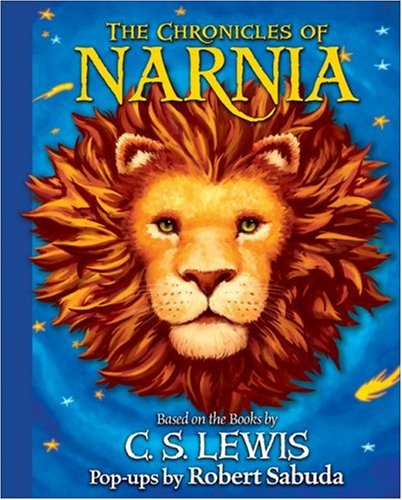
**Clive Staples Lewis** **1998 - 1963**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis>



**Clive Staples Lewis** (29 November 1898 – 22 November 1963), commonly referred to as **C. S. Lewis**, known to his friends as **Jack**, wrote extensively on many subjects; his academic field was [medieval literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_literature), but he also wrote [Christian apologetics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_apologetics), [literary criticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_criticism), radio broadcasts, and essays on Christianity. He is also known for his fiction, especially [*The Screwtape Letters*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Screwtape_Letters), [*The Chronicles of Narnia*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chronicles_of_Narnia) and [*The Space Trilogy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Space_Trilogy).

Lewis was a close friend of [J. R. R. Tolkien](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien), the author of [*The Lord of the Rings*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings). Both authors were leading figures in the English faculty at [Oxford University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Oxford) and in the informal Oxford literary group known as the "[Inklings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inklings)". According to his memoir [*Surprised by Joy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surprised_by_Joy), Lewis had been baptised in the [Church of Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Ireland) at birth, but fell away from his faith during his adolescence. Owing to the influence of Tolkien and other friends, at about the age of 30, Lewis re-converted to [Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity), becoming "a very ordinary layman of the [Church of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England)" ([*Lewis 1952*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1952), p. 6). His conversion had a profound effect on his work, and his wartime radio broadcasts on the subject of Christianity brought him wide acclaim. Later in his life he married the American writer [Joy Gresham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joy_Gresham), who died of [bone cancer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bone_tumor) four years later at the age of 45.

Lewis's works have been translated into more than 30 languages and have sold millions of copies over the years. The books that comprise *The Chronicles of Narnia* have sold the most and have been popularised on stage, in TV, and in cinema. Examples include the 1988 BBC TV serialisation, the 2005 film adaptation of [*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chronicles_of_Narnia:_The_Lion,_the_Witch_and_the_Wardrobe), and the 2008 film adaptation of [*Prince Caspian*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chronicles_of_Narnia:_Prince_Caspian).

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## [] Biography

### [] Childhood

Clive Staples Lewis was born in [Belfast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belfast), [Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ireland) on 29 November 1898. His father was Albert James Lewis (1863 – 1929), a [solicitor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solicitor) whose father, Richard, had come to Ireland from [Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wales) during the mid 19th century. His mother was Florence (Flora) Augusta Lewis née Hamilton (1862 – 1908), the daughter of a [Church of Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Ireland) ([Anglican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican)) priest. He had one older brother, [Warren Hamilton Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Lewis) (Warnie). At the age of four, shortly after his dog Jacksie died when run over by a car, Lewis announced that his name was now Jacksie. At first he would answer to no other name, but later accepted Jack, the name by which he was known to friends and family for the rest of his life. When he was seven, his family moved into "Little Lea", the house the elder Mr. Lewis built for Mrs. Lewis, in the [Strandtown](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Strandtown&action=edit&redlink=1) area of East Belfast.



Little Lea

Lewis was initially schooled by private tutors before being sent to the [Wynyard School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wynyard_School) in [Watford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watford), [Hertfordshire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hertfordshire), in 1908, just before his mother's death from [cancer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cancer). Lewis's brother had already enrolled there three years previously. The school was closed not long afterwards due to a lack of pupils — the headmaster Robert "Oldie" Capron was soon after committed to an [insane asylum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychiatric_hospital). Tellingly, in *Surprised By Joy*, Lewis would later nickname the school "[Belsen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bergen-Belsen_concentration_camp" \o "Bergen-Belsen concentration camp)". There is some speculation by biographer Alan Jacobs that the atmosphere at Wynyard greatly traumatized Lewis and was responsible for the development of "mildly sadomasochistic fantasies". (*[Gopnik 2005](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis" \l "CITEREFGopnik2005" \o ")*) After Wynyard closed, Lewis attended [Campbell College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campbell_College) in the east of Belfast about a mile from his home, but he left after a few months due to respiratory problems. As a result of his illness, Lewis was sent to the health-resort town of [Malvern, Worcestershire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malvern,_Worcestershire), where he attended the [preparatory school](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preparatory_school_%28UK%29) Cherbourg House (called "Chartres" in Lewis's autobiography).

In September 1913, Lewis enrolled at [Malvern College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malvern_College), where he would remain until the following June. It was during this time that 15-year-old Lewis abandoned his childhood Christian faith and became an [atheist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism), becoming interested in mythology and the [occult](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occult).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-0) Later he would describe "Wyvern" (as he styled the school in his autobiography) as so singularly focused on increasing one's [social status](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_status) that he came to see the [homosexual](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality) relationships between older and younger pupils as "the one oasis (though green only with weeds and moist only with fetid water) in the burning desert of competitive ambition. […] A perversion was the only thing left through which something spontaneous and uncalculated could creep" ([*Lewis 1966*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1966), p. 107). After leaving Malvern he moved to study privately with William T. Kirkpatrick, his father's old tutor and former headmaster of [Lurgan College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lurgan_College).

As a young boy, Lewis had a fascination with [anthropomorphic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropomorphic) animals, falling in love with [Beatrix Potter's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrix_Potter) stories and often writing and illustrating his own animal stories. He and his brother Warnie together created the world of [Boxen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boxen_%28C._S._Lewis%29), inhabited and run by animals. Lewis loved to read, and as his father’s house was filled with books, he felt that finding a book he had not read was as easy as "finding a blade of grass."

