

The C. S. Lewis & Inklings Society

Newsletter 9 (Oct. 2013)



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/

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

þara wæs Æloduig sum,

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

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On the weekend of March 21-23, 2013, presenters from twenty-two different college or university campuses across the U.S., both secular and private, came to the 16th Annual C.S. Lewis & The Inklings Society Conference at LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas.

Dr. Randall Compton, the conference director, with assistance from Dr. Martin Batts, Dr. Jim Watson, Fredna Stuckey, and Judy Walton, did a fine job of organizing the paper sessions around the theme “Fairytale in the Age of iPads: Inklings, Imagination, and Technology.”



Some papers on this theme explored the potential and the limits of new media, online gaming, and film adaptations for works of mythopoeia.

Concurrent paper sessions (with 33 papers scheduled) included topics not only on Lewis and Tolkien, but on Charles Williams, Dorothy Sayers, Walter Hooper, T. S. Eliot, George MacDonald, and St. Augustine.



The conference at LeTourneau kicked off Thursday evening with check-in and coffee and a showing of the film *The Fellows Hip: Rise of the Gamers*. The

*"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).

following morning Martin Batts gave a warm welcome and a very fine devotional before our first plenary session. LeTourneau also generously provided an array of refreshments between each of the paper sessions.

At the banquet Saturday night, everyone enjoyed a relaxing and delicious meal as we reflected on the day's presentations and got reconnected with other CSLIS members. Salwa Khoddam spoke briefly about the history of the Society and the many exciting works of scholarship that have been published in recent years. Mark Hall encouraged everyone to renew their membership and enter the annual cash competition for greatest scholarly essays.



The CSLIS Executive Board were pleased to offer **cash awards for winning papers**: Kathyne Hall (ORU undergraduate) 1st Place in the Student Essay Contest for her paper “An Illustrious Illustrator: J.R.R. Tolkien as Artist and Calligrapher”; Jeremy Larson (Baylor University graduate student) 1st place for his paper “The Gold is God’s, Wherever It Is Found: An Augustinian Reading of J.R.R. Tolkien’s Poem ‘Mythopoeia’”; and Jason Fisher (Editor, *Mythprint*) 1st place for his paper “J.R.R. Tolkien: The Foolhardy Philologist.” Congratulations!



Honorable Mentions included Felipe Vogel (LeTourneau undergraduate), “The Green Mystic: Tolkien’s Otherworldly Love of Trees”; Dr. Eleanor Hersey Nickel (Fresno Pacific University), “Whiner or Warrior? Susan Pevensie’s Role in Novel and Film Versions of *the Chronicles of Narnia*.”

The plenary speaker this year was **Ralph Wood**, University Professor of Theology and Literature at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Dr. Wood spoke for us both at the opening session on Friday morning and at the lunch session later that afternoon. Both plenary talks were stirring and highly informative on lessons to be learned from the writings of Tolkien and Lewis.



At the morning plenary session, Wood spoke on “A Long Obedience in the Right Direction: J.R.R. Tolkien on Adventures and Quests.” Here are a few highlights of that talk. The prevailing ethic in U.S. has been to live as long as you can and have



the most fun possible while you're alive. Our cities are built around sites of health, work, and entertainment: hospitals, business complexes, or parks, whereas medieval cities were organized around a cathedral. People today want escapism, and in the words of a prominent writer, we have amused ourselves to death. Thus we are not prepared for it when the end comes. The fantasy stories of J.R.R. Tolkien offer escape, not from our problems in this life, but into realities that transcend our confined century's fashions. Although Middle-earth is an alternate world, it offers not egotistic castle-building, but challenging lessons from characters of various races, human and non-human. We can learn from Boromir's mistake of cultivating only one of the seven cardinal virtues, in his case Courage, at the expense of the others (classical virtues included also Prudence, Justice, and Temperance, and Christians added Faith, Hope, Charity). Craving to live for adventures (like a tourist wanting to escape mundane life and its troubles) is no solution to the question of what makes for a meaning-filled life before (or after) death. The Quest, as illustrated in Tolkien's fiction, provides a better model as a challenging, self-sacrificial journey that may involve dangers, pain, and loss as well as moments of high romance and amusement, whereas escapist "adventures" often seek only the latter pleasurable aspects with a minimum of fuss.

