



inklinations http://www.okcu.edu/english/csliis*

Hwæt we inclinga on ærdagum
searþancolra snyttru gehierdon. . .
þara wæs Hloðuig sum, hæleða dyrost, brad ond beorhtword. . .**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On the weekend of April 4-5, 2008, presenters from over twenty different university campuses across the U.S., both secular and private, and even one from Scotland, came to the 11th Annual C. S. Lewis & The Inklings Society Conference at Grove City College in Grove City, Pennsylvania. Strategically scheduled paper sessions included topics not only on Lewis and Tolkien, but on Charles Williams, George MacDonald, and Dorothy Sayers.



Our hosts, Dr. Janice Brown, Dr. James Dixon, and the entire English Dept. at Grove City College pulled out all the stops in planning a variety of lavish events on the stately and beautiful grounds of the GCC campus, all centered on the conference's theme of "The Inklings: Communion of Saints."

Participants enjoyed GCC's extraordinary hospitality in providing refreshments between each session; a glorious Evensong at the Harbison Chapel (which looked very much like a European cathedral), a banquet of delectable

food, fine fellowship, and even a string quartet; a superb after-dinner dramatic performance (see details below); a delicious luncheon meal on Saturday before the final address and guest panel, followed by Afternoon Tea. What a splendid time of scholarship, fellowship, and immersion of culture was had by all CSLIS members!

Our banquet speaker on Friday night, Dr. James Como, Professor of Rhetoric and Public Communication at CUNY and co-founder of the New York C.S. Lewis Society, delivered an engaging and informative talk, "Militant and Mild: A Meditation on Aidos, Hope, and C.S. Lewis's Saints." Como has authored a number of articles and books on Lewis, and his keynote address offered astute observations on Lewis as a writer and as an important (though certainly imperfect) and humble believer.



James Como's Keynote Address at the Banquet

*The C. S. Lewis and Inklings Society is based out of Oklahoma City University. See website for information.

**"Lo! we have heard in old days of the wisdom of the cunning-minded Inklings. . . One of them was [Lewis], dearest of men, broad and bright of word" (Humphrey Carpenter, *Inklings* 176-77).

Our other guest speaker, Dr. Jerry Root, teaches at Wheaton College, Illinois, and has written several articles on Lewis and co-edited *The Quotable C.S. Lewis*. Root gave an inspiring set of addresses on Lewis' rhetorical gifts, including the many lessons Lucy learned from the magician's book on the island of the Dufflepuds in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* and the different voices of Aslan in *A Horse and his Boy*.



Last panel: Jerry Root, James Como, Joe R. Christopher

After the final panel, everyone enjoyed a lavish spread of scones, tea, coffee, and other goodies that enlivened the further conversations.

GCC also staged a phenomenal production of Charles Williams' drama *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury* on Friday evening. Elaborate costuming, the exquisite setting of the campus chapel, and a playtext expertly edited by James Dixon provided a stunning interpretation of selected scenes.



Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury

Eighth Day Books once again provided a fantastic array of Inklings-related books for conference goers to browse in between sessions, and we thank them for bringing such an impressive collection of scholarly and literary works to the conference each year.

NEWS

CSLIS Conference March 26-28, 2009.

The next CSLIS Conference will be hosted at Calvin College. The theme will be "Inklings: Dinosaurs or Contemporaries?" and will feature plenary speaker Peter Schakel. In papers and plenary sessions, the conference will explore ways in which C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield and Charles Williams may be particularly relevant to the literary, theological, philosophical and socio-political issues of our own early 21st century times. As in previous conferences, we would like to include Dorothy L Sayers and G.K. Chesterton.

Abstracts (including a title) of 250 words, defining a clear theme and direction for an extended argument, should be e-mailed to Dr. Michael Stevens, Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids MI by November 30, 2008, at mstevens@cornerstone.edu. In addition to submissions by academics and independent scholars, we would like to encourage submissions by graduate and advanced undergraduate students. Completed papers will be strictly limited to 20 minutes reading time, so please plan accordingly.