As a teenager, he was wonderstruck by the songs and legends of what he called *Northernness*, the ancient literature of [Scandinavia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavia) preserved in the [Icelandic sagas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icelandic_sagas). These legends intensified a longing he had within, a deep desire he would later call "joy". He also grew to love nature — the beauty of nature reminded him of the stories of the North, and the stories of the North reminded him of the beauties of nature. His writing in his teenage years moved away from the tales of Boxen, and he began to use different art forms ([epic poetry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epic_poetry) and opera) to try to capture his newfound interest in [Norse mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norse_mythology) and the natural world. Studying with Kirkpatrick (“The Great Knock”, as Lewis afterwards called him) instilled in him a love of [Greek literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_literature) and mythology, and sharpened his skills in debate and clear reasoning.

### [] World War I

Having won a [scholarship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholarship) to [University College, Oxford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_College,_Oxford) in 1916, Lewis volunteered the following year in the [British Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army) as [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) raged on, and was commissioned an officer in the Third Battalion, [Somerset Light Infantry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somerset_Light_Infantry). Lewis arrived at the front line in the [Somme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somme) Valley in [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) on his nineteenth birthday, and experienced [trench warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trench_warfare).

On 15 April 1917 Lewis was wounded during the [Battle of Arras](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Arras_%281917%29), and suffered some depression during his convalescence, due in part to missing his Irish home. On his recovery in October, he was assigned to duty in [Andover](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andover,_Hampshire), England. He was discharged in December 1918, and soon returned to his studies. Lewis received a First in [Honour Moderations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honour_Moderations) (Greek and [Latin Literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_literature)) in 1920, a First in [Greats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greats) (Philosophy and [Ancient History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_history)) in 1922, and a First in [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_studies) in 1923.

### [] Jane Moore

While being trained for the army Lewis shared a room and became close friends with another cadet, "Paddy" Moore. The two had made a mutual pact that if either died during the war, the survivor would take care of both their families. Paddy was [killed in action](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killed_in_action) in 1918 and Lewis kept his promise. Paddy had earlier introduced Lewis to his mother, Jane King Moore, and a friendship very quickly sprang up between Lewis, who was eighteen when they met, and Jane, who was forty-five. The friendship with Mrs. Moore was particularly important to Lewis while he was recovering from his wounds in hospital, as his father, who had an almost pathological reluctance to break free from the routine of his Belfast practice, could not bring himself to visit Lewis.

Lewis lived with and cared for Mrs. Moore until she was hospitalized in the late 1940s. He routinely introduced her as his "mother", and referred to her as such in letters. Lewis, whose own mother had died when he was a child and whose father was distant, demanding and eccentric, developed a deeply affectionate friendship with Mrs. Moore. "All I can or need to say is that my earlier hostility to the emotions was very fully and variously avenged", he wrote of her in his autobiography. He also said to his friend George Sayer: "She was generous and taught me to be generous, too."

In December 1917 Lewis wrote in a letter to his childhood friend Arthur Greeves that Jane and Greeves were "the two people who matter most to me in the world."

In 1930, Lewis, Moore, her daughter Maureen and Warnie moved into "[The Kilns](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Kilns&action=edit&redlink=1)", a house in the district of [Headington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headington) Quarry on the outskirts of Oxford (now part of the suburb of [Risinghurst](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risinghurst)). They all contributed financially to the purchase of the house, which passed to Maureen, then [Dame Maureen Dunbar, Btss.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maureen_Dunbar), when Warren died in 1973.

Moore suffered from [dementia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dementia) in her later years and was eventually moved into a [nursing home](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nursing_home), where she died in 1951. Lewis visited her every day in this home until her death.

### [] "My Irish life"



Plaque on a park-bench in [Bangor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangor,_County_Down), [County Down](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Down)

Lewis experienced a certain [cultural shock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_shock) upon first arriving in England: "No Englishman will be able to understand my first impressions of England," Lewis wrote in [*Surprised by Joy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surprised_by_Joy). "The strange [English accents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_accents_of_English_speakers) with which I was surrounded seemed like the voices of demons. But what was worst was the English landscape … I have made up the quarrel since; but at that moment I conceived a hatred for England which took many years to heal."

From boyhood Lewis immersed himself firstly in [Norse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norse_mythology) and [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_mythology) and then in [Irish mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_mythology) and [literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_literature) and expressed an interest in the [Irish language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_language), though he seems to have made little attempt to learn it. He developed a particular fondness for [W. B. Yeats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W._B._Yeats), in part because of Yeats’s use of Ireland’s [Celtic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celt) heritage in poetry. In a letter to a friend Lewis wrote, "I have here discovered an author exactly after my own heart, whom I am sure you would delight in, W. B. Yeats. He writes plays and poems of rare spirit and beauty about our old Irish mythology."

In 1921, Lewis had the opportunity to meet Yeats on two occasions, since Yeats had moved to Oxford.

Surprised to find his English peers indifferent to Yeats and the [Celtic Revival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celtic_Revival) movement, Lewis wrote: "I am often surprised to find how utterly ignored Yeats is among the men I have met: perhaps his appeal is purely Irish — if so, then thank the gods that I am Irish." Early in his career, Lewis considered sending his work to the major [Dublin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dublin) publishers, writing: "If I do ever send my stuff to a publisher, I think I shall try Maunsel, those Dublin people, and so tack myself definitely onto the Irish school." After his [conversion to Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversion_to_Christianity), his interests gravitated towards Christian spirituality and away from pagan Celtic mysticism.

Lewis occasionally expressed a somewhat [tongue-in-cheek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tongue-in-cheek) [chauvinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chauvinism) toward the [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_people). Describing an encounter with a fellow Irishman he wrote: "Like all Irish people who meet in England we ended by criticisms of the inevitable flippancy and dullness of the [Anglo-Saxon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxons) race. After all, Ami, there is no doubt that the Irish are the only people … I would not gladly live or die among another folk."

