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*“It’s good to see Colin Duriez’s ever-useful A–Z of C.S. Lewis back in print in a new expanded and updated version. It’s a very helpful reference work for scholars and fans alike but it’s also a great pleasure simply to dip into and read. It’s full of helpful, pithy summaries that combine scholarship, clarity, and brevity. I like the attention Duriez pays to Lewis as a critic and scholar as well as to the more famous Narnia books. Many of the entries show clearly how Lewis was engaged with the intellectual life of his own day and especially how relevant he is to issues being discussed today.”*

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*“An invaluable work of reference and a fascinating volume in which to dip and browse, this is the perfect companion for every Lewis reader by an acknowledged expert on the life, thoughts, works, and worlds of one of the great imaginative writers of the twentieth century.”*

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OF *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA*, AND MUCH MORE**

*“Covering the whole range of Lewis’s life and work, this encyclopedia is thorough, accurate, and well balanced. I highly recommend it.”*

**MICHAEL WARD, AUTHOR OF *PLANET NARNIA***

THE  
A–Z  
OF  
C.S. LEWIS



*An encyclopedia of his life,  
thought, and writings*

COLIN DURIEZ



# Contents



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*Preface* 7

*C.S. Lewis A–Z* 13

*Bibliography of C.S. Lewis* 345

# Preface



*In memory of  
my father,  
Charles Duriez  
1915–2002*

C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* are consistently among the bestselling children's books, firmly established as classics along with *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Wind in the Willows*. Lewis, who for many years was an atheist, is also unmatched as a popularizer of the Christian faith in recent times, and is certainly one of the most widely read believers in the history of the church. In specialist circles, his books of literary criticism – introducing writers such as John Milton or the period of the Middle Ages – are still in print, half a century after his death.

Yet how well is C.S. Lewis actually known? I suspect that many of us have only read one kind of his wide range of writings – his science fiction, perhaps, or his children's stories, or his popular theology (especially *The Screwtape Letters* and *Mere Christianity*), or his literary criticism. Some will undoubtedly have discovered his work and life through seeing the play or film versions of *Shadowlands*, or have come to know him through television or film adaptations of some of the Narnia stories.

*The A–Z of C.S. Lewis* has been written to help an exploration and discovery (or rediscovery!) of his world. The rich variety of Lewis's writings is part of an integrated whole. He combined reasoning and imagination in a unified and bright vision of reality – and of the God he discovered, whom he came to see as the giver of reality.

C.S. Lewis is an enigmatic figure. Different people seek to understand him in their image as they warm to him. In the Richard Attenborough version of *Shadowlands*, for instance, Lewis is a retiring bachelor don, quarantined from women and children, brought into the real world by his love for the abrasive dying

American, Joy Davidman Gresham. After her death from cancer, he grieves in a temporary agnosticism. To his close friends in the Inklings club, however, Lewis was the jovial life and soul of the party, puffing on his pipe, swilling his theology down with the best bitter or cider, delighting in a good joke or pun. For an enormous number, Lewis has been the defender of the faith, and, for very many, the media evangelist who led them to faith, particularly through the published BBC radio talks, *Mere Christianity*.

For people who met Lewis, but weren't in his close circle of friends, he could seem reserved. They couldn't get close to him. Some students he tutored at Oxford found him formidable; some considered him bullying in argument. Others responded to his intellectual challenges, and became his friends, such as George Sayer, John Wain, and Harry Blamires. Some of his friends were not intellectual at all. Much of this reserve, of course, was the typical product of his background, the shaping of his early twentieth-century upper-middle-class environment in Ulster. Also, he was fundamentally secretive, having a rich inner life that he guarded, and shared mainly in his writings. Psychologically, much might be explained by the death of his mother in childhood, poignantly reflected in his Narnian Chronicle *The Magician's Nephew*.

Lewis also felt himself part of an older world – what he called the Old West – seeing himself as a relic, a dinosaur. His roots and orientation lay back in time before the modern world existed. He was in fact fervently anti-modernist, surrounding himself to an extent with those who shared his antipathy, such as J.R.R. Tolkien. Yet his writings have been received around our modern world by a rich variety of people. The same is true of the films made of his stories of Narnia.

