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The Future of Inklings Studies: Keynote Panel Discussion (4 June 2016)

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The Future of Inklings Studies: Keynote Panel Discussion (4 June 2016)

by Diana Glycer, Sorina Higgins, Colin Duriez, and Joe Ricke.
(transcribed and edited by Joe Ricke)

Joe Ricke: What we want to do in this panel is discuss with all of our keynote speakers the future of Inklings Studies.¹ At the end, of course, we will have some question and answer time, so that everyone can take part. You might say, we want to dream and probe the future. But first, let's look back. So I want to ask each of the panelists this question, starting with Diana. Who are the authors and/or what are the works that, looking back, have proven foundational to you? In other words, who or what got you going in the direction you have gone or led you into a direction that has been fruitful? I suppose you could just pay homage, as it were, to the people who have been meaningful to our work—perhaps Inklings scholars, perhaps not. Okay. Is that all right, Diana?

Diana Glycer: Absolutely. It's very exciting to be here today. It is a daunting task to try to think of just a few titles that are significant, especially titles aside from those of the primary texts. One of things that I spend a lot of time talking about, and encouraging young scholars about, is the importance of doing primary research, because it is important for us to talk with one another about our various interpretations. The more we can encourage one another to go back to the original documents and to see what the Inklings really have to say. I think it's incredibly important for us to constantly be checking back and forth. And that's why I'm so grateful for every archivist and librarian in this room. You are our heroes. You make it possible for us to do what we do [applause].

1 This essay is a revised transcription of a recording by William O'Flaherty, originally prepared for his podcast series *All about Jack*. The audio version was first published online on 28 June 2016. The edited audio was transcribed by Abby Palmisano and revised for publication by Joe Ricke. The original panel included Carol Zaleski, Professor of Religion at Smith College and co-author of *The Fellowship*, who joined the discussion by Google Hangouts. Although her face was seen and her comments were heard in the room, the audio was not adequate for a clear recording of her contribution. She is referenced, however, several times by other speakers during the discussion.

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Let me mention two books that have been very influential to my thinking. When it comes to Lewis studies, one of my favorites, still, and one of the most important books that I've ever read in Lewis studies, is *C.S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table* by James T. Como. That particular collection. What you have there is an assortment of perspectives. One of the reasons that book is so important to me is the very fact that there is so much in it that is contradictory. I think that the differences are helpful and healthy in our field, to have a variety of perspectives, instead of striving for an artificial consistency. What Como has done in that book is allow these individuals to speak clearly from their individual perspectives, and I think that's a model for a healthy intellectual community, modeling the ways in which we can extend intellectual hospitality to a variety of perspectives and voices. I love that book, and I reread it frequently. I think it's still good. I wish he hadn't revised it, because when he revised it, I think he tried to even out the seams a little bit, and I don't think that that was an advantage. I like the original version of that very much. So that was a Lewisian book that has been very important to me.

A book from another field, would be a book by Goran Hermeren called *Influence in Art*. It raises this whole question of what I'll talk about in my address tonight: this idea of what counts as influence. And tonight, I'll be issuing a warning. I think that we view influence much too narrowly. I think that we need to think more capaciously about what we're looking at, and what we're looking for when it comes to the question of influence. So, I will tell you a little more about that tonight. Thanks.

Colin Duriez: What put me on to the Inklings, really, was discovering C.S. Lewis. That is, fairly early on (I must have just finished high school), when I read his *Surprised by Joy*, I came across all of these names, like Tolkien and others. And then shortly afterwards, I was in Istanbul, where I was studying, and an American lent me his copy of *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*. Well, I read the introduction to that. It was written by C.S. Lewis, and it was about the Inklings, which did, in that book, include Dorothy L. Sayers as well. But, I soon realized that she wasn't actually allowed to be an Inklings. And then, a bit after that, I was in North Ireland continuing my studies, and somebody told me that a chap called Humphrey Carpenter was writing a book about the Inklings. So I started to think that was something I wanted to explore, and that really led me to start writing

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about the Inklings. But there wasn't really a book to help start writing, until I read Humphrey Carpenter's book when it was finally out, other than doing what I'm sure Diana did as well, and that was to sift away through letters and diaries, manuscripts, and scraps of information, and slowly start to put together a better picture of what the group was. And that really took a long, long time, but that's the only way to do it, really. So it's sort of odd that I went to Turkey and met these Americans who were just discovering Lewis and the Inklings through people like Clyde S. Kilby.² By the way, he was one of the great pioneers in Lewis and Tolkien and Inklings studies. He took the time to get to know Lewis and Tolkien and other Inklings and helped to get their materials to Wheaton. He was also a great encourager. Although I never actually met him, he wrote to me and encouraged me. So that's how it all started.