Due to his Oxford career Lewis did indeed live and die among another folk, and he often expressed regret at having to leave Ireland. Throughout his life, he sought out the company of his fellow Irish living in England and visited Northern Ireland regularly, even spending his honeymoon there ([*The Old Inn 2007*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFThe_Old_Inn2007)). He called this "my Irish life".

### [] Conversion to Christianity

Raised in a church-going family in the [Church of Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Ireland), Lewis claimed he became an [atheist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheist) at the age of 15, though he later described his young self (in [*Surprised by Joy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surprised_by_Joy)) as being "very angry with God for not existing". He returned to his Christian beliefs at age 33.

His separation from Christianity began when he started to view his religion as a chore and as a duty; around this time he also gained an interest in the occult as his studies expanded to include such topics. Lewis quoted [Lucretius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucretius) (*De rerum natura*, 5.198–9) as having one of the strongest arguments for atheism:

*Nequaquam nobis divinitus esse paratam*

*Naturam rerum; tanta stat praa culpa*

"Had God designed the world, it would not be

A world so frail and faulty as we see."

Lewis's interest in fantasy and mythology, especially in relation to the works of [George MacDonald](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_MacDonald), was part of what turned him from atheism. In fact, MacDonald's position as a Christian fantasy writer was very influential on Lewis. This can be seen particularly well through this passage in Lewis's [*The Great Divorce*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Divorce), chapter nine, when the semi-autobiographical [main character](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protagonist) meets MacDonald in [Heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven):

…I tried, trembling, to tell this man all that his writings had done for me. I tried to tell how a certain frosty afternoon at [Leatherhead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leatherhead) Station when I had first bought a copy of *Phantastes* (being then about sixteen years old) had been to me what the first sight of Beatrice had been to [Dante](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dante): *Here begins the new life*. I started to confess how long that Life had delayed in the region of imagination merely: how slowly and reluctantly I had come to admit that his Christendom had more than an accidental connexion with it, how hard I had tried not to see the [true name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_name) of the quality which first met me in his books is Holiness. ([*Lewis 1946*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1946), pp. 66 – 67)

Influenced by arguments with his Oxford colleague and friend [J. R. R. Tolkien](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien), and by the book [*The Everlasting Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Everlasting_Man) by [Roman Catholic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic) convert [G. K. Chesterton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._K._Chesterton), he slowly rediscovered Christianity. He fought greatly up to the moment of his conversion noting, "I came into Christianity kicking and screaming." He described his last struggle in [*Surprised by Joy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surprised_by_Joy):

You must picture me alone in that room in [Magdalen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magdalen_College,_Oxford), night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England. ([*Lewis 1955*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1955))

After his conversion to [theism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theism) in 1929, Lewis [converted to Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianization) in 1931. Following a long discussion and late-night walk with his close friends Tolkien and [Hugo Dyson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugo_Dyson), he records making a specific commitment to Christian belief while on his way to the zoo with his brother. He became a member of the [Church of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England) — somewhat to the disappointment of Tolkien, who had hoped he would convert to [Roman Catholicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) ([*Carpenter 2006*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFCarpenter2006)).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-CSL-1)

A committed [Anglican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England), Lewis upheld a largely orthodox Anglican theology, though in his [apologetic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologetics) writings, he made an effort to avoid espousing any one denomination. In his later writings, some believe he proposed ideas such as purification of [venial sins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venial_sin) after death in [purgatory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purgatory) ([*The Great Divorce*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Divorce)) and [mortal sin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mortal_sin) ([*The Screwtape Letters*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Screwtape_Letters)), which are generally considered to be Catholic teachings. Regardless, Lewis considered himself an entirely orthodox Anglican to the end of his life, reflecting that he had initially attended church only to receive [communion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Communion) and had been repelled by the [hymns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hymn) and the poor quality of the sermons. He later came to consider himself honoured by worshipping with men of faith who came in shabby clothes and work boots and who sang all the verses to all the hymns.

### [] Joy Gresham

In Lewis's later life, he corresponded with and later met [Joy Davidman Gresham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joy_Gresham), an American writer of [Jewish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish) background and also a convert from atheism to Christianity.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-2) She was separated from her alcoholic and abusive husband, the novelist [William Gresham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Gresham), and came to England with her two sons, David and [Douglas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Gresham).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-3) Lewis at first regarded her as an agreeable intellectual companion and personal friend, and it was at least overtly on this level that he agreed to enter into a [civil marriage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage) contract with her so that she could continue to live in the UK.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-4) Lewis's brother Warnie wrote: "For Jack the attraction was at first undoubtedly intellectual. Joy was the only woman whom he had met… who had a brain which matched his own in suppleness, in width of interest, and in analytical grasp, and above all in humour and a sense of fun" ([*Haven 2006*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFHaven2006)). However, after complaining of a painful hip, she was diagnosed with terminal [bone cancer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bone_cancer), and the relationship developed to the point that they sought a Christian marriage. Since she was divorced, this was not straightforward in the Church of England at the time, but a friend, the Rev. Peter Bide, performed the ceremony at her hospital bed in 1956.

Gresham's cancer soon went into a brief [remission](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remission), and the couple lived as a family (together with Warren Lewis) until her eventual relapse and death in 1960. The year she died, the couple took a brief holiday in [Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece) and the [Aegean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegean_Sea) in 1960; Lewis was fond of walking but not of travel, and this marked his only crossing of the [English Channel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Channel) after 1918. Lewis’s book [*A Grief Observed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Grief_Observed) describes his experience of bereavement in such a raw and personal fashion that Lewis originally released it under the pseudonym N.W. Clerk to keep readers from associating the book with him. However, so many friends recommended the book to Lewis as a method for dealing with his own grief that he made his authorship public.

Lewis continued to raise Gresham's two sons after her death. Douglas Gresham is an active Christian and remains involved in the affairs of the Lewis estate, while David Gresham returned to his mother's original Jewish faith. The two brothers are now estranged (*[Neven 2001](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis" \l "CITEREFNeven2001" \o ")*).

