

# The C. S. Lewis & Inklings Society

Newsletter 8 (Oct. 2012)



## 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 floduig sum,*

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

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On the weekend of May 31-June 2, 2012, presenters from thirty different college or university campuses across the U.S., both secular and private, came to the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual C.S. Lewis & The Inklings Society Conference at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana.

This year's event was a unique joint venture with the 8<sup>th</sup> "Frances White Ewbank Colloquium on C. S. Lewis & Friends" (a biennial event named in honor of Dr. Ewbank, who pioneered the study of C.S. Lewis at Taylor). By joining forces this year, the two organizations were able to invite our usual attendees to one great conference instead of two separate events, and enjoy a time of closer fellowship as we stayed in the dorms and ate delicious meals together on campus. It was good to pool our efforts and allow our respective societies' members to meet each other or reconnect.

Dr. Pam Jordan-Long, the program director at Taylor, did a phenomenal job of organizing the events and keynote speakers, and the planning committee at

Taylor (Dan Bowell, Laura Constantine, Drew Crane, Kevin Diller, Linda Lambert, Dave Neuhouser, and Tom Nurkkala) and student workers really went the extra mile to make us all very comfortable and welcome—everything from the airport shuttle to local transport on campus to loaning us all umbrellas, providing snacks, assisting with printouts and other last-minute technology needs. We were warmly received at Taylor, and the campus provided a variety of opportunities to consider the works of the Inklings and associates.



At the banquet Saturday night, Devin Brown shared his new documentary "C. S.

\*"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).

Lewis: Why He Matters Today” that celebrates the impact and relevance of Lewis in our time.

Concurrent paper sessions (with over 40 papers scheduled) included topics not only on Lewis and Tolkien, but on Charles Williams, Owen Barfield, George MacDonald, and G. K. Chesterton. Attendees enjoyed light refreshments between sessions. Eighth Day Books again offered a vast collection of Inklings literature and secondary sources.

Conference attendees also were given tours of the impressive Edwin W. Brown Collection in the Taylor university library, which houses many rare editions and manuscripts of Lewis and the Inklings. Also on display was a special collection of Tolkieniana belonging to T.R. Knight in the Zondervan library foyer. These opportunities to examine so much Inklings material, along with the release of Charlie Starr’s new book based on his research here at Taylor, made the weekend all the more exciting and fruitful.

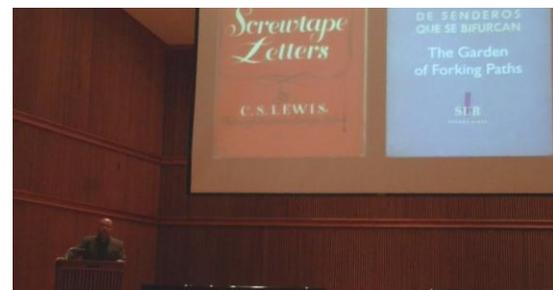


The conference organizers were pleased to offer cash awards for winning papers: Taylor University awarded Janie Kliever (Northwest University undergraduate) 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Student Essay Contest for her paper “Gleam of the Divine: Classical Mythology in *The Chronicles of Narnia*”; the CSLIS Board awarded Zach A. Rhone

(Indiana University of Pennsylvania graduate student) 1<sup>st</sup> place for his paper “A Meaningful Hierarchy: How C. S. Lewis Perceives Humanity’s Significance”; and CSLIS awarded Jason Fisher (Editor, *Mythprint*) 1<sup>st</sup> place for his paper “Tolkien’s Wraiths, Rings, and Dragons: An Exercise in Literary Linguistics.” Congratulations!

Honorable Mentions included Carmen Wilcox (LeTourneau undergraduate), “Owen Barfield and J.R.R. Tolkien on Language and Meaning”; Brenton D. G. Dickieson (University of Prince Edward Island), “The Pedagogical Value of the *Screwtape Letters* for a New Generation.”

**The plenary speakers** this year were Alan Jacobs, whose presentation title was “Distinguo!” and David Downing, who spoke on “Journey to Joy: C.S. Lewis's Pilgrim's Regress.” In addition, Charlie Starr shared a riveting account of his investigations on the manuscript “Light: C. S. Lewis’s First and Final Short Story,” and Rod Reed performed two Readers Theatre dramas, one on Lewis and one on the family of George MacDonald.



