter, you will receive access to the following online services of the Society:

- Suggested readings
- Scheduled topics for local discussions
- Service opportunities (read-a-thons, etc.)

Requirements: You must have at least 5 members to be recognized as a local

chapter of CSLIS, and you need a Spokesperson to act as the local contact for regular correspondence. Chapters composed of college students could request a faculty member to be their sponsoring Spokesperson and could apply to their university's student board to fund their own various local events (for instance, to pay for snacks at meetings or book discussions).

All chapters must abide by the Mission Statement as found on the Society's website:

[http://www.oru.edu/academics/resources/cs\\_lewis/](http://www.oru.edu/academics/resources/cs_lewis/)

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### **MEMBERSHIP**

Please don't forget to renew your CSLIS membership. This entitles all members to

- present their papers at the conference
- receive society newsletters and updates
- participate in CSLIS Writing Contests

The cost is \$10 for students and retired faculty, or \$20 for faculty and independent scholars. The form for applying or renewing, required along with your payment, is available online:

[https://webapps.oru.edu/new\\_php/academics/resources/cslewis/membership.php](https://webapps.oru.edu/new_php/academics/resources/cslewis/membership.php)

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### **HERE'S WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING: RECENT SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY**

**Joe R. Christopher, Tarleton State University**

#### **Essays Published**

"*Alice's [Successful] Adventures in Wonderland*: An Appreciation of its



One Hundred Fifty Years." *Mythlore* 34:1/127 (Fall-Winter 2015): 142-152.

"Anthony Boucher's Greatest Horror Story." *Mythlore* 35.1 (Fall-Winter 2016): 85-93. Forthcoming.

"C. S. Lewis's Problem with 'The Franklin's Tale': An Essay Written in the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Year of *The Allegory of Love*." *C. S. Lewis and the Inklings: Reflections on Faith, Imagination, and Modern Technology*. Ed. Salwa Khoddam, Mark R. Hall, and Jason Fisher. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. 121-132.

"C. S. Lewis's Two Satyrs." *Mythlore* 34.2/128 (Spring-Summer 2016): 83-93.

"An Ekphrasis by C. S. Lewis: 'On a Picture by Chirico.'" *Inklings Forever, Vol. X: A Collection of Essays Presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Frances White Ewbank Colloquium on C. S. Lewis and Friends*. Upland, Indiana: Center for the Study of C. S. Lewis and Friends, Taylor University. Forthcoming fall 2016.

"An Interesting Translation." *Beyond Bree*, October 2016, p. 6.

"New Orleans in the Early 1830s: Some Notes on Barbara Hamby's *A Free Man of Color*." *Our New Orleans*, ed. Marilyn Robitaille and Joe R. Christopher. Stephenville TX: The Bosque River Press, 2016. 62-70.

"A Spelling (and Metrical) Error in *The Story of Kullervo*—Or So I Supposed." *Beyond Bree*, August 2016 ("Kullervo Issue"), pp. 3-5.

### Poems Published

"How Strange Thou Art." *Windhover: A Journal of Christian Literature*, vol. 10, 2016.

**Larry Fink, Professor of English, Hardin-Simmons University**

### Essays Published

Fink, Larry E. "C.S. Lewis, J.B. Phillips, and the Angelic Point of View." *CSL: The Bulletin of the New York C.S. Lewis Society*.

---. "Hopkins' Influence on Percy's The Moviegoer." *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature*.

**Salwa Khoddam, Professor of English, Emerita, Oklahoma City University**

### Essay Published

Khoddam, Salwa and Horace Jeffrey Hodges, "The Peach in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Marvell's 'Garden,' and Eliot's 'Prufrock': Etymology, Sin, and Transgression." *Medieval and Early Modern English Studies* 24. 1 (Feb. 2016): 115-50.

### Book Published

Khoddam, Salwa, Dario Rivarossa, and Carter Kaplan, trans. *Creation of the World (Il mondo creato)* by Torquato Tasso. Brookline, MA: International Authors, 2016.

**Ben Parker, Northern Illinois University**

### Book Review Published

Duriez, Colin. *Bedeviled: Lewis, Tolkien, and the Shadow of Evil*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. *Christianity and*



*Literature* 65.4 (September 2016):  
521-24.