Sorina Higgins: Well, I think I'd like to add on to what they said, and then bring in as well, the power of communities, like this, because, I think the most influential works for me have been works in progress. So one, for instance, is Grevel Lindops' new biography of Charles Williams. Well, you say, wasn't that just published, like last week? Well, actually, it was October of last year, but Grevel's been working on it for over a decade. And he's been extremely generous. I've been in touch with him since pretty early on in the process. And he's shared bits and pieces of it with me all along. And those of you who have seen the *Chapel of the Thorn*, you know that he took his section "Chapel" from the biography, and he and I revised it together and made it into the preface to that book. So I was aware of what he was doing and sort of learning at a distance about how he was doing it. Finding out about archives and manuscript work, even, at a distance was extremely helpful.

And then, four years ago, when I was here, at the Taylor Colloquium, the community was so inspiring that immediately after that, I went to the Wade Center and worked on *The Chapel of the Thorn*. And that's the same time, as many of you have heard, that Brenton made the *Screwtape* discovery. So that was another instance of collaboration and mutual inspiration. And, while I was at the Wade, I also had many wonderful interactions with Chris Mitchell.³ There was one particular

2 The late Clyde S. Kilby was a professor of English at Wheaton College and the Founder and Head Curator/Director of the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College from 1965 to 1981.

3 The late Christopher W. Mitchell was the Director of the Marion E.

conversation that we had, it was just so encouraging, and he sat me down and asked me, “What are your goals? What are your interests?” Then he pretty much told me to stick with Charles Williams, because he knew that there weren’t enough people working on that. He put me in touch with several other people who were working on Williams as well.

Another influential book was *Planet Narnia* and, again, that was as a work in progress as far as I was concerned. I heard Michael Ward give a talk on it, way before the word was even out that he had made this discovery. So that was a real blessing and influential on my work.

Joe Ricke: We heard about *Planet Narnia* quite early on too because, as Michael shared at the last colloquium, the very first teaching he ever did, the very first Lewis teaching anyway, was tutoring for the Taylor students I used to take over to Oxford. And so my students would come back and all present papers on the secret planetary influence on Narnia. That was seven or eight years before the book came out, although an earlier essay appeared about that same time in *Christianity Today*, I think.

Now let me just ask a question that I didn’t warn anyone about. Is that OK? It’s a simple one. Other than your own work, because I know you’re all writers, so you’re reading your own work a lot through the work of revision, but what are you reading right now that’s relevant to your work in Inklings studies. What are you reading right now that you want to recommend to the rest of us, that this is really something we should be looking at ourselves. Why don’t we start with Sørina this time, and then we’ll come back the other way, all right?

Sørina Higgins: Well, I am just about to finish my chronological read through, and blog through, of Charles Williams. So that’s kind of a big priority to me. I want to finish that before I start my work at Baylor in the fall. So I’m just reading or re-reading the last few books that Williams wrote and preparing to blog on those. But, Carol, I’m actually just reading your book right now.⁴ I’ve got the audio version, and I think I’m about a quarter to a third of the way through it. So, that’s really great, and we’re going to talk about themes to Inklings scholarship soon, and I’ll come back to that, but Carol’s book has one

Wade Center at Wheaton College from 1994-2013.

4 This and other references to “Carol” are to Carol Zaleski. See note 1.

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the most important themes that is going on right at this exact moment in Inklings studies. So if you haven't read it yet, do.

Colin Duriez: Just before I left England, I was reading a book which I couldn't bring with me because of the weight of my suitcase, and that's Stephen Thorson's book on Barfield. I am finding it delightfully lucid and helpful in trying to get an overview of his thinking and particularly to understand how best to describe Lewis's philosophical thinking as he developed, because it's really tricky trying to figure out how much he was an idealist and how much he was a realist in philosophical terms.