Writing Contest. The Society continues to solicit submissions for a Writing Contest! Winners will be published in the newsletter and/or future publications of the Society. Submissions of up to 2500 words are requested in the categories of:

- (a) Creative Writing (poetry, fiction, etc.)
- (b) Academic Essays (10 sources minimum)

For creative works, we are seeking poems or short stories, which may be inspired by, or take

place in, the mythopoeic worlds of the Inklings, but must not be simply derivative (direct imitations) of prior works. Of course, they also may bear no relation to them.

For academic papers, we are looking for research-based essays (minimum of 10 secondary sources) that analyze the literary works or the theological or theoretical ideas of Inklings and associated writers; we are not considering devotional pieces, meditative, personal, or journalistic writing.

Submissions for the Writing Contest are due May 1, 2009 (1 entry per student or faculty per year). Winners will appear in future newsletters.

Joining/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:

- Blogs on Lewis, Tolkien, and other Inklings
- Monthly suggested readings
- Scheduled topics for local discussion groups
- Service opportunities (read-a-thons, etc.)

Also, membership in local chapters makes you eligible for **student stipends for conference expense**, among other additional benefits, at no additional cost beyond your annual CSLIS membership fee. Ask J. Himes for further details. Please register your local chapter with the CSLIS today! (contact: jhimes@jbu.edu)

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.

MEMBERSHIP

Please don't forget to renew your CSLIS membership for 2008-09. This entitles all members to

- present your paper at the conference
- receive society newsletters and updates
- participate in CSLIS Writing Contests

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

<http://www.okcu.edu/english/cslis/membership.html>

A REPORT ON OXBRIDGE

by Salwa Khoddam, founder of CSLIS

Oxbridge 2008, the C.S. Lewis Foundation Summer Institute in the U.K., which I attended this summer with partial funding from the Office of International Education at Oklahoma City University, has provided a highly significant experience for me. I could not have received a better education in such a short time. The major theme of the conference was "The Self & the Search for Meaning." Week 1 (July 28 – August 2) was held in Oxford and week 2 (August 3 – 8) in Cambridge. A group of select, world-renowned plenary speakers from all disciplines gave daily inspiring and informative talks, seminars, and workshops on this theme that is so relevant today. They were an array of distinguished preachers, faculty, artists, and scientists, all experts in their fields, from the likes of Bishop Kallistos Ware, chairman of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue in the U.K. to Nigel Cameron, President of the Center for Policy on Emerging Technology in Washington, D.C. Each inspired and energized us in different ways. All focused on explaining the challenges of modern life and suggested ways to handle these challenges, be they

scientific, psychological, or religious. It was such a privilege for me to be exposed to these important and universal issues of our times presented from interdisciplinary and international points of view and also to be provided with carefully argued solutions based on long years of study.

The conference began with a welcoming and inspiring sermon by Rev. Derek Bingham, who was one of the plenary speakers at the CSLIS conference at JBU in 2006. He talked about Lewis's personal effect on his spiritual life. One of the most powerful lectures was given by Dana Gioia, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts and a well-known poet in the U.S. He talked about the need of art in order to enrich our lives, humanize us, and help us get in touch with what is eternal and universal. The participation in Beauty, which great literary works and paintings offer us, brings out in us our higher faculties so that we can experience a higher reality. Another powerful speech was given by Nigel Cameron, who alerted us to challenges of protecting our human dignity in the face of nanotechnology of the future. Dr. Paul Witz, Professor and Senior Scholar at the Institute for Psychological Services in Arlington, VA, offered us a cautiously optimistic view of an emerging "transmodern identity" in our culture among the young generation, which breaks away from secular humanism and relativism and is integrated with Christianity. There were other inspiring speeches by Christians and non-Christians who provided us with ways of transforming ourselves in our consumer-based culture of materialism and commercialism. I took notes from these lectures and bought a few CDs of the speeches to use in my classes.

In the afternoons, there were faculty forums for presenting academic papers. I presented my paper on one of the stories from C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* entitled "Over the Perilous Sea to the Garden of Restoration in C.S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*." My paper, which is part of a chapter of a book that I am writing on Lewis, was well received, and I had two great suggestions from the audience on what to add to it. I also attended a two-week seminar on two of Lewis's books that I will be teaching in Spring 2009 at OCU.