Wood gave another enlightening talk at the lunch session entitled "C.S. Lewis and Theosis: the Christian Life as Divinization in *The Great Divorce*." In this learned presentation, Wood stressed the difference between bourgeois religious sentiment and a more radical spiritual transformation.

Most Christian communities, Wood said, are "conspiracies in 'niceness,'" referring

to the Evangelical tendency toward moralistic, therapeutic Deism.



Ralph Wood

In an extensive church study, author Christian Smith has said that the average Christian goes to church to feel better, to have their needs met, rather than to encounter the living Christ as Lord and Master. This kind of self-help faith grows out of an emphasis on substitutionary atonement, what Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace," which American evangelicals need to grow beyond. The Eastern tradition views Adam and Eve as teenagers who just could not wait, whom God would have allowed to eat of the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life eventually, when they were ready by the long practice of obedience. This is a view that Lewis shares and illustrates in works like *Perelandra* and *The Great Divorce*. Wood explained how close Lewis's "theology" comes to the Eastern Orthodox tradition, particularly concerning the Eucharist, in which the "veil between two worlds becomes quite thin" and Christ reaches from behind it to touch not just the soul but the body. Lewis joins Eastern and Western Church views in his Augustinian perspective on Evil—Lewis in many ways is anti-Calvinist—as an absence of the good, a parasitic thing that will fade away. The ghosts in *The Great Divorce* who are granted a visit to the fringes of heaven may stay and experience a purgatorial growth, or they may choose to

avoid the pain of becoming more real and substantial, as their counterparts chose to do who have come down the mountain to invite them further in. Wood pointed out the ways in which Lewis's theological views, as did Charles Williams's, resembled the Eastern understanding of the deification or "divinization" of believers, as we are caught up in God's own triune life, a process known as *theosis*, or as Williams put it, the "in-Godding of ourselves." It is this process of sanctification, not our niceness or our good works, that helps us grow into the Image of God, in terms of nearness of approach and not just nearness of likeness (we all are born in image of God). It is literally the Christ-life within us empowering to do godly things, and not we ourselves.

NEWS

17th Annual CSLIS Conference

The next CSLIS Conference will be hosted at Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, April 3-5, 2014.

The theme of the conference, "*A Culture of Death? The Inklings and Modernity*," seeks to explore some of the issues that arise from the ambiguities and ambivalences of the Inklings' temporal placement. Topics include:

- The Inklings' relation to, or critiques of, the modern (whether literary styles, literary criticism, politics, ethics, theology, philosophy, etc.)
- The Inklings' relation to postmodern or "post-secular" thought
- Issues in their writings concerning life and death
- Issues concerning peace and violence

Papers on the above theme related to the works of C.S. Lewis, the Inklings, George MacDonald, and Dorothy L. Sayers are invited. However, papers on other subjects related to the above authors will also be considered.

We are pleased to announce our keynote speaker, David Bentley Hart, author of *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (Winner of the Michael Ramsey Prize for Theological Writing, 2011) and *The Story of Christianity: An Illustrated History of 2000 Years of the Christian Faith*.



Dr. Hart is a Cambridge-educated Eastern Orthodox theologian, philosopher, and social critic.

He has taught theology at the University of Virginia, the University of St. Thomas, Duke Divinity School, Loyola College of Maryland, and Providence College, and is presently serving as a contributing editor to the journal *First Things*.

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.)