But also I've been reading tons of books by Dorothy L. Sayers, because I'm currently working on a book about her. I'm trying to put together her many different aspects—a dramatist, a crime writer, a translator of Dante, and a popular theologian. And she is somebody whose prose and conversation are always filled with lots of interesting quotations that leave you wondering where they came from. It would be nice to have somebody annotate all those quotations, but it would be a lifetime job, I think. So that's where I am at the moment.

Diana Glycer: I'm afraid that my answer will tell you more about me than Lewis studies. My daughter is fourteen years old, and as she was growing up, it was our habit to read to her constantly. So we read to her half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening. Now that she's fourteen, she likes to read to me, and this has been a tremendous privilege, to see the books that she loves best through her perspective. So we've just finished, for the very first time for me, the entire Harry Potter series. And her favorite author right now is an author named Rainbow Rowell. Does anybody know Rainbow Rowell? So she's been reading Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl* to me. And it's very, very, interesting, the kinds of conversation that are sparked when your children read to you, and you get to ask them questions like, "What do you notice?" "How do you feel about that?" "How do you feel about the choices that these characters are making?" "What would you say if *you* were on the scene and could speak into the situation?" and so on. So we've been doing a lot of that.

My own reading has been related to two projects that I have been working on. One is a book on Dante that I'm very excited about. I've been on sabbatical the last year, working on a book about Dante. I think Dante is incredibly important to all of the Inklings. I think

that Dante's influence has been vastly underestimated, particularly on Lewis's thought and worldview. We talk about Lewis's medieval point of view, but we don't talk enough, specifically, on his work on Dante. The specific influence of specific scenes and even phrases in Dante. So I'm very grateful, Marsha, for your book on that.⁵

The other thing that I've been working on, and I'm very excited because I can see the finish line of a project that I've been working on for quite a while, is a book called *The Major and the Missionary: A Love Story*. It's a fascinating project about Warren Lewis and his correspondence with a missionary doctor with whom he became a pen-pal late in life. These letters are fascinating. They start with some inquiries, they become pen friends, and then she gets a little flirty. And it's quite interesting to read their unfolding romance, and to follow the trajectory of their profound relationship that occurred, for both of them. I was late in life but very meaningful to both of them. So I've been reading a lot about missions and about Papua New Guinea, where Blanche was stationed, and I've been trying to understand a little bit about what it meant to be a missionary doctor in that time. She was at the very cutting edge of the ecumenical movement in that country. To watch her efforts, not only to make a difference as a missionary and as a doctor, but also as someone who was trying to promote a kind of "mere christianity" and a kind of collaboration among the various groups that were stationed there, has been fascinating for me.

Joe Ricke: Let's switch, then, to our announced topic—the future of Inklings studies, or new directions in Inklings studies, or however you want to frame that. We can dream, we can complain, we can make a short list. However we want to think about this. So let's start with Colin this time, and then give everybody a chance.

Colin Duriez: I suppose that, up till now, my gripe has been that lots of studies have been on the individual members of the Inklings and usually it's just the four picked out. You know—Tolkien, Lewis, Barfield, and Charles Williams. The reality is much more interesting than that. There are lots and lots of other colorful characters in the group. But I think, now, that it's finally changing. Sometime last year, I think, I said to Diana, "this is the year of the Inklings, isn't it?" Or

5 Glycer refers to Marsha Daigle-Williamson, a conference participant, who had recently authored a book on Dante and C. S. Lewis. See the works cited list.

maybe you said it, Diana, and I picked it up from you. Anyway, it's amazing to see all these books coming out about the Inklings. We've been working for years on things, and suddenly Carol's book came out, and all kinds of others—*Bandersnatch*, and my book on the Oxford Inklings. Grevel Lindop on Charles Williams; he's been working on that for for nine or ten years, I'm sure. So things are changing.