**Presentation**

“Utopia in Deep Heaven: Thomas More  
and C. S. Lewis’s Space Trilogy.”  
Chicago: Midwest Popular Culture  
Association Conference, 6-9  
October 2016.

**Jennifer Raimundo, Institutional  
Planning Team Leader, Signum  
University**

**Essay Published**

Raimundo, Jennifer. “Mirth’s Might: The  
Tenacity of Humour in the Works  
of J.R.R. Tolkien.” *Laughter in  
Middle-earth: Humour in and  
around the Works of J.R.R.  
Tolkien*. Switzerland: Walking  
Tree Publishers, 2016. Print.

**Presentation**

“Native Language in a Strange Country:  
Death and Rebirth in the  
Friendship of C.S. Lewis and  
Charles Williams.” 10th Francis  
White Ewbank Colloquium on C.S.  
Lewis and Friends, 4 June 2016.  
Taylor University, Upland, IN.  
Paper Presentation.

**Harvey Solganick, Professor of  
Philosophy, Humanities, The College at  
Southwestern Baptist Theological  
Seminary**

**Presentations**

“C.S. Lewis on Evangelism and  
Discipleship.” Discipleship  
University. First Baptist Church of  
Dallas. September 11-November  
20, 2016.

“Angling toward the Anglican Trinity:  
C.S. Lewis’ Triune God and His

Implications for Evangelical  
Theology.” Evangelical Theological  
Society National Conference. San  
Antonio, TX. November 15, 2016.

**Essay Published**

Solganick, Harvey. “The Philosophical  
Theology of Scientocracy.” *Journal  
of Biblical Theology*. 2017.

**Book Proposal**

Solganick, Harvey. *Becoming an  
Evangelical Apologetic Disciple for  
Christ—Lessons from C.S. Lewis*.  
Publisher TBA, Sabbatical  
Proposal, 2016-2017.

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**ABSTRACTS OF AWARD-WINNING  
PAPERS:**

*1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Student Essay Contest:*

“Choice or Control: Fear and  
Female Characterization in *That Hideous  
Strength* and *A Wrinkle in Time*”  
Author: Elissa Branum, Senior History  
Major, John Brown University

In Madeleine L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle  
in Time* (1963), the mysterious Mrs.  
Whatsit declares, “Only a fool is not  
afraid” (121). Meg Murry, the novel’s  
female protagonist, is initially  
characterized as fearful and insecure.  
Virginia Wolf describes Meg as terrified of  
“human limitations” and as desiring  
“power over others” to gain a sense of  
control (136). Similarly, in C.S. Lewis’s  
*That Hideous Strength* (1945), the female  
protagonist, Jane Studdock, finds herself  
frustrated with her marriage and afraid of  
losing her autonomy. Both narratives  
begin with frustrated, fearful characters  
in seemingly quotidian settings that  
suddenly transition to terrifying fantasy

events. Mrs. Whatsit's claim reflects the role of fear in the narratives: the presence of fear is what develops the characters of Meg and Jane and leads them from seeking control to embracing humility. In describing *A Wrinkle in Time* to Leonard Marcus, Madeleine L'Engle stated: "It's fantasy, and yet it's the real reality" (109). L'Engle's description can also be applied to Lewis's work and is particularly apt in redeeming the character of Jane. The novel has been renounced as a "misshapen conclusion" to the *Space Trilogy*—Lewis himself thought it was "all rubbish" (Schwartz 91-92). A major issue that has provoked criticism of *That Hideous Strength* is his arguably sexist treatment of female characters, particularly Jane (Schwartz 91-92). I argue that, despite these issues, Jane's struggle against fear leads to the dynamic development of her character (through her own choice, rather than through masculine control), which demonstrates the success of the novel in what L'Engle describes as an "attempt to touch on reality" (Marcus 114). Comparing Meg and Jane reveals both characters' transitions from helpless fear to deliberate humility.

*Honorable Mention in the Student Essay Contest:*

"J. R. R Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*: Environmentalism, Industrialization, and Christian Stewardship."