### [] Illness and death

In early June 1961, Lewis began experiencing medical problems and was diagnosed with [inflammation of the kidneys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nephritis) which resulted in [blood poisoning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacteremia). His illness caused him to miss the autumn term at [Cambridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Cambridge), though his health gradually began improving in 1962 and he returned that April. Lewis's health continued to improve, and according to his friend George Sayer, Lewis was fully himself by the spring of 1963. However, on 15 July 1963 he fell ill and was admitted to hospital. The next day at 5:00 pm, Lewis suffered a [heart attack](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myocardial_infarction) and lapsed into a coma, unexpectedly awaking the following day at 2:00 pm. After he was discharged from hospital, Lewis returned to the Kilns though he was too ill to return to work. As a result, he resigned from his post at Cambridge in August. Lewis's condition continued to decline and in mid-November, he was diagnosed with end stage [renal failure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronic_renal_failure). On 22 November 1963 Lewis collapsed in his bedroom at 5:30 pm and died a few minutes later, exactly one week before what would have been his 65th birthday. He is buried in the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church, [Headington, Oxford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headington) ([*Friends of Holy Trinity Church*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFFriends_of_Holy_Trinity_Church)).

Media coverage of his death was almost completely overshadowed by news of the [assassination of President John F. Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination_of_President_John_F._Kennedy), which occurred on the same day, as did the death of [Aldous Huxley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aldous_Huxley), author of [*Brave New World*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brave_New_World). This coincidence was the inspiration for [Peter Kreeft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Kreeft)'s book [*Between Heaven and Hell: A Dialog Somewhere Beyond Death with John F. Kennedy, C. S. Lewis, & Aldous Huxley*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Between_Heaven_and_Hell_%28novel%29) (*[Kreeft 1982](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis" \l "CITEREFKreeft1982" \o ")*).

C. S. Lewis is commemorated on 22 November in the [church calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calendar_of_saints_%28Episcopal_Church_in_the_United_States_of_America%29) of the [Episcopal Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopal_Church_in_the_United_States_of_America).

## [] Career

### [] The scholar



Magdalen College

Lewis began his brilliant academic career as an undergraduate student at Oxford, where he won a triple first, the highest honors in three areas of study. [[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-5) Lewis then taught as a fellow of [Magdalen College, Oxford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magdalen_College,_Oxford), for nearly thirty years, from 1925 to 1954, and later was the first [Professor of Medieval and Renaissance English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professor_of_Medieval_and_Renaissance_English,_Cambridge_University) at the [University of Cambridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Cambridge) and a fellow of [Magdalene College, Cambridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magdalene_College,_Cambridge). Using this position, he argued that there was no such thing as an [English Renaissance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Renaissance). Much of his scholarly work concentrated on the [later Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Late_Middle_Ages), especially its use of allegory. His [*The Allegory of Love*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Allegory_of_Love) (1936) helped reinvigorate the serious study of late medieval narratives like the [*Roman de la Rose*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_de_la_Rose). Lewis wrote several prefaces to old works of literature and poetry, like Layamon's *Brut*. His book "A Preface to *Paradise Lost*" is still one of the most valuable criticisms of that work. His last [academic work](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academia), [*The Discarded Image*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Discarded_Image)*: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (1964), is a summary of the medieval [world view](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_view), the "discarded image" of the cosmos in his title. Lewis was a prolific writer, and his circle of literary friends became an informal discussion society known as the "[Inklings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inklings)", including [J. R. R. Tolkien](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien), [Charles Williams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Williams_%28UK_writer%29), [Owen Barfield](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owen_Barfield), and his brother Warnie Lewis. At Oxford he was the tutor of, among many other undergraduates, poet [John Betjeman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Betjeman), critic [Kenneth Tynan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenneth_Tynan), mystic [Bede Griffiths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bede_Griffiths), and Sufi scholar [Martin Lings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Lings). Curiously, the religious and conservative Betjeman detested Lewis, whereas the [anti-Establishment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-establishment) Tynan retained a life-long admiration for him ([*Tonkin 2005*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFTonkin2005)).

Of Tolkien, Lewis writes in [*Surprised by Joy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surprised_by_Joy):

When I began teaching for the English Faculty, I made two other friends, both Christians (these queer people seemed now to pop up on every side) who were later to give me much help in getting over the last stile. They were H.V.V. Dyson … and J.R.R. Tolkien. Friendship with the latter marked the breakdown of two old prejudices. At my first coming into the world I had been (implicitly) warned never to trust a Papist, and at my first coming into the English Faculty (explicitly) never to trust a [philologist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philology). Tolkien was both. ([*Lewis 1966*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1966), p. 173)

### [] The author

In addition to his scholarly work, Lewis wrote a number of popular novels, including his [science fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_fiction) [Space Trilogy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Trilogy) and his [fantasy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy_fiction) [Narnian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narnia) books, most dealing implicitly with Christian themes such as [sin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sin), humanity's [fall from grace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_from_grace), and [redemption](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redemption).

#### [] The Pilgrim's Regress

*Main article:* [*The Pilgrim's Regress*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pilgrim%27s_Regress)

His first novel after becoming a Christian was *The Pilgrim's Regress,* his take on [John Bunyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bunyan)'s [*The Pilgrim's Progress*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pilgrim%27s_Progress) which depicted his own experience with Christianity. The book was critically panned at the time.