There is one area where I'd like to see more work. I mean, we know the Inklings as a writing group. In its early days, Lewis described its members as being characterized by "a tendency to write and to Christianity." And his brother, Warren, definitely preferred the writing group to the conversational group which formed. But I would like to see more on the other Inklings group, which is the same people, but focusing more upon their conversation and their reading. I think that you can get a hint of the power of their conversation in Humphrey Carpenter's reconstruction of an Inkling meeting, which everybody seems either to like or hate. I know that Barfield really enjoyed the conversations. And everyone knows that Lewis was a famous conversationalist. And a number of people have pointed out that if you knew Lewis very well, you knew that his letters, those wonderful letters in three massive volumes of them, actually echo a lot of this actual conversation.

And I think all of us gathered here care about the part that conversation plays in making culture and are concerned that it isn't playing as much of a part in our culture as it did in the past. But you can notice certain places where you can still get that power of conversation. So, maybe we should ignore Warren a bit and say that the conversation group was also very important. I mean, they kept going to the pub, The Eagle and Child, week after week, to talk. That lasted right into the fifties. Until towards the very end of the fifties, C.S. Lewis was wondering what the group identity was, after Tolkien no longer came and Charles Williams had died. . . . So I would love to see some more on the conversations. It would be hard work, as it was for people who have written on the group, and who have had to do an archaeological dig on the letters, and diaries, and so on. And I think it could also be very worthwhile as to . . .

Joe Ricke: Go ahead, go ahead. This is our last big thing, and then we're going to open up to questions. So, give it a shot.

Colin Duriez: I would like to see more work on the other Inklings. The group all over the thirty years or so that was made up of twenty or so people. And as far as I know, to come along to a conversation group in the pub, you probably still had to be invited. It wasn't just a matter of barging in. You know, you might find some interesting person in the corner, who turned out to be a right-wing poet. Someone sort of like Strider, who sort of got dragged in, for example. Generally, the Inklings were a noisy lot in the corner of the pub and would probably surprise people by their roughing. There are some people that if you say that they were an Inkling, you'd get in real trouble, you know? Tutt- tutting and all that. One of them is Roger Lancelyn Green, and he actually attended quite a few gatherings of the Inklings in the pub. Obviously, he didn't attend all the time because he wasn't living in Oxford; he was living in Cheshire, in his ancestral home. We know that he played a very important part in Lewis's development of the *The Narnia Chronicles*. And everything he wrote really fits into the ethos of the Inklings. So I suppose I'll just have to develop a thick skin and mention him more. But there's lots of others. People who wrote about Hadrian's Wall, you know, and historical books, and all kinds of other subjects. It was a bit like some of these older groups gathered around Dr. Johnson. There would be people with all different areas of expertise and with very different interests. They were not all Oxford dons from the English Department. There was a wide variety of professional people, and they added to each other's knowledge. I think they were really a remarkable group.

So I'd like to see more work on the other Inklings. And it would be hard work, finding the information, but some people are really good at that, you know? And then, finally, some of what you might call satellites of the Inklings, people who weren't actually members. People like Dorothy L. Sayers had huge affinities with the group, so it's really good to see so much work being done on her now. She's a major writer. And there are many others as well that should be explored. I mean, somebody like Cecil Harwood, one of the anthroposophist friends of Owen Barfield, who became a deep friend of Lewis. In fact, his son, Lawrence, became one of Lewis's godsons, and he's written a very interesting book about Lewis, as his godfather. Lewis would visit and would crawl on the floor with the kids and things, and have a good time. That's not at all, you know, the kind of image that people have of him. These "satellite Inklings" are very interesting. Cecil Harwood, for example, was described by a group of authors in the twentieth

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century as the “Lord of the Walks,” because he used to organize the walks. So it’s nice to hear that, isn’t it? It might echo something else that took place later on.

Joe Ricke: Thank you. Of course, one of the purposes of the way we conceived the colloquium this year, with the “friendship theme,” was to pick up these satellites, and extend the circle of friends so to speak. And I know we couldn’t all get to every session, but we had a great paper on C.S. Lewis and the Fred Hoyle, the Astronomer—kind of like the anti-friend—and another wonderful paper on Lewis and Wagner. And of course, that paper brought in Cecil Harwood, because if Lewis was going to hear Wagner, he was almost certainly going with Harwood. And obviously Sayers has been important; we’ve had two whole sessions on Sayers. And so it’s really been encouraging that the way we were conceiving of doing things this year, really worked, at least in terms of recognizing the Inklings’ larger circle of influence. Now, back to the future. Sørina, do you want to give this a go?