Author: Christie Goodwin, Major, Grove City College

In his agrarian essays, Wendell Berry articulates that "in losing stewardship we lose fellowship; we become outcasts from the great neighborhood of creation" (89). In this statement, Berry expresses his ecological perspective as a means of serving both

nature and ones' fellow men. J.R.R Tolkien, the writer of the famed trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, expresses a view similar to Berry's. Though it is extreme to refer to the J.R.R Tolkien as "technophobic" or "anti-progress", the writer did observe the negative results of industrialization on his time, resulting in distinct ideas about the reversal of this "corruption". Examining multiple critical views, Tolkien's personal statements, and evidence from his writing, it is apparent that Tolkien felt strongly about the preservation of nature and the Christian's responsibility to creation. Through the alignment of nature with good, representation of industrialism, and the closeness of Christian symbolism with the natural world in Middle-earth, Tolkien's sub-creation emphasizes an earth-conscious perspective, suggesting the need for better Christian stewardship of God's creation.

In the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, nature, and the preservation of it, is associated with the sacred and pure things of Middle-earth. Tolkien's Elvish race works in harmony with nature, treating it with reverence and recognizing its mystical powers. According to Tolkien, his elves "have a devoted love of the physical world", desiring to "observe and understand it for its own sake" (*Letters* 236). The Shire, the home of the hobbits, represents the pastoral ideal; the beatific Hobbit lifestyle is in agreement with the natural world. According to Hugh Keenan, the reader can "recognize that the hobbits are emblematic of naturalness, of childhood, and of a life" (11). This simplicity is interrupted by the mechanic, industrial nature of the dark forces which ravage the Shire. Until the agrarian lifestyle is restored, the Hobbit's journey does not end; Keenan notes that the "complete pattern circles from natural fertility in the Shire to technological desolation of nature at Mordor and afterwards ends at the Shire and at

Fertility again. Or as Bilbo might say ‘there and back again’ ” (10). Places of sanctuary, such as the Shire and the Elvish Rivendell, are united with nature, and their destruction is distressing to the sympathetic reader. Races and forces which aid the Fellowship are often nature-bound, taking pride in the beauty of the natural world. As observed by Deidre Dawson, the natural world in Tolkien’s work is cherished by the Elves and Hobbits “as part of an organic whole; all feel sadness and distress as they witness the loss and destruction of any part of their universe” (116). Care for the natural world, and the races which respect the simplicity of creation, are aligned with the forces of good.

The emblem of Tolkien’s ecology is the Ent, a mysterious tree creature which Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans label as a “crucial part” of Tolkien’s “environmental ethic” (119). The “model of the Ents...is clarification of the real role of a steward”; Ents see the value in the untouched wilderness (Dickerson and Evans, 39). Care for the natural world drives the Ents to terminate the wicked work of Isengard. Treebeard, the Ent which aids the wandering Hobbits, describes the desolation of the forest as “wastes of stump and bramble where once there were singing groves” (*The Two Towers* 490). The Ent feels responsibility for the protection of the forests, stating “nobody cares for the woods as I care for them” (*The Two Towers* 487). When the forests are “viewed as raw material for technological reshaping ... the land loses its essential value”, and the Ents watch the natural order diminish (Keenan 11). Seeing value in all of nature, Tolkien’s Ent acts as a steward of the whole created order.

*1<sup>st</sup> place in the Scholars’ Essay Contest:*

“Myth and Metafiction in George McDonald’s *Phantastes*: Mythopoeic

Reading as Spiritual Sanctification.”  
 Author: David S. Hogsette, Grove City College

Most people reading *Phantastes* for the first time struggle with the narrative’s apparent randomness. However, recognizing the coherence of this disjointed narrative, appreciating Anodos’s development, and thus embarking on our own spiritual self-exploration actually begins with understanding the meaning of Anodos’s name. Rolland Hein notes that in Greek, *Anodos* can mean *having no way*, or it can indicate *rising up* or *elevating*. Hein suggests that this name accurately describes Anodos and his adventures, because he is a person who has no clear way or path in life and is wandering through fairy world. Yet, by the end of his journey, he rises to spiritual awakening (*George MacDonald* 136; *Harmony Within* 56). Joseph Sigman further explains that there is a pun in the original Greek on the words and phrases *road*, *way*, *having no way*, *journey inland*, and *the way up* (205). It would appear that Anodos wanders aimlessly through the narrative, but as we trace his seemingly random adventures of repeated failure and disappointment, we see that his meanderings are all significant encounters with experiential means of grace by which, eventually, Anodos rises to higher spiritual development. Offering a slightly different perspective, Richard H. Reis notes that the name *Anodos* is translated most frequently from the Greek as “a way back,” thus suggesting Anodos is on a journey from childhood into adulthood and must find his way back to the guiltlessness of childhood (87).