For convenience of use, I have used asterisks within articles to show other references. This is to allow my readers to follow through themes and subjects that capture their interest. If this omits a significant cross-reference, I give it at the article's end. Where appropriate I have added further reading. There are a number of

general articles, providing some overviews to aid exploration and discovery. At the end of the book is a list of C.S. Lewis's works (most of which are described within the A–Z). A modest book like this dare only claim the range of a comprehensive A–Z because its subject was truly encyclopedic in his constantly fascinating interests, friendships, reading, concerns, and writings, which are facets of him I have tried to capture.

The range of this book helps it to include different aspects of C.S. Lewis's thinking and imagination. My hope is that it extends Lewis's own aims in the breadth of his writings. At the same time I have tried to do justice to the subtlety and depths of Lewis's thought by avoiding oversimplifying and by suggesting links to the deeper intellectual and literary currents of his day for those who wish to explore further. Behind all the exploration that my guide hopes to encourage is the quest for an answer to the puzzle of Lewis's continuing and growing relevance to today's world, where there is place both for wild hope and a distressing sense of the dangers that we face.

A passage in one of his letters encourages me to think that C.S. Lewis may not have been totally out of sympathy with my book, and the enjoyment that went into its writing, and, hopefully, will mark its reading.

To enjoy a book... I find I have to treat it as a sort of hobby and set about it seriously. I begin by making a map on one of the end leaves: then I put in a genealogical tree or two. Then I put a running headline at the top of each page: finally I index at the end all the passages I have for some reason underlined.... One is *making* something all the time and a book so read acquires the charm of a toy without losing that of a book. (C.S. Lewis, 1932; from *They Stand Together: The Letters of C.S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves (1914–1963)*.)

It is over two decades since the appearance of *The C.S. Lewis Handbook*, and over a decade since the original *Encyclopedia* built upon it. What you are now holding is a substantially updated version of that encyclopedia. This takes into account new insights into Lewis's work, such as Michael Ward's *Planet Narnia*, which has led to a much greater appreciation of Lewis's sublime skill in creating *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Readers, of course, have continued in new generations to appreciate these stories, with sales worldwide of around 85 million in 29 different languages for *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and huge additional sales for the other books in the Narnia series. People have flocked to see the film versions from Walden Media.

The original *Encyclopedia* benefited by being read through by Douglas Gresham and Walter Hooper. Some entries are drawn from articles written and talks given over the years. Feedback from these, and books I've published that feature him directly or are related to him, concerning his friends J.R.R. Tolkien and the Inklings, have helped in the development of this book. A list of others to whom I'm indebted in various ways over the more than twenty years since the original *The C.S. Lewis Handbook* would be far too long to place here. I must limit myself to mentioning Tony Collins at Monarch, Christopher Catherwood, Andrew Walker, Elizabeth Fraser, Marjorie Mead and her colleagues at The Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Illinois, USA, Leland and Mary Ryken, Mary Bechtel, Cindy Bunch, Marta Garcia de la Puerta, Margarita Carretero González, John Gillespie, Lila Bishop at Crossway, Alison Barr at SPCK, Bruce L. Edwards, Brian Sibley, David C. Downing, Michael Ward, and at Lion Hudson: my editor Ali Hull, Jessica Tinker, Kirsten Etheridge, Jude May, Leisa Nugent, Rhoda Hardie, and others of their supportive colleagues. Any errors are of course my own.

*Colin Duriez*  
*Keswick, January 2013*

# A



## **Abhalljin** See: **Aphallin**

**Abingdon** A small town not far from Oxford\* at whose nearby RAF base C.S. Lewis gave his very first talk on Christianity to wartime personnel of Bomber Command. He considered the experience an abject failure. Working at communicating more successfully in such talks helped him when the BBC\* invited him to give national radio broadcasts, which were published and eventually collected into the bestselling *Mere Christianity*\*.

***The Abolition of Man (1943)*** C.S. Lewis considered this one of his most important books, a view that was shared by Owen Barfield\*, who commented that it is “his most trenchant and valuable philosophic statement” and contains “much of his best and hardest hitting thought”. The small book is concerned with the education\* of children, and in it Lewis developed his argument against what he saw as an alarming tendency in modern thinking. In a letter in 1955 he ruefully commented that *The Abolition of Man* “is almost my favourite among my books but in general has been almost totally ignored by the public”.