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:

http://www.oru.edu/academics/resources/cs_lewis/

Local Chapter News

Lee Webb, Associate Professor of Library Science at Oklahoma City University announces a newly official chapter of CSLIS: "We are unique in that we do not have a single university affiliation. Our group includes students and faculty from several institutions as well as independent scholars. Our principal activity thus far has been our monthly book discussion meeting at a local bookstore which is attended by an average of 10. Some books we've discussed in recent months include *The Fall of Arthur*, *Pilgrim's Regress*, *C. S. Lewis: A Life*, and

Mythopoeic Narnia. Some activities we are planning for the future are an Inklings-type writer's group and hosting a local mini-conference to invite new participants from the several universities in the Oklahoma City metro area."

Also, Salwa Khoddam did a reading of her book *Mythopoeic Narnia* to the CSLIS/OKC chapter on October 22nd, 2013.

These are great examples of the kinds of activities sponsored by CSLIS's local chapters.

Call for Papers:

Edited Volume *The Inklings and King Arthur*.

This collection will compare the Arthurian works, especially the mythological geographies, of Tolkien, Lewis, Williams, Barfield, their immediate predecessors, and their contemporaries, using *The Fall of Arthur* as an important keystone text. Topics may include: Arthur in England during the World Wars, Spiritual Quest in a Scientific Age, On Mythological Geographies, Lancelot as Earendel, Western Isles and Faerie Land, Perelandra as Avalon, Sarras as Valinor, **Williams'** Anatomical Arthur, Williams' Occult Arthur, and Owen Barfield's Holy Grail. Proposals should show evidence of rigorous critical engagement and an original approach to the text(s) in question, and must not be previously published. Include contact information and institutional affiliation; a brief introduction to the topic, including scope and texts under consideration; the theoretical framework used; the main conclusions; and the implications of this paper for the overall vision of this volume. In addition, please submit a curriculum vitae.



Send abstracts of 500-1000 words by 1 January 2014 to Sorina Higgins at inklings.arthur@gmail.com

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

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

Janet Brennan Croft

Janet is currently editing two books for the Mythopoeic Press. *Women in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* is a mix of new and classic articles and will be out in Spring 2014. *Baptism of Fire: The Birth of British Fantasy in World War I* considers the Inklings and other authors, and will come out in Fall 2014.

Jason Fisher, Independent Scholar

Jason has published one of his award-winning CSLIS conference papers, "Tolkien's Wraiths, Rings, and Dragons: An Exercise in Literary Linguistics." *Tolkien in the New Century: Essays in Honor of Tom Shippey*. Ed. John Wm. Houghton, et al. Jefferson, NC: McFarland (Forthcoming).

Also, Jason has two contributions to journals —

"Drie Ringen voor ... voor wie precies? Een verklaring voor het bestaan van de drie Elfenringen." Translated by Cécile van Zon. *Lembas* 161 (October 2013): 105–8. [This is my essay "Three Rings for — Whom Exactly? And Why? Justifying the Disposition of the Three Elven Rings" from *Tolkien Studies* 5 (2008), now translated into Dutch.]

"Some Contributions to Middle-earth Lexicography: Hapax Legomena in *The Lord of the Rings*." *The Year's Work in Medievalism* 26 (2011) [2013]: 36–48. [This is one of the award-winning papers I gave at CLIS, now in print. :)]

And two book reviews—

"*Light: C.S. Lewis's First and Final Short Story*, by Charlie W. Starr." *Sehnsucht* (Forthcoming).

"*Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit*, by Corey Olsen; and *There and Back Again: J.R.R. Tolkien and the*

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

Joe R. Christopher

On 4 October 2013, Joe read a paper titled "C. S. Lewis's Two Satyrs" at the South Central Modern Language Association convention, Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature section, in New Orleans. He was also the secretary of the Twentieth Century British Literature section at that convention on 3 October.