In a footnote of the biography *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith 1939 – 1981* by [Iain Murray](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iain_Murray), Murray notes the following: "Lewis is said to have valued ML-J's appreciation and encouragement when the early ion of his *Pilgrim's Regress* was not selling well. Vincent Lloyd-Jones and Lewis knew each other well, being contemporaries at Oxford. ML-J met the author again and they had a long conversation when they found both themselves on the same boat to [Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ireland) in 1953. On the later occasion, to the question, 'When are you going to write another book?', Lewis replied, 'When I understand the meaning of prayer.'" ([*Murray 1990*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFMurray1990))

#### [] Space Trilogy

*Main article:* [*Space Trilogy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Trilogy)

His *Space Trilogy* or *Ransom Trilogy* novels (also called the *Cosmic Trilogy*) dealt with what Lewis saw as the then-current dehumanizing trends in modern [science fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_fiction). The first book, [*Out of the Silent Planet*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Out_of_the_Silent_Planet), was apparently written following a conversation with his friend [J. R. R. Tolkien](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien) about these trends; Lewis agreed to write a "space travel" story and Tolkien a "time travel" one. Tolkien’s story, "[The Lost Road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lost_Road_and_Other_Writings)", a tale connecting his [Middle-earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-earth) mythology and the modern world, was never completed. Lewis’s main character of [Ransom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elwin_Ransom) is based in part on Tolkien, a fact that Tolkien himself alludes to in his *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*. The second novel, [*Perelandra*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perelandra), illustrates a new [Garden of Eden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden_of_Eden), a new [Adam and Eve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_and_Eve), and a new "serpent figure" to tempt them. The story can be seen as a hypothesis of what could have happened if "our Eve" had resisted more firmly the temptation of the serpent. The last novel in the Trilogy, [*That Hideous Strength*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/That_Hideous_Strength), also contains numerous references to Tolkien's [fictional universe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional_universe) of [Middle-earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle-earth). Many of the ideas presented in the books, particularly in *That Hideous Strength*, are dramatizations of arguments made more formally in Lewis’ [*The Abolition of Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Abolition_of_Man).

This last was based on the series of lectures Lewis had given at [Durham University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durham_University) in 1943, designed to counter what he saw as a movement in contemporary literature and thought to de-humanise man. Lewis stayed in [Durham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durham), where he was overwhelmed by [the cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durham_Cathedral). *That Hideous Strength* is in fact set in the environs of a university of a similar size to that of Durham ('Edgestow'), though Lewis notes in his preface to the book that this is the only resemblance between the two universities.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-6)

It is claimed that Lewis began another science-fiction novel, [*The Dark Tower*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dark_Tower_%281977_novel%29), but it is [unfinished](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfinished_work); it is not clear whether it was intended as part of the same series as the completed novels. The manuscript was eventually published in 1977, though controversy persists about its authenticity.

#### [] The Chronicles of Narnia

*The Chronicles of Narnia* is a series of seven [fantasy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy_fiction) novels for children and is considered a classic of [children's literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children%27s_literature). Written between 1949 and 1954 and illustrated by [Pauline Baynes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pauline_Baynes), the series is Lewis' most popular work having sold over 100 million copies in forty-one languages ([*Kelly 2006*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFKelly2006))(*[Guthmann 2005](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis" \l "CITEREFGuthmann2005" \o ")*). It has been adapted several times, complete or in part, for [radio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio), [television](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television), [stage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre), and [cinema](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film). The series has been published in several different orders, and the preferred reading order for the series is often debated among fans; Douglas Gresham has stated that Lewis preferred that they be read in "Narnian chronology", not the order in which they were published (*[Drennan 1999](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis" \l "CITEREFDrennan1999" \o ")*).

The books contain many allusions to Christian ideas which are easily accessible to younger readers; however, the books are not weighty, and can be read for their adventure, colour, and richness of ideas alone. Because of this, they have become favourites of children and adults, Christians and non-Christians. In addition to Christian themes, Lewis also borrows characters from [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_mythology) and [Roman mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_mythology) as well as traditional British and Irish [fairy tales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairy_tale). Lewis reportedly based his depiction of Narnia on the geography and scenery of the [Mourne Mountains](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mourne_Mountains) and "that part of [Rostrevor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rostrevor) which overlooks [Carlingford Lough](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlingford_Lough)" ([*Guardian Unlimited 2005*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFGuardian_Unlimited2005)). Lewis cited [George MacDonald](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_MacDonald)'s Christian fairy tales as an influence in writing the series.

#### [] Other works

Lewis wrote a number of works on [Heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven) and [Hell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hell). One of these, [*The Great Divorce*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Divorce), is a short [novella](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novella) in which a few residents of Hell take a bus ride to Heaven, where they are met by people who dwell there. The proposition is that they can stay (in which case they can call the place where they had come from “[Purgatory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purgatory)”, instead of “Hell”); but many find it not to their taste. The title is a reference to [William Blake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Blake)'s [*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Marriage_of_Heaven_and_Hell), a concept that Lewis found a "disastrous error" ([*Lewis 1946*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1946), p. vii). This work deliberately echoes two other more famous works with a similar theme: the [*Divine Comedy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_Comedy) of [Dante Aligheri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dante), and Bunyan's [*Pilgrim's Progress*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrim%27s_Progress). Another short work, [*The Screwtape Letters*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Screwtape_Letters), consists of suave letters of advice from a senior [demon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demon), Screwtape, to his nephew Wormwood, on the best ways to tempt a particular human and secure his [damnation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damnation#Religious). Lewis’s last novel was [*Till We Have Faces*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Till_We_Have_Faces) — he thought of it as his most mature and masterful work of fiction, but it was never a popular success. It is a retelling of the myth of [Cupid and Psyche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cupid_and_Psyche) from the unusual perspective of Psyche's sister. It is deeply concerned with religious ideas, but the setting is entirely [pagan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pagan), and the connections with specific Christian beliefs are left implicit.

Before Lewis’s conversion to Christianity, he published two books: [*Spirits in Bondage*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirits_in_Bondage), a collection of poems, and [*Dymer*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dymer), a single [narrative poem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative_poetry). Both were published under the [pen name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pen_name) Clive Hamilton.

### [] The Christian apologist

In addition to his career as an English professor and an author of fiction, Lewis is regarded by many as one of the most influential [Christian apologists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_apologetics) of his time; [*Mere Christianity*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mere_Christianity) was voted best book of the twentieth century by [*Christianity Today*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_Today) in 2000. Due to Lewis' approach to [religious belief](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_belief) as a [skeptic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skepticism), and his following conversion, he has been called "The Apostle to the Skeptics."