This is an interesting perspective, but I interpret the journey as a way back home



from the spiritual or dream state through which Anodos must mature into a moral being, an educated person who learns the true nature of love and self-sacrifice. This journey is not so much a return to childlike guiltlessness as it is a process of spiritual maturity and redemption. Through metafictional encounters with mythic figures made real within the fairy realm, as well as encounters with a metafictional *doppelganger*, Anodos works his way through fairyland as though through a literal story, and he emerges emotionally changed and spiritually matured. As such, his own metafictional encounter with myth and fairy as literary devices signify our own potential development as readers of fairytales and fantasy. Before metafiction was all the rage, MacDonald presented readers with a proto-postmodern narrative; however, MacDonald's metafiction does not question the ultimate actuality of self, nor does it recontextualize human subjectivity as mere cultural construction or, worse, problematize the self as solipsistic fiction. Rather, metafiction in *Phantastes* foregrounds the significance of mythopoeic reading as a fundamental literary mechanism for moral instruction and spiritual development that prepares the real individual for ultimate reality, namely, eternal relationship with God.

*Honorable Mention, Scholars' Essay Contest:*

"Mythical Memory: The Theme of Tolkien's Life and Works."

Author: Truett Billups, Independent Scholar

One of the major reasons for the extreme popularity of *The Lord of the Rings*, in addition to the great story and skillful literary style, has been the unparalleled depth of detail and fictional history it contains. Soon after the release

of its first edition, Tolkien received many inquiries from readers concerning details of Middle-earth's history. People were fascinated with Tolkien's fantasy world, and much of this is due to the seemingly endless ocean of Middle-earth's past into which readers could plunge. Tolkien scholars have long recognized that this extensive history is not mere fluff. It reflects many real-world histories and mythologies, using its connections to include deeper messages about such things as morality, death, immortality, courage, and fate. However, an important role the history of Middle-earth plays can be recognized in the way it is preserved internally within the cultures of Elves, Men, Dwarves, and Hobbits, whether through word-of-mouth transmission (Oral Tradition) or the keeping of books and records (Inscription). These different methods of preservation provides a way for the characters of *The Lord of the Rings* to know and remember the past, allowing them to determine the right course of action in accomplishing their goal of defeating Sauron.

Consider the story of Aragorn in the Houses of Healing. Upon his arrival to Minas Tirith, the lives of several important protagonists hang in the balance, including Merry, Éowyn, and Faramir. Aragorn uses his knowledge of old lore to heal and save them from death. This reflection, this knowing, of the past is only possible through the tool of *memory*.

In many of his writings, even outside of his fictional works, Tolkien showed great interest in conveying the value of memory. He constantly lamented the cultural forgetting of myth and displayed a wistful desire for the past. He wrote in a letter that *The Lord of the Rings* is "mainly concerned with Death, and Immortality; and the 'escapes': serial longevity, and hoarding memory." He believed that memory of the past, specifically myth, could teach "men and

women how to be fully men and women. . . . Essentially, memory of the past provided a way of redemption that could not be reached through "sheer human will or reason." The question arises: How does the invention of a fictional world, one of such bewildering complexity as Middle-earth, help us remember the past of *this* world? Is it simply one big demonstration of the principal importance of memory, or does Middle-earth itself literally help us remember our own past? The answer is both, but this paper deals with the latter.

### Creative Writing Winner

**First Prize: "Mythopoeia in Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*"**

**Author: Joshua Place, Sophomore Biology Major, John Brown University**

With a long sigh, I put the book that I just finished on the table beside me. Lost in thought, I watched the firelight flicker from the hearth, illuminating the spine of the book I had just completed—*King Solomon's Mines*. Deeply affected, I sat for a while in my armchair by the fire, surrounded by stillness, the only sound the quiet pop and snap of burning wood. "If only I could pinpoint it," I said aloud, "I would be content. Why this quickening of my heart? Why this deep longing for *something else*?" Though I could not immediately answer my own question, I had, a few days ago, read a work by the author C.S. Lewis on characteristics of good literature. In search of answers, I began to apply its lessons, musing aloud—my only companion the fire before me.