In his talk entitled “Distinguo!” **Alan Jacobs**, the Clyde S. Kilby Professor of English at Wheaton, spoke on the current trend in fiction dealing with multiverses and infinite choice. Jorge Luis Borges gets credited for starting this phenomenon with his 1941 short story “The Garden of Forking Paths,” and you see it now in all kinds of popular movies



and books. The idea is that somewhere out there, another version of the protagonist could just as easily have chosen the other door, or the other job, etc. There is not quite as much at stake if this life is only one of all the possible incarnations of you or me. The multiverse hypothesis therefore reduces the significance of any choice to zero and leaves open the question of whether multiform reality continues after death. Current authors following Borges' lead include YA fiction writer Diana Wynn Jones and Neal Stephenson.



Alan Jacobs

Not long after Borges published his famous short story (and a year after C. S. Lewis had published *That Hideous Strength*) Sartre wrote "Existentialism is Humanism" (1946), which presents a view opposite to that of Borges' multiverse. Sartre wrote: "Choice may be possible, but what is not possible is not to choose." Existentialists say that choice matters because this is the only world we get.

Like Thomas Aquinas, C. S. Lewis was fond of using the term *distinguo*, a plea for clear distinctions that Lewis found useful in tutorials with his Oxford students and in debates with Tolkien. Lewis shared the view of his friend Owen Barfield that the world is getting narrower and less ambiguous, instead of more open-ended and infinite. In other words, reality presents us with choices that lead toward resolution, not endless new options. In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis

relates that there came a point in his conversion when it wasn't "all or nothing" but simply "All!"—that God is calling our forking paths to become one irreversible path. We find this to be true in our choice of vocation, marriage partner, etc. The life choices we make preclude others.

Lewis illustrates this principle most clearly in works like *That Hideous Strength*, in which characters who realize that either/or choices do matter include Dimble, on the moral basis of good/evil, and Feverstone, who operates on the basis of powerful/weak, not on which side is right. *The Great Divorce* and *The Magician's Nephew* also deal with these concerns.

**David Downing**, the R.W. Schlosser Professor of English at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, has written four award-winning books on C. S. Lewis and just recently published a historical novel (a "history mystery") about Lewis and Tolkien entitled *Looking for the King: An Inklings Novel*. In our second plenary presentation, Downing deciphered many of the obscure allusions and references in Lewis's least read book, *The Pilgrim's Regress*. As Lewis himself explained in the 1943 Afterword to the Third Edition, the work is not autobiographical, but it does map out roughly Lewis's trajectory toward the Christian faith, which at the time of writing he did not realize was quite uncommon, though he felt it was a natural one.





David Downing

Lewis's journey (from "popular realism" to Philosophical Idealism to Pantheism to Theism to Christianity) traces his own reconciliation of logic and the passions, or "Reason and Romanticism" (as implied by the book's subtitle) as he traversed the "Dialectic of Desire" and came to the conclusion that nothing in this world will satisfy our spiritual and intellectual yearnings.

This uncommon path to faith is the main culprit for the book's lack of clarity in the allegorical characters and scenes drawn from the politics, philosophy, and aesthetic debates of the early twentieth century. Because of this admitted failure within his otherwise deeply profound allegory, Lewis added a running header on each page as an interpretive guide to the reader.

Downing's presentation enumerated and contextualized the exact philosophers, poets, and politicians that C. S. Lewis was deriding (rather bitterly, as he himself acknowledged in the Afterward), so that readers can more easily understand, for example, that Mr. Halfways (whose art can take you "half way" to your desire) represents Victorian poets such as William Morris; that the ridiculous performance-poet Victoriana is based on the avant-garde poet Edith Sitwell, who read her "poems" through a megaphone behind a tapestry; that Mr. Phally (wearing a costume with a crocodile codpiece) represents the "religion of sex" as found in the writings of D. H.

Lawrence; or that Neo-Angular represents modernists like T. S. Eliot. Downing also clarified that the protagonist John's tryst with the "brown girls" (a dead-end or "sensual cheat" on his quest for the source of Joy) may stem from a dream that Lewis had of being seduced by a brown girl, according to Roger Lancelyn Green, and that further, her Mediterranean features may not only have been influenced by a popular actress of the time, Josephine Baker, but also conform to the European moral geography of the time.