Sørina Higgins: Sure, thank you. Well, I see three very exciting things happening, and so my dream is that they would continue to happen and gain momentum. And so, first, what I alluded to previously, is the idea of looking at the Inklings as modernists, because I think that at one time, the only places that you could give a paper on the Inklings was either at an Inklings conference or the Tolkien at Kalamazoo sessions.⁶ So, you had to look at Tolkien’s *Medievalism* to talk about him. Now, maybe that’s just my impression, and sort of overstating the case, but for a long time, all of the books that were coming out, all of the studies, were sort of looking at their sources, were situating them as backwards-looking writers. So even when we were looking at how to put *The Inklings and King Arthur* together, at one stage I was thinking we would have to organize the book according to their sources. So, you know, we would need to move the book through the Welsh sources, then move on to Malory, etc.

But no, that’s not really the way that they were looking at Arthur, because they were engaged in this contemporary conversation, right?

6 Tolkien at Kalamazoo is a loosely-knit scholarly sponsoring organization for papers given at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, held annually at Western Michigan University. The Center for the Study of C.S. Lewis and Friends at Taylor University also sponsors panels of papers on “Lewis and the Middle Ages” at the Kalamazoo Conference each year. Contact jsricke@taylor.edu for more information.

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That's why in my keynote talk, I mentioned the other twentieth century writers who were all working on Arthur. So I think it's very important to look at them in their modernist context. I want to see studies of Williams and James Joyce, and more stuff on Lewis and T. S. Eliot, and I want to see a lot more on their modernist context. And I want to see a lot more on them as war poets, right? I mean, Lewis fought in the war, was wounded, and published a line of poetry in 1919, so why aren't we talking about him in the exact same sentence as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, and so forth. And even Williams, who didn't fight, has so many poems about the war and its effects on the home front and on the people that he lost. So that's a really important topic that we need to do more of. So, I'd like to see that.

The second, is that I really love how the critical conversation is moving forward, and how more and more scholars are picking up on the big critical themes of the latter half of the twentieth century and the critical conversations that are going on right now. There's a lot going on with the Inklings and Genders Studies and Environmental Studies, looking at post-colonial implications of their work, you know, like looking at Williams's "The Vision of the Empire" and so forth. So that's really important, and we need to keep that going, not just to be sort of popular in academia, but because these are really, really, important questions. And we can add those to the more common ones of the theological conversations and the source material, and so forth.

And the last one is finding more of a place for the Inklings in academia, and especially in education. I want to see more to see more courses on them taught at the university level. Obviously, there are whole programs that are developing, and I'm here promoting Signum University as well, so, that's my little edge. But I want to see that these authors are being taken seriously, and we don't have to accept the line between the academic and the popular, right? Over and over and over again, when surveys are done about what are the best books of the twentieth century, *The Lord of the Rings* wins. The surveyors keep trying to ask the questions in different ways so Tolkien doesn't win, right? But it doesn't work; he always wins. And the academy still seems to have this idea that if it's popular, it must not be good literature. Ok, who has had more of an impact on more minds, Joyce or Tolkien? Who has been read more? Now, if I ask you who's been studied more, that would fall down differently, but if I'm walking through the mall, and I'm just asking people, who has read Joyce or who has read Tolkien? The answer is obvious. So I would like to see

more undergraduate and graduate study of these authors.

Joe Ricke: I often think this about the way I studied Victorian poetry in grad school. We never studied Elizabeth Barrett Browning, even though she was the most popular poet of the Victorian Age. But she wasn't critically accepted, especially later, in the way that her husband was or in the way that Matthew Arnold was. And how many people read Elizabeth Barrett Browning versus Matthew Arnold? It's a huge gulf between them, and she wins. And so the same thing applies, and it's not just to Inklings. Diana, would you like to take a stab at this?