Lewis was very much interested in presenting a reasonable case for the truth of Christianity. *Mere Christianity*, [*The Problem of Pain*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Problem_of_Pain), and [*Miracles*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracles_%28book%29) were all concerned, to one degree or another, with refuting popular objections to Christianity, such as "How could a good God allow pain to exist in the world?". He also became known as a popular lecturer and broadcaster, and some of his writing (including much of *Mere Christianity*) originated as scripts for radio talks or lectures ([*Lewis 1952*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1952), p. v).

According to George Sayer, a 1948 loss in a debate with [Elizabeth Anscombe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._E._M._Anscombe) led to his reevaluating his role as an apologist and his future works concentrated on devotional literature and children's books.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-7) Anscombe had a different recollection of the debate's emotional effect on Lewis.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-8) Victor Reppert also disputes Sayer, listing some of Lewis post-1948 apologetic publications, including the second and revised ion of his *Miracles* in 1960.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-9)

Lewis also wrote an autobiography titled *Surprised by Joy*, which places special emphasis on his own conversion. (It was written before he met his wife, Joy Gresham; the title of the book came from the first line of a poem by [William Wordsworth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wordsworth).) His essays and public speeches on Christian belief, many of which were collected in [*God in the Dock*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_the_Dock) and [*The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Weight_of_Glory_and_Other_Addresses), remain popular today.

His most famous works, the *Chronicles of Narnia*, contain many strong Christian messages and are often considered [allegory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory). Lewis, an expert on the subject of allegory, maintained that the books were not allegory, and preferred to call the Christian aspects of them "[suppositional](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supposition)". As Lewis wrote in a letter to a Mrs. Hook in December 1958:

If [Aslan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aslan) represented the immaterial Deity in the same way in which Giant Despair [a character in [*The Pilgrim's Progress*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pilgrim%27s_Progress)] represents despair, he would be an allegorical figure. In reality however he is an invention giving an imaginary answer to the question, 'What might Christ become like, if there really were a world like Narnia and He chose to be incarnate and die and rise again in that world as He actually has done in ours?' This is not allegory at all. ([*Martindale & Root 1990*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFMartindaleRoot1990))

#### [] Trilemma

*Main article:* [*Lewis's trilemma*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis%27s_trilemma)

In a much-cited passage in the book *Mere Christianity*, Lewis challenged the increasingly popular view that [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus), although a great moral teacher, was not God. He argued that Jesus made several implicit claims to [divinity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divinity), which would logically exclude this:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a [poached egg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poached_egg) — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the [Son of God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God), or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ([*Lewis 1952*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1952), p. 43)

This appeared at a time when scholars such as [Albert Schweitzer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Schweitzer) and [Rudolf Bultmann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Bultmann) had portrayed Jesus' [miracles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle) and [resurrection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection) as myths. The concept that Jesus was not God but a wise man had gained ground in academic circles. In accepting the premise that Jesus had claimed divinity, Lewis was contradicting a viewpoint, popularized by [H. G. Wells](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._G._Wells) in his [*Outline of History*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline_of_History), that Jesus had made no such claim.

This argument, which Lewis did not invent but developed and popularised, is sometimes referred to as "[Lewis' trilemma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis%27_trilemma)". It has been used by the Christian apologist [Josh McDowell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josh_McDowell) in his book *More Than a Carpenter* ([*McDowell 2001*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFMcDowell2001)). Although widely repeated in Christian apologetic literature, it has been largely ignored by professional theologians and biblical scholars.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-10)

Lewis' Christian apologetics, and this argument in particular, have been widely criticized. Philosopher John Beversluis in *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion* (1985, rev. 2007) described Lewis's arguments as "textually careless and theologically unreliable". [John Hick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hick), writing in 1993, states that New Testament scholars do not today support the view that Jesus claimed to be God.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-11) The Anglican bishop [N. T. Wright](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N._T._Wright) commented that the 'trilemma' argument "doesn’t work as history, and it backfires dangerously when historical critics question his reading of the Gospels."[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-12)

Lewis used a similar structure in [*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lion,_the_Witch_and_the_Wardrobe), when Professor Kirke advises the young heroes that their sister's claims of a magical world must logically be taken as either lies, madness, or truth.

#### [] Universal morality

One of the main theses in Lewis' apologia is that there is a common morality known throughout humanity. In the first five chapters of [*Mere Christianity*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mere_Christianity) Lewis discusses the idea that people have a standard of behaviour to which they expect other people to adhere. This standard has been called Universal Morality or Natural Law. Lewis claims that people all over the earth know what this law is and when they break it. He goes on to claim that there must be someone or something behind such a universal set of principles. (*[Lindskoog 2001b](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis" \l "CITEREFLindskoog2001b" \o ")*, p. 144)

These then are the two points that I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in. ([*Lewis 1952*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1952), p. 21)

Lewis also portrays Universal Morality in his works of fiction. In *The Chronicles of Narnia* he describes Universal Morality as the "Deep magic" which everyone knew. (*[Lindskoog 2001b](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis" \l "CITEREFLindskoog2001b" \o ")*, p. 146)

In the second chapter of *Mere Christianity* Lewis recognizes that "many people find it difficult to understand what this Law of Human Nature [...] is". And he responds first to the idea "that the Moral Law is simply our herd instinct" and second to the idea "that the Moral Law is simply a social convention". In responding to the second idea Lewis notes that people often complain that one set of moral ideas is better than another, but that this actually argues for there existing some "Real Morality" to which they are comparing other moralities. Finally he notes that sometimes differences in moral codes are exaggerated by people who confuse differences in beliefs about morality with differences in beliefs about facts:

I have met people who exaggerate the differences, because they have not distinguished between differences of morality and differences of belief about facts. For example, one man said to me, "Three hundred years ago people in England were putting witches to death. Was that what you call the Rule of Human Nature or Right Conduct?" But surely the reason we do not execute witches is that we do not believe there are such things. If we did — if we really thought that there were people going about who had sold themselves to the devil and received [supernatural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supernatural) powers from him in return and were using these powers to kill their neighbours or drive them mad or bring bad weather, surely we would all agree that if anyone deserved the [death penalty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_penalty), then these filthy quislings did. There is no difference of moral principle here: the difference is simply about matter of fact. It may be a great advance in knowledge not to believe in witches: there is no moral advance in not executing them when you do not think they are there. You would not call a man humane for ceasing to set mousetraps if he did so because he believed there were no mice in the house. ([*Lewis 1952*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFLewis1952), p. 26)

## [] Legacy

Lewis continues to attract a wide readership. Readers of his fiction are often unaware of what Lewis considered the Christian themes of his works. His Christian apologetics are read and quoted by followers of a wide range of [religious denominations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_denomination), including Catholics and Mormons ([*Pratt 1998*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFPratt1998)).