**Charlie Starr**, Professor of English, Humanities, and Film at Kentucky Christian University, presented startling discoveries about a little-known Lewis manuscript in his book *Light: C. S. Lewis's First and Final Short Story*, which had its debut at this conference with a signing after the presentation.



Starr related how this version of *The Man Born Blind*, originally edited by Walter Hooper in 1977, surfaced in 1985 and was acquired by Edwin W. Brown and generously donated to Taylor University for further study. Starr's close inspection of this unique MS reveals many aspects of Lewis's revision process (a rarity considering how much Lewis threw out or burned) and also a key to interpreting this enigmatic short story. The evidence and analysis of the handwriting, the condition of the holograph with Lewis's name and his own title "Light" for the story on the first of individual sheets (and not found in

a notebook as was *Man Born Blind*) and lots of internal details such as dialogue help to date this text and to identify it as the version Lewis intended for publication. Charlie Starr's restoration of this important text and variorum edition provide a more accurate interpretation of the tale which up to now has certainly been one of Lewis's most unusual. Starr shows that the blind protagonist's fatal leap at the end may well reflect Lewis's ideas about ultimate truths being tangible, and that a fierce yearning for Joy, as in the case of characters like Reepicheep and, in this tale, Robin, can sometimes lead individuals into a reckless abandonment to the "light," in efforts to literally bathe in the source of absolute truth and beauty.



Charlie Starr

**Ron Reed**, Artistic Director (and founder) of Pacific Theatre in Vancouver, Canada, and others performed a dynamic new play which imagines that C.S. Lewis was the last patient of Sigmund Freud. Reed's portrayal of Freud on stage was convincing and sympathetic.

Reed also did a one-man show of the drama that he wrote entitled "A Bright and Particular Star," based on the life and acting career of George MacDonald's daughter Lilly, which was a tour-de-force of Scottish, American, and English accents as Reed played the parts of George MacDonald, Lilly, Mark Twain, and many others. The playtext was drawn from actual events in the lives of

the MacDonald family as they performed plays such as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *MacBeth*, and other edifying masques and plays for the public, which nearly launched the secular acting career of Lilly; the drama movingly relates her decision to leave the life of theatre, which affects her prospects of marriage to an American who courted her.



Ron Reed

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## NEWS

### 16<sup>th</sup> Annual CSLIS Conference, 2013

The next CSLIS Conference, *Fairytales in the Age of i-pads: Inklings, Imagination, and Technology* will be hosted at LeTourneau University in Longview, east Texas. We are pleased to announce our keynote speaker, Dr. Ralph Wood, University Professor of Theology and Literature at Baylor University. He has published several books including *The Gospel According to Tolkien: Visions of the Kingdom in Middle-earth*, and *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South*.

### 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,

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you will receive access to the following online services of the Society:

- Blogs on the Inklings
- Monthly suggested readings
- Scheduled topics for local discussions
- Service opportunities (read-a-thons, etc.)

*Note from Mark Hall on the ORU C. S. Lewis and Inklings Club: We celebrated Bilbo and Frodo's birthday last night [9/24/12]. We had carrot cake, played riddle games, and watched Bilbo's birthday celebration and the Hobbit movie trailers. The students seemed to really enjoy it.*

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](mailto: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.

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## MEMBERSHIP

Please don't forget to renew your CSLIS membership. 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:

[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

continues to co-edit the journal *Windhover: A Journal of Christian Literature*

Read poems based on Charles Darwin. Science and Science Fiction Conference, titled "When Worlds Collide: Science, Faith, and the Imagination," Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, 13 April.

Read a paper titled "C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem: A Conjectural Essay" at the joint meet of the C. S. Lewis and Inklings Society's conference and the 8<sup>th</sup> Frances White Ewbank Colloquium on C. S. Lewis and Friends, Taylor University, Upland, Indiana. The paper is to appear in the proceedings.

Published *The Varieties of Poetic Genres: Ars Poetica*. Lewiston, NY: Mellen Poetry Press, 2012 (appearing late in August). The book has a few poems on Lewis and has some references to Tolkien.

Read poems based on Charles Darwin. The Langdon Review Weekend, Granbury, Texas, 6 September. A

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selection of my Darwinian poems appeared in this year's *Langdon Review of the Arts in Texas*, released also on 6 September.