On 5 September 2013 Joe read five poems about Lilith at the *Langdon Review* Weekend, Granbury, Texas: "Who Is Lilith, What Is She?," "Adam, Lilith, and Eve," "Lilith Renames an Animal," "Lilith Says Goodbye to Adam," and "Eve's Lament."

Origins of The Hobbit, by Mark Atherton.” *Tolkien Studies* 10 (2013): 224–33.

Mark R. Hall

Let us all congratulate Mark for his promotion at ORU to Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Cultural Studies!

One of Mark’s students, Lauren Stanley, participated in a Study Abroad semester in Oxford. She purchased and donated one of our CSLIS books, *C. S. Lewis and the Inklings: Discovering Hidden Truth*, to The Kilns, so it is now in the library housed at C. S. Lewis's house.



Jonathan B. Himes

Book Review: *The Unofficial Narnia Cookbook*. Dinah Bucholz. *Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal* of the Arizona C. S. Lewis Society (forthcoming, 2013).

Salwa Khoddam

Our Society’s founder has been prolific of late with a number of exciting publications.

1. She extensively revised her book *Mythopoeic Narnia: Memory, Metaphor, and Metamorphoses in The Chronicles of Narnia* into a second edition (Hamden, CT: Winged Lion Press, 2013).

2. Her article "The God Amor, the Cruel Lady, and the Suppliant Lover: C. S.

Lewis and Courtly Love in The Allegory of Love" is published in *Journal of Inklings Studies* 3.2 (October, 2013). Salwa read part of it at the 16th annual CSLIS conference at LeTourneau University, Longview, Texas, on March 21-23, 2013.

3. Another article "The Apple/Peach Image in John Milton, Andrew Marvell, and T. Eliot: Etymology and Sin," with Horace Jeffery Hodges, is under review in *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*.

4. Dr. Mark Hall and Salwa are editing a collection of essays by CSLIS members into an anthology to be published by the Cambridge Scholars Publishing in September, 2014.

This volume follows other collaborative works by CSLIS members: *C. S. Lewis and the Inklings: Discovering Hidden Truth*. Ed. Salwa Khoddam, Mark R. Hall, and Jason Fisher. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing; and also *Truths Breathed through Silver: The Inklings’ Moral and Mythopoeic Legacy*, published in 2008, also by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, and edited by Dr. Jonathan Himes with Dr. Joe R. Christopher and Dr. Salwa Khoddam.

Harvey Solganick

- * “Creating Constructive Consciousness: Critical Thinking for the Christian.” London: London Press, 2013.
- * “Creating Constructive Consciousness: Critical Thinking for the Christian.” *Global Education Journal*. Volume 2013. Issue 3. 1-33.
- * “Creating Constructive Consciousness: Critical Thinking for the Christian.” *Journal of Ethics and Critical Thinking*. Volume 2013 Issue 4 (Publishing Date 12/15/2013).
- * Book review of *God and Charles Dickens* by Gary Colledge. *Christianity and Literature* 2013.



Ralph Wood

Chapter in book: "Flannery O'Connor: *The Violent Bear It Away.*" *Finding a Common Thread: Understanding Great Texts from Homer to Flannery O'Connor*, ed. Robert C. Roberts, Scott Moore, and Donald D. Schmeltekopf (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2013): 305-22.

Article: "Chesterton and Hitchens: The Need for Worthy Opponents." *Books and Culture* 19:1 January-February 2013): 11-15. Also available on-line: <http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/2013/janfeb/chesterton-vs-hitchens.html>

Book Reviews: *The Lion's World: A Journey into the Heart of Narnia*, by Rowan Williams. *Christian Century* 13.9 (May 1, 2013): 47-8.

The Terrible Speed of Mercy: A Spiritual Biography of Flannery O'Connor, by Jonathan Rogers. *Touchstone* 26.3 (May-June 2013): 50-51.

G. K. Chesterton: A Biography, by Ian Ker. *VII: An Anglo-American Literary Review* 29 (2012): 103-5.