RECENT SCHOLARSHIP

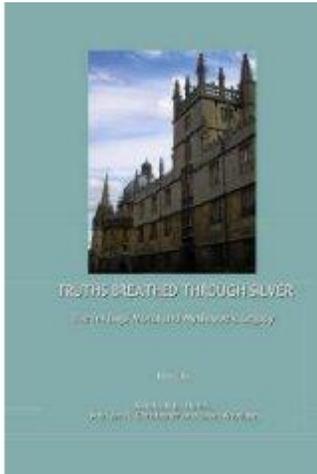
Professor emeritus Joe R. Christopher of Tarleton State University (Stephenville TX), since he read "The Early Influences of Williams Morris on C. S. Lewis" at last spring's CSLIS meeting, has read two more papers on Lewis. At the Mythopoeic Society's convention in New Britain, Connecticut, on 15-18 August, he read "The Thematic Organization of *Spirits in Bondage*," a discussion of Lewis's first book of poetry. At the Southwest Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature held in Seminole, Oklahoma, on 2-4 October, he read an essay on Lewis's Despoina poems, two published in *Spirits in Bondage* and one elsewhere. About the time this newsletter is sent out, he will have also read a paper on Lewis's Gothic poetry in *Spirits in Bondage*—"Spooks," "The Witch," and "Alexandrines." This will be given in the Gothic literature section of the South Central Modern Language Association, meeting in San Antonio, Texas, on 6-8 October. Dr. Christopher also has had an essay appear titled "Sir Gawain's Pentangle," in the proceedings of the 2005 Tolkien Conference held in Birmingham, England, published by The Tolkien Society. The essay discusses the significance of Tolkien's understanding that "pentangle," in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, was a long-known word in English, while Norman Davis's revision of the Tolkien and Gordon edition of *Sir Gawain* says that the Pearl Poet's use is the first known in English.

Jonathan B. Himes, Joe R. Christopher, and Salwa Khoddam edited the book *Truths Breathed Through Silver: The Inklings' Moral and Mythopoeic Legacy* (Cambridge Scholars, March 2008). Representing a decade of scholarship within the CSLIS, this book examines the mythopoeic fiction that Lewis, Tolkien, Williams, and their associates enjoyed and composed. Ten essays by scholars Tom Shippey, Jason Fisher, David Neuhouser, and David Oberhelman, and keynote presentations by Rolland Hein, Kerry Dearborn, and Thomas

Howard demonstrate how these fantasy writers revived old myths to fortify their generation with the truths they contain. In addition to his editorial role, Himes is the author of chapter four, "The Allegory of Lust: Textual and Sexual Deviance in [Lewis's] *The Dark Tower*," as well as the Introduction to the volume. Christopher contributed his 2000 keynote address "C. S. Lewis's Three Paths to God" and Khoddam contributed her essay "From Ruined City to Edenic Garden in C. S. Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*."

Check out a preview of the Introduction and first chapter on AMAZON:

<http://www.amazon.com/Truths-Breathed-Through-Silver-Mythopoeic/dp/1847184448>



Below are some endorsements for the book by prominent scholars.

"These ten essays constitute a lively conversation at the intersection of faith, myth, and truth. Each voice is distinct, each topic particular, each approach thought-provoking on its own terms. But the cumulative effect is to remind us just how much mythopoeic writers like J. R. R. Tolkien, H. Rider Haggard, G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, George MacDonald, and Charles Williams continue to say about things that concern us all."

--Diana Glycer, author of *The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as*

Writers in Community, Professor of English, Azusa Pacific University

"In this wide-ranging collection of essays on MacDonald and the Inklings, some shed new light on old topics and others direct our attention to fresh, sometimes surprising themes. Often retaining the personal warmth of their origins in oral presentation, they go beyond traditional literary criticism to point out practical implications for cultural critique, theological understanding, and holy living."

--Charles Huttar, Professor of English, Emeritus, Hope College

"This collection of essays is marked by venturesomeness and innovative scholarship. Serious bibliophiles, philologists, lay-theologians and connoisseurs of mythopoesis will all find something here of value, and, with thoughtful essays such as the editor's on the problematic DARK TOWER and a superb reflection by a professional mathematician on the oeuvre of George MacDonald in the light of GM's passion for mathematics, there will be something genuinely new in this book for almost everyone."

--David Lyle Jeffrey, Distinguished Professor of Literature and Humanities, Honors College, Baylor University