Diana Glycer: I would love to. I think there's several topics that I'm really excited about in terms of Inklings studies. I am excited to see more on Lewis's family. I think it is great that Don King is working on a biography of Warren Lewis.⁷ I hope that my work on Warren Lewis, especially on the later part of his life will perhaps help us to understand and maybe even rehabilitate our understanding of that man. I'm excited about Crystal Hurd's work on Lewis's parents.⁸ I think Flora Lewis needs a lot more attention, I think we need to understand her. She was an outstanding individual. Another topic that I think needs more attention is this whole issue of women and C.S. Lewis in its broadest sense. Now there's a collection that came out recently, as many of you know, and many of you contributed to that. I think that it's good, but I think that it's a bit piecemeal. I think that we are really ready, really poised, to have extended, sophisticated, and thoughtful looks at this issue. It's time.

A third topic, that's come up in a lot of conversations here, is that we are ready for some really in depth analysis of Lewis's individual works, and I'm really grateful for that discussion. Honestly, I would point to the setting of the C.S. Lewis stone in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey as a kind of watershed moment for the possibility of treating Lewis's work much more seriously than we ever have before. I think that we are there. If there's ever something that gives us an invitation to look at his works more critically, in the very best sense of that word, it was that moment.⁹

7 Don King is a professor of English at Montreat College and a prolific Inklings scholar and author. He has written books about and edited the poetry of C. S. Lewis, Joy Davidman, and Ruth Pitter.

8 See her essay in this collection, "Patriarchy and P'daita Bird: The Artistic Influence of Albert Lewis."

9 On 22 November 1963, the fiftieth anniversary of his death, C. S.

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So I think those are some of the topics that I would like us to address as a community. I also think that there are some larger issues. So, if I could rabble-rouse a little bit, there are two things that I'm very concerned about relating to how we conduct ourselves as scholars. One thing that I think we have to admit is that the publishing industry is broken. It is very, very difficult, increasingly difficult, for us to do the work that we do, and to get it out, and to make it available without incredible difficulty in working with publishers. I think that we are poised to come up with some more creative ways of making our work available, and I would like to propose that perhaps we can be alert to opportunities to create micro-publishers who would be very happy to publish small numbers of significant works, so that we can create the scholarship that we need to go forward, but without having to meet the demands of the numbers of volumes that are required for these things to become viable from a publisher's point of view. I'm very concerned about how the work that we do here gets out and becomes more widely available, and I want to see us be much more inventive. The other way I'd like us to be much more inventive is in how we collaborate. Now, it won't surprise you to know that I'm very interested in creative collaboration. I've been coming to academic conferences for a very long time. This is the first one that I've ever attended that had on its first day the opportunity for authors to get together in a round table setting and simply talk about what we're working on, in a large public setting. And even in a session like this, I mean. look who's here! Am I the only one who looks around and says, "Ah! It's my bookshelf come to life!" Can we find new ways of doing a better job, and supporting each other in what we do? Even just simply informing each other—"Oh, did you know that so-and-so has an interest in that?" or "did you hear the paper that was given at Kalamazoo?" "No! I wasn't able to be there." How can we do a better job of encouraging one another, resourcing one another, challenging one another to stay the course, because this work we do is hard and lonely sometimes. How can we do a better job of challenging one another, in the very best sense of bringing out the very best work from one another? Simply by making our papers and our presentations, and even our drafts available before they go to print, and really having each other's back in terms of our creative collaboration.

Joe Ricke: Thanks Diana. We're going to open it up to questions now.

Lewis was honored with a memorial in Westminster Abbey's famous Poets Corner.

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But first, just one more thing. I'm going to give a shout out to some people here. Sørina has her *Oddest Inkling* blog, and Brenton blogs at *A Pilgrim in Narnia*. I'm always seeing new things that people are working on, the kind of things that Diana is talking about, in places like that. William O'Flaherty over there hosts the *Essential C.S. Lewis* as well as the *All about Jack* podcasts. This is just a tip of the iceberg, and just from people in this room. So we are seeing some of the work that people are doing in progress, sometimes in very early, even embryonic form. And they're just sharing it, hoping someone is out there reading it. So, that's helpful, and I want to thank those people who are already doing this important work. Now you all need to find their blogs, like them, share them, and so forth. And maybe something more. OK. Questions?