Lewis has been the subject of several biographies, a few of which were written by some of his close friends, such as [Roger Lancelyn Green](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Lancelyn_Green) and [George Sayer](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=George_Sayer&action=edit&redlink=1). In 1985 the screenplay [*Shadowlands*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadowlands) by [William Nicholson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Nicholson), dramatizing Lewis's life and relationship with Joy Davidman Gresham, was aired on British TV (starring [Joss Ackland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joss_Ackland) as Lewis and [Claire Bloom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claire_Bloom) as Joy). In 1989 this was staged as a theatre play (starring [Nigel Hawthorne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigel_Hawthorne)) and in 1993 *Shadowlands* became a feature [film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadowlands_%28film%29), starring [Anthony Hopkins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Hopkins) as Lewis and [Debra Winger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debra_Winger) as Joy. In 2005, a one hour made for TV movie entitled *C. S. Lewis: Beyond Narnia* (starring [Anton Rodgers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_Rodgers)) provided a general synopsis of Lewis's life.

Many books have been inspired by Lewis, including [*A Severe Mercy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Severe_Mercy) by his correspondent and friend [Sheldon Vanauken](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheldon_Vanauken). *The Chronicles of Narnia* have been particularly influential. Modern children's literature such as [Daniel Handler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Handler)'s [*A Series of Unfortunate Events*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Series_of_Unfortunate_Events), [Eoin Colfer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eoin_Colfer)'s [*Artemis Fowl*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artemis_Fowl_%28series%29), [Philip Pullman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Pullman)'s [*His Dark Materials*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/His_Dark_Materials), and [J. K. Rowling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling)'s [*Harry Potter*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter) have been more or less influenced by Lewis' series ([*Hilliard 2005*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFHilliard2005)). Pullman, an [atheist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism) and so fierce a critic of Lewis' work as to be dubbed "the anti-Lewis"[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-13)[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-14), considers him a negative influence and has accused Lewis of featuring religious [propaganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda), [misogyny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misogyny), [racism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism), and emotional [sadism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadism) ([*BBC News 2005*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFBBC_News2005)) in his books. Authors of adult [fantasy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy) literature such as [Tim Powers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Powers) have also testified to being influenced by Lewis' work.

Most of Lewis’ posthumous work has been ed by his [literary executor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_executor), [Walter Hooper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Hooper). An independent Lewis scholar, the late [Kathryn Lindskoog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathryn_Lindskoog), argued that Hooper's scholarship is not reliable and that he has made false statements and attributed forged works to Lewis (*[Lindskoog 2001](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis" \l "CITEREFLindskoog2001" \o ")*). C. S. Lewis' stepson, [Douglas Gresham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Gresham), denies the forgery claims, saying that "The whole controversy thing was engineered for very personal reasons... Her fanciful theories have been pretty thoroughly discred." ([*Gresham 2007*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFGresham2007)).

A [bronze statue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze_sculpture) of Lewis' character, Digory, from *The Magician's Nephew*, stands in [Belfast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belfast)'s Holywood Arches in front of the Holywood Road Library ([*BBC News 2004*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#CITEREFBBC_News2004)).

Lewis was strongly opposed to the creation of [live-action](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Live_action) versions of his works. His major concern was that the anthropomorphic animal characters "when taken out of narrative into actual visibility, always turn into buffoonery or nightmare". This was said in the context of the 1950s, when technology would not allow the [special effects](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_effect) required to make a coherent, robust film version of Narnia.

The song "The Earth Will Shake" performed by [Thrice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thrice) is based on one of his poems, and the band [Sixpence None the Richer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sixpence_None_the_Richer) are named after a passage in *Mere Christianity*. *The Great Divorce* has served as the inspiration for at least three pieces of music: a string quartet piece entitled *The Great Divorce* by [Matt Slocum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt_Slocum) of [Sixpence None the Richer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sixpence_None_the_Richer), the song "The High Countries" by [Caedmon's Call](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caedmon%27s_Call) on their album [Back Home](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Back_Home_%28Caedmon%27s_Call_album%29), and Phil Woodward's 2007 rock album [*Ghosts and Spirits*](http://www.ghostsandspirits.net/). New Zealand Christian singer-songwriter [Brooke Fraser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooke_Fraser) also included a song entitled "C. S. Lewis Song" in her latest album "Albertine" which contains passages from his writing.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-15) [Christian alternative rock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_alternative_rock) band [Poor Old Lu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poor_Old_Lu) are so named because of a sentence in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. Another alternative rock band, [Future of Forestry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Future_of_Forestry), got its name from Lewis's poem [*The Future of Forestry*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Future_of_Forestry). [2nd Chapter of Acts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd_Chapter_of_Acts) recorded an album entitled [*The Roar of Love*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Roar_of_Love), inspired by the first of the Narnia stories. British band [The Waterboys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Waterboys) quoted from the final Narnia book, [*The Last Battle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Battle), in their 1984 song "Church Not Made with Hands". Later, on their 1990 album *Room to Roam*, The Waterboys included a song entitled "Further Up, Further In", the title taken from the penultimate chapter of *The Last Battle*. Also, Joni Mitchell included a song titled "The Dawntreader" on her album, "Song to a Seagull."