At the Southwest Conference of Christianity and Literature, meeting in Oklahoma City, 5-6 October, I am doing two things: (1) I am reading a paper titled "The Real C. S. Lewis Bible" and (2) I am chairing a session of four poets reading their poems.

At the South Central Modern Language Association convention, meeting in San Antonio TX, 8-10 November, I am doing two things: (1) I am chairing the Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature section (with a good paper on Tolkien by Robert T. Talley, Jr.) and (2) I am reading some poems from my *Varieties of Poetic Genres: Ars Poetica* in a different section.

Also forthcoming is an essay "To and from Purgatory Island: The Dantean Conclusion to 'The Nameless Isle'" in *C. S. Lewis and the Inklings: Discovering Hidden Truth* (see Salwa Khoddam's news below).

### **Larry Fink**

Conference Paper; "The King James Version & Cultural Literacy"

Conference: The King James Version @ 400: A Celebration

Location: Hardin-Simmons University

Date: September 12-13, 2011

Conference Chaired: Southwest Conference on Christianity & Literature

Location: Hardin-Simmons University

Date: September 29-October 1, 2011

Conference Paper; "Hopkins' Influence on Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*"

Conference: *The Moviegoer* at Fifty

Location: Walker Percy Center for Writing and Publishing, Loyola University, New Orleans

Date: October 14-15, 2011

Conference Paper; "Human Dignity, Liberal Education, and the Future of Health Care"

Conference: Honors Forum on Faith & Intellect.

Location: Hardin-Simmons University

Date: March 22-23, 2012

### **Mark R. Hall**

"Gandalf and Merlin, Aragorn and Arthur: Tolkien's Transmogrification of the Arthurian Tradition and Its Use as a Palimpsest for *The Lord of the Rings*," Proceedings of 2012 CSL & Inklings & Friends Conference. This paper was presented at the C. S. Lewis and Inklings Conference at Taylor University in 2012.

"Truth, Beauty, and the Reflection of God: John Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice* as Palimpsests for Modern and Contemporary Architecture," Proceedings of the 2012 Engineering and Metaphysics Conference. This paper was presented at the 2012 Engineering and Metaphysics Conference at Oral Roberts University.

"Reframing Time and Space: Narrative as a Vehicle of Travel, Tragedy, and Transcendence in H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* and C. S. Lewis' *Perelandra*," is scheduled to appear in *C. S. Lewis and the Inklings: Discovering Hidden Truth*, edited by Salwa Khoddam, Mark Hall, and Jason Fisher to be published in 2012 by Cambridge Scholars Press, an anthology of papers presented at the CSLIS conference in 2010 at Oklahoma City University.



**Salwa Khoddam and Mark Hall with Jason Fisher**

*C. S. Lewis and the Inklings: Discovering Hidden Truth.* Ed. Salwa Khoddam, Mark R. Hall, and Jason Fisher. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming.



C. S. LEWIS AND THE INKLINGS

*Discovering Hidden Truth*

EDITED BY  
SALWA KHODDAM AND MARK R. HALL  
WITH JASON FISHER

included under the term “Inklings” in this anthology: G. K. Chesterton and George MacDonald. Readers will find new territory here for further exploration of the Inklings in the areas of

- 1) creative collaboration;
- 2) literary genres (for example, the penny dreadful, Christian liturgical poetry);
- 3) literary influences (H. G. Wells, Dante);
- 4) literary linguistics (Tolkien’s “web of words”); and
- 5) the convergence of literature and theology.

Other explored areas, which readers would find interesting, are medieval cosmology and classical and Nordic mythology in Lewis’s and Tolkien’s works (i.e., the mythology of the Greeks and Romans and the Nordic myth of Ragnarök).

This volume follows another collaborative work by CSLIS members, published in 2008, also by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, and edited by Dr. Jonathan Himes with Dr. Joe R. Christopher and Dr. Salwa Khoddam: *Truths Breathed through Silver: The Inklings’ Moral and Mythopoeic Legacy*.

This volume is a collaborative enterprise. The essays collected here originated as papers delivered by members of the C. S. Lewis and Inklings Society at its 13<sup>th</sup> annual conference at Oklahoma City University, April 9-10, 2010. The essays explore a variety of aspects of the inter-related topics of “hiddenness” and “discovery” in five of the Inklings’s works: literary, biographical, and philosophical/theological. The Inklings that are examined in this anthology are C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Owen Barfield, with two of their literary predecessors and influences that are