Brenton Dickieson: Yes. My question arises from what you just said and what Diana just said. Sørina, you have an excellent blog on Charles Williams. Recently, you've been featuring guest posts, from a variety of scholars, reading and writing through Williams. I was wondering if you could comment on the blog and other online tools as a forum for the exchange of scholarship and for entry to the marketplace of ideas or community of scholars. Maybe we need a Facebook of Inklings scholars, or something like that?

Sørina Higgins: Thank you for that excellent question. Well, I'll start with the more negative side and move to the more positive. The negative is that the online world is still very fragmented. I'm still really surprised to find out, you know, how many other people are working on Charles Williams who don't know about my blog. And I don't know about their stuff. That's really discouraging, especially when we should all just be able to Google each other and just find it. Right? And maybe that's partly generational or technological; maybe some people aren't as comfortable moving around the internet and finding the different areas. I'm not sure how to unify all of that, because everybody has a favorite platform.. So share your ideas. Let us know your ideas on how we can, not centralize, but network all of these things.

Charlie Starr: Diana, following up about what you said about a new kind of publishing, I just want to give props to Bob Trexler and Winged Lion Press, for the kind of work he is doing.

Joe Ricke: Yes. Bob just published a very good book on David Neuhouser. I don't know if anyone's seen that yet [laughter].¹⁰ Oh! And a book by Charlie

¹⁰ The Winged Lion Press publication, *Exploring the Eternal Goodness: Selected Writings of David L. Neuhouser*, was distributed to all colloquium participants. Neuhouser founded the Lewis Center at Taylor and started the colloquium in 1997. Winged Lion Press also published Charlie Starr's *Light: C. S. Lewis First and Final*

Starr. Paul Michelson?

Paul Michelson: More a comment than a question. Following on what Sørina said, Diana mentioned that the publishing industry is broken. Well, so is academia. People are coming up for tenure, and they have to fight to even get recognition, especially in the humanities work. Some of it is very substantial, talking about geographical gazetteers, and stuff like that. The difference is, it's volumnized in book form. People have to fight to get any recognition for serious academic work. I don't know any solutions for that, other than just supporting people who are doing these things. But that's another problem we have.

Marsha Daigle-Williamson: I have a question for Diana. When you say that you were working on the Inklings and Dante, are you working on one chapter for each Inkling and Dante, or what? What is the organizational principle?

Diana Glycer: My work on Dante is inspired by the Inklings, but it's really not about the Inklings. It's really about Dante, and really comes out of my life. I fell in love with Dante, in a really, really, big way more than twenty years ago. And it's a book that I study and read at least once every year, and have for those two decades. And when I share my passion for Dante, its often the case that people surprisingly do not share my love for this book. So I want to try to rehabilitate Dante by writing a book that will invite people to enjoy it as much as I do. So that's my goal in writing that. I think that Dante is incredibly relevant and powerful, but I think that it he can also be obscure. So my approach is to take spiritual formation reading of Dante. Sort of Richard Foster meets literary criticism is the kind of the approach that I am taking in that particular book.¹¹

Joe Ricke: That's interesting in light of Robert Moore-Jumonville's presentation this morning on C.S. Lewis and the problem of prayer, but from a spiritual formation perspective. And that leads me to saying something about generalism. Some of us heard a great paper

Short Story (an edition and interpretation of a Lewis manuscript in the Brown Collection at Taylor) and a number of other books on the Lewis and related authors.

11 Richard Foster is a theologian and spiritual writer in the Quaker tradition whose most well-known book is *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (1978).

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on Thursday, in praise of David Neuhouser, C. S. Lewis, Wendell Berry, and other generalists. It was written by Chris Smith, the editor of *The Englewood Review of Books*, and it was all about the joys and the benefits (and importance for our time) of being a generalist. Of course, “generalist” is kind of difficult to define, but he went into all that. The fact is that Dave Neuhouser was a math professor, but we wouldn’t be here without him. And my good friend Chris Armstrong over there is a church historian, who specialized in the nineteenth-century American church. And now he runs a work project at Wheaton College, a vocation think tank of sorts. But he wrote a book addressed to evangelicals, like himself, who maybe need to learn something from the Middle Ages. And his way of doing it—this may seem, a bit cynical, I don’t know—his way of doing it, was to approach it through C.S. Lewis. So the book is basically about reading medieval wisdom through the eyes of C.S. Lewis. And I thought, that’s the same sort of thing that Diana is talking about. And it’s the same sort of thing that Dave Neuhouser did. And it’s what Robert was doing this morning. So, that’s another area, a broader cultural area, we can kind of be working in. Jennifer?