The 2005 film adaptation of [*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chronicles_of_Narnia:_The_Lion,_the_Witch,_and_the_Wardrobe) was based on his first installment in the Narnia series. Film adaptations have been made of two other books he wrote: [*Prince Caspian*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chronicles_of_Narnia:_Prince_Caspian) (released on 16 May 2008) and [*Voyage of the Dawn Treader*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voyage_of_the_Dawn_Treader) (to be released on 7 May 2010).

Several C. S. Lewis Societies exist around the world, including one which was founded in Oxford in 1982 to discuss papers on the life and works of Lewis and the other Inklings, and generally appreciate all things Lewisian.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_note-16) His name is also used by a variety of Christian organizations, often with a concern for maintaining [conservative Christian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_right) values in education or literary studies.

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## [] See also

* [Christian apologetics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_apologetics) (field of study concerned with the defence of Christianity)
* [The Chronicles of Narnia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chronicles_of_Narnia)
* [The Inklings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Inklings)
* [Pauline Baynes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pauline_Baynes)
* [G. E. M. Anscombe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._E._M._Anscombe)
* [George MacDonald](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_MacDonald)

## [] Notes

1. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-0) [biography](http://atheism.about.com/od/cslewisnarnia/a/biography.htm) accessed 15 September 2007
2. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-CSL_1-0) Carpenter, Humphrey (1978). The Inklings. Allen & Unwin.  Lewis was brought up in the [Church of Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Ireland), and after his conversion joined the [Church of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England).
3. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-2) [C. S. Lewis - His Conversion](http://www.lamblion.com/articles/other/gems/Gems-02.php)
4. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-3) [sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2006/01/01/RVGQFGC5DO1.DTL)
5. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-4) Green and Hooper. *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (New York:Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 268.
6. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-5) The Question of God. Armand Nicholi. Page 4.
7. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-6) Lewis' 1943 Preface to "That Hideous Strength" (1945) by C. S. Lewis.
8. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-7) "[Frequently Asked Questions About C. S. Lewis](http://www.rapidnet.com/%7Ejbeard/bdm/exposes/lewis/cs-lewis.htm)". "According to George Sayer, Lewis's friend and biographer, Lewis regarded the debate as a defeat, and felt humiliated by it:

"He told me that he had been proved wrong, and that his argument for the existence of God had been demolished. ...The debate had been a humiliating experience, but perhaps it was ultimately good for him. In the past, he had been too proud of his logical ability. Now he was humbled ....'I can never write another book of that sort' he said to me of *Miracles*. And he never did. He also never wrote another theological book. *Reflections on the Psalms* is really devotional and literary; *Letters to Malcolm* is also a devotional book, a series of reflections on prayer, without contentious arguments.""

1. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-8) "[Frequently Asked Questions About C. S. Lewis](http://www.rapidnet.com/%7Ejbeard/bdm/exposes/lewis/cs-lewis.htm)". "As Anscomeb wrote in response to a query:

"The fact that Lewis rewrote that chapter, and rewrote it so that it now has those qualities, shows his honesty and seriousness. The meeting of the Socratic Club at which I read my paper has been described by several of his friends as a horrible and shocking experience which upset him very much. Neither Dr. Havard (who had Lewis and me to dinner a few weeks later) nor Professor Jack Bennet remembered any such feelings on Lewis's part... My own recollection is that it was an occasion of sober discussion of certain quite definite criticisms, which Lewis's rethinking and rewriting showed he thought was accurate. I am inclined to construe the odd accounts of the matter by some of his friends—who seem not to have been interested in the actual arguments of the subject-matter—as an interesting example of the phenomenon called projection.""

1. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-9) "[The False Anscombe Legend](http://dangerousidea.blogspot.com/2006/06/false-anscombe-legend.html)".
2. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-10) "Was Jesus Mad, Bad, or God?", in Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, Gerald O'Collins, *The Incarnation: an interdisciplinary symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God* (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 222 – 3.
3. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-11) John Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, page 27.
4. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-12) N. T. Wright, "Simply Lewis: Reflections on a Master Apologist After 60 Years", *Touchstone*, March 2007 [[1]](http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=20-02-028-f)
5. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-13) [reason.com](http://www.reason.com/news/show/124392.html)
6. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis#cite_ref-14) [Philip Pullman by Peter Hitchens](http://home.wlv.ac.uk/%7Ebu1895/hitchens.htm)
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## [] External links

* [Works by C. S. Lewis](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/C.+S.+Lewis) at [Project Gutenberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Gutenberg)
* [Open Directory entry for C. S. Lewis](http://www.dmoz.org/Arts/Literature/Authors/L/Lewis,_C._S./)
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* [Marion E. Wade Center](http://www.wheaton.edu/learnres/wade/) at [Wheaton College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheaton_College,_Illinois) — has the world’s largest collection of Lewis's works and works about him
* [Taylor University](http://www.taylor.edu/academics/supportServices/csLewis/), Upland, Indiana, has the world's largest private collection of C. S. Lewis first ions, letters, manuscripts, and ephemera — the Edwin W. Brown Collection
* [Arend Smilde's CSL site](http://www.solcon.nl/arendsmilde/cslewis) — Dutch and (mainly) English. Several unique or hard-to-find texts and resources

### [] Audio

* [Lewis on The George MacDonald Informational Web](http://georgemacdonald.info/other.html) Has an excerpt of Lewis talking about friend and fellow author: Charles Williams, bottom of page
* [Lewis's Surviving Broadcast Talks on the BBC](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/people/cslewis_16.shtml) BBC page on Lewis with original audio recordings.
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### [] Analysis/evaluation

* [Works by or about C. S. Lewis](http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79-3974) in libraries ([WorldCat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WorldCat" \o "WorldCat) catalog)
* [C. S. Lewis](http://www.iblist.com/author349.htm) at the [Internet Book List](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Book_List)
* [The Chronicle](http://www.cslewischronicle.org/) — British academic journal for C. S. Lewis and his circle