"I think *King Solomon's Mines* compelled me because of its resistance to my imaginative egotistical castle building. I felt as though I were simply a spectator of the

book's plot, rendering it nigh impossible to place myself into the position of any of the characters. Because of this fact, the story did not readily lend itself to feeding the self-centered dreams of my own heroism." The fire winked at me as if in agreement, urging me to reflect farther.

"Furthermore, I felt the Kappa Element strongly. I could taste the dust of the African desert, experience the rush of battle, feel the despair of being trapped in a mine surrounded by diamonds. The characters were just dynamic enough to highlight the atmosphere of the book, rather than take from it—why," I informed the twinkling fire, "I even had to put the book down and get a drink of water during the chapter about the march through the desert."

I got up and began to pace back and forth, heedless of the slow darkening of my hearth. "Perhaps, too, the book gave me a new perspective. I have never been to South Africa, never shot so much as a chipmunk, couldn't survive through a desert—yet through this book I can take on the perspective of a wiry elephant hunter, roughened by the South African plains—in short, I can climb inside the mind of Haggard himself, see things from his perspective, cease to be myself, and expand my perception of reality."

The fire was completely out now, and, with a start, I realized that I was standing in complete blackness. Bending down somewhat shakily—I have always been afraid of darkness, and what it might hide—I managed to coax the coals back into a small flicker. I continued adding wood, intent on my purpose, until I had a roaring flame once again. I stood up slowly, and made for my chair—only now someone was sitting in it.

A roundish man, very bald and with thick black spectacles perched on his nose was serenely smoking a pipe, gazing at me through sharp, intelligent eyes. I stood, gazing back, unaccustomed to having strange men suddenly appear in

my armchair in the wee hours of the night—even if they are peacefully smoking pipes.

The man took his pipe out of his mouth and pointed it at me. “I agree with you, you know,” he said in a crisp British accent, tinged with Irish vowels, “Haggard was quite a writer. His scene in the mines—what a trapped feeling of despair he creates in his readers. After all, as I wrote in *Experiment in Criticism*, “[good literature] admits us to experiences other than our own...my own eyes are not enough for me, I will see through those eyes of others”(139-140). He reinserted his pipe and continued looking serenely at me. Then I realized—he had said as *I* wrote. This man who had mysteriously appeared in my armchair was none other than C.S. Lewis himself.

I continued to stand there, my mouth slightly open. Seeing that I wasn’t about to say anything, Lewis continued. “I hope you don’t mind me quoting my own book, but I think when reading *King Solomon’s Mines*, you are not “always the hero, [with] everything being seen through [your] own eyes”(52). “And,” for here I roused myself, sparked by the agreement of Lewis with my theories, “it makes a good myth as well. I knew that Ignosi was royalty, even before they arrived at their destination. I knew that a confrontation would take place, I knew what the outcome of the battle would be—these things all felt *inevitable*. Though I thought them interesting, I really didn’t deeply sympathize with any of the main characters—all of which points meet your criterion for good myth.”

“True,” agreed Lewis. “Perhaps we should observe the story of *King Solomon’s Mines* again, now that you have such answers in mind.” With these words he blew a smoke ring, which issued from his pipe and expanded, filling the entire room with a thick fog. With a start, I realized the ground beneath me was moving, as if on the surface of the ocean.

The fog cleared, and I was standing in the very cabin in which Sir Henry Curtis and Captain John Good had requested Allen Quatermain’s help in finding Sir Henry’s brother, George. C.S. Lewis was in one corner of the cabin, still sitting in my armchair, gazing calmly on the scene, puffing his pipe as if he had been there all along. Before I could take in the full details of the cabin, however, it vanished, and was replaced by an image of Quatermain buying cows for the journey.

Disoriented, I staggered back as image after image flashed rapidly in front of me—the party setting out, Ignosi joining in disguise, the grand elephant hunt, the long search for water, finding of the frozen body of Don Silvestra, subsequent capture by natives, confrontation with the wicked King, the epic and bloody battle, and the final descent into the diamond mines—here the images stopped, and seemed to slow. This had been one of my favorite parts, one of the parts that had most enthralled me with its atmosphere. I watched closely.