Jennifer Woodruff-Tait: I was going to pick up on that, actually, I’m the managing editor of *Christian History* magazine, and we did an issue on the seven authors of the Wade Center, using material from the Wade Center, with lists of print and online resources. So that, if you’ve never read this author before, you could start by looking at websites, all tied together with a time line of connections between the authors. So, if you’re interested in something of that kind, that issue pulls this whole world together.

Joe Ricke: Yes. If you haven’t seen that issue, it is a great starter. We’ve given away well over a hundred issues of that this year. The rest of you should consider doing the same. By the way, Jennifer, how many people in this room wrote for that particular issue?

Jennifer: You know, I think that almost everyone who wrote in it or was interviewed for it is in this room. [laughter]

Joe Ricke: So, there you go. I know Colin wrote for it. Edwin wrote for it.¹² Chris wrote for it. Chris Armstrong, here, by the way is the senior

¹² Edwin Woodruff-Tait, church historian of the early reformation period, a free-lance writer, and a consulting editor for *Christian History*.

editor of *Christian History*, the magazine Jennifer just mentioned.

Chris Armstrong: She does the work.

Jennifer: He has the ideas. And I do the work.

Joe Ricke: Devin?

Devin Brown: I've had the privilege, and many of you have too, of having Colin come into my classroom at the end of each semester through the bonus features of the *Lord of the Rings* and *Narnia* films. And that's another way of getting our scholarship out there. I mean we've talked about the print way and the online way, but what about the video way? I'm just curious, what kind of impact has that had? Because those are great resources. These people had money and were able to pay very well, and were able to feature the very best of scholarship there. And as I said, our students can come into the classroom and see it and hear it. That's another way of bringing Inklings to the world. The bonus material and documentaries that go with it. That's scholarship, just in a different format.

Diana Glycer: Speaking of technology, I want to add in the idea of Skyping into each other's classrooms. And I've had some fantastic opportunities to be present, via technology, talking with students in various settings. So you think about making these connections. What you're seeing right here is an exciting example of the opportunity we have to do better collaboration.¹³

Colin Duriez: Yes, yes. I'm trying to remember how I got into that, because I've done a number of those kinds of interviews, for the BBC for example, and they've often asked me to talk about Lewis or Tolkien. In the case of the *Lord of the Rings* DVDs, they had asked Brian Sibley to do the interviewing. He's a friend of mine, and he knows my work. And so I went to this posh hotel in London and nearly met Christopher Lee, but not quite. He was on a break, so I missed him, unfortunately. I also had to opportunity to be a part of another project; it was the BBC documentary on Freud and C.S. Lewis, *The Question of God*.¹⁴

13 Diana Glycer was referring to the fact that Carol Zaleski was able to be part of the panel discussion from a distance by video and audio technology.

14 The film *Question of God* was actually a PBS production (see works cited).

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That was a highly professional film. The people who put that together sent me a whole load of questions to think about so that I could be prepared. When I did the film, we were in the Kilns. And it was the same with the film of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. That was filmed at the Kilns and at C.S. Lewis's home church in Headington. And to me, that was wonderful to do. But, in terms of "paying very well," in none of the cases did I get any payment. Except from the BBC; they paid me. Well, New Lion Cinema did give me a thank you, thanking me for my part in *The Lord of the Rings*. Maybe that's worth something. Anyway, the point is that this is a platform to use. And I think it was well worth doing, because sometimes people looking on a bookshelf will say "I've seen you somewhere!"

Joe Ricke: Unfortunately, we are out of time. I just want to say thank you to everyone, but we have to say goodbye for this session. Please join me in thanking our panelists one more time. [applause]



Roundtable discussion: Joe Ricke (moderator),
Diana Gyler, Colin Duriez, and Sorina Higgins

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