“Tap, tap, went old Gagool’s stick down the passage, as she trotted along, chuckling hideously; and still overcome by some unaccountable presentiment of evil,  
I hung back....

’by Jove, I believe it’s full of diamonds’....’we are the richest men in the world’....’eat of them, hee! hee! *Drink* of them, ha! ha!...’Oh Bougwan! Help! Help! The rock falls!’...the door was shut...the ponderous mass of rock had closed, probably forever”  
(245-256).

The images before me stopped. Quatermain and Captain Good were standing, exactly as I had imagined them, frozen in the act of discovering the trapdoor. Lewis got out of his armchair, walked over to the two of them, and gestured in the direction of

Quatermain with his pipe. “Explain,” said Lewis, pointing now at Captain Good, “how this passage fits with your theory?”

“First,” I began, also walking near where the two characters stood frozen, and looking intently at them, “I have no desire to place myself in the shoes of any of these men. They exist, but not with enough traits or depth for me to really identify with. They are merely part of a story, and don’t take the prominent position of the narrative. I never felt that *King Solomon’s Mines* was about Allen Quartermaine or Captain Good, because they seemed to lend themselves to the landscape, to enhance the atmosphere of the place and my experience of it. The quaint idiosyncrasies of the good Captain—his obsession with cleanliness, his insistence on shaving—served to highlight the comparative harshness and wildness of the African veldt around them. What good are three crisp collars when one is facing a rampaging elephant?”

Furthermore, Haggard used rich descriptive power and avoided cliches, giving me no opportunity to place myself in the story, or to use its plot for egotistical castle building, since I couldn’t create any part of the landscape in a familiar way. Instead, I was given the exact details of what the cavern looked like—in all its horrifying splendor. The echoes, the dark ice crystals, the petrified bodies of kings of the past—I would have created none of this for a setting in which *I* was the main character, thus, these precise detailed descriptions played an important role in keeping me from imagining myself as the story’s hero.

Second, these descriptions and characters enhanced the Kappa Element. It was as if Haggard created beautiful and stirring architecture out of the stones of plot, character and landscape. Even the names of the locations, when read aloud, sound foreign and mysterious. The dialogue of the adventurers, the stone boxes of diamonds, the darkness, the

dusty ancient coins—all of these elements created rich depth when placed together. To see the depth, simply imagine a group of regular miners descending into a western style mineshaft—wooden beams and all—lead by a foreman, discovering multiple wooden boxes of diamonds. Such a story leaves a bitter taste in the mouth, and would be nothing worth reading. Indeed, it is more akin to a news story than it is to fantasy.

I do not think that only I would find this diamond mine death trap compelling. People of the time it was written would have also been stirred, albeit for a different reason. As Victorians, they would probably have been absorbed by the mystery of the unknown triumphing over all the power white men had to offer. No longer were the whites all powerful, no longer did they have an answer for every problem. Here was an ancient stone puzzle which was to become their tomb. Here was antiquity conquering the modern spirit. Even in this, *King Solomon’s Mines* would confound the unliterary reader by not offering them a “complete” ending. The diamond mine climax did not lend itself to the crisp, cut and dried complete victory of the heroes.

Indeed, perspective wise, the book was absolutely steeped in 19th century Victorianism. Though I do not think we are able to step directly into Haggard’s shoes—the book is not *that* personal—we can certainly view things from a Victorian perspective.

This seeking to conquer and explore other nations, this idealization of the white culture, this insatiable desire to seek out the mysterious places on earth and make them known—these, I think, are very Victorian ideals. From a twenty-first century perspective, they are immensely interesting. In reading *King Solomon’s Mines*, to loosely paraphrase *Experiment in Criticism*, I became a Victorian

Englishman, and yet remained myself (141).

It was at the end of my long monologue that I noticed. Lewis was gone, the armchair was empty, and I was simply talking into empty space. Did I imagine the entire thing? Though calm of mind now regarding what made *King Solomon's Mines* good literature, I certainly didn't want to have to deal with the fact that I might be going mad. Suddenly, however, the fire before me flared brightly, and I caught the glint of something lying in my armchair. Curious, I picked the object up to examine it. It was a long, simple wood pipe. Packed inside were the still smoldering remains of what had once been a mound of tobacco leaves. I smiled, stoked the fire, and, sitting back down in my armchair, opened a new book.

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