This powerful tract defends the objectivity of values like goodness and beauty against the already by then modern view that they are merely in the mind of the beholder, reflecting the social attitudes of a culture. Lewis argues that “until quite modern times all teachers and even all men believed the universe to be such that certain emotional reactions on our part could be either congruous or incongruous to it – believed, in fact, that objects did not merely receive, but could *merit*, our approval or disapproval, our reverence, or our contempt”.

If values are objective, argued Lewis, one person may be right and another wrong in describing qualities. If one says that a waterfall is beautiful, and another says that it is not, that “beautiful” does not merely describe emotions within the beholder. Only one of them is right; their opinions are not equally valid. A similar situation exists over the goodness or badness of an action. Judging goodness or badness is not simply a matter of opinion. Lewis argued indeed that there is a universal acknowledgment of good and bad over matters like theft, murder, rape, and adultery, a sense of what Lewis called the Way, or Tao\*. “The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of imagining a new primary colour, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in.”

Abandonment of the Tao spells total disaster for the human race, argued Lewis. Specifically human values like freedom and dignity become meaningless, he felt; the human being is then merely part of nature\*. Nature, including humanity, is to be conquered by the technical appliance of science. Technology, with no limits or moral checks upon it, becomes totalitarian. An elite plans the future generations, and the present generation is cut off from the past. Such an elite is conceivably the most demonic example of what Lewis called the “inner ring”\*, a theme he explored in an essay written in the war years and in his science fiction story *That Hideous Strength*\*. It is a social and cultural embodiment of what, in an individual, would be deemed self-absorption and egoism.

Lewis elsewhere sums up the urgency of the point he makes in *The Abolition of Man*:

At the outset, the universe appears packed with will, intelligence, life and positive qualities; every tree is a nymph and every planet a god... The advance of knowledge gradually empties this rich and genial universe: first of its gods, then of its colours, smells,

sounds and tastes, finally of solidity itself as solidity was originally imagined. As these items are taken from the world, they are transferred to the subjective side of the account: classified as our sensations, thoughts, images or emotions... We, who have personified all other things, turn out to be ourselves mere personifications. (“The Empty Universe” in *Present Concerns*, 1986)

In such thinking, the human being has become nothing; An objective morality, he concludes, is an essential property of our very humanity. See also: **subjectivism**

**Adam and Eve in Narnia** In the Bible\*, Adam and Eve are the first humans, with all people in every part of the world descending from them. Narnia\* is a land of talking beasts\*, but humans are there from the beginning, having come from our world. The original humans who witness the creation of Narnia in *The Magician’s Nephew*\* are Digory Kirke\*; Polly Plummer\*; Digory’s uncle, Andrew Ketterley\*; and a London hansom cab driver, Frank\*. Jadis\*, late of Charn\*, is also with them; it is through her that evil is introduced into Narnia at its very beginning. Frank is chosen to be the first king of Narnia by Aslan\*. Aslan decrees that all kings or queens of Narnia have to be human (“Sons of Adam or Daughters of Eve”\*), reflecting a hierarchy by which Narnia is ordered. Frank’s wife, Helen, is the first human to be drawn into Narnia by Aslan’s call. From Frank and Helen many humans, including future kings and queens, are descended, but other humans, the Telmarines\*, stumble into Narnia through a portal, in this case a cave in a South Sea island.

**Adonis** In Greek mythology, a beautiful youth dear to the love goddess Aphrodite, mother of Cupid\*. He is killed while boar hunting, but is allowed to return from the underworld for six months every year to rejoin her. The anemone springs from

his blood. Adonis was worshipped as a god of vegetation, and known as Tammuz in Babylonia, Assyria, and Phoenicia. He seems also to have been identified with Osiris, the Egyptian god of the underworld.

Lewis was interested in Adonis, partly because of his respect for pre-Christian paganism\*, and because the myth embodied the idea of death and rebirth explored in *Miracles*\*. See also: **myth became fact**

**The Aeneid of Virgil** This classical epic poem was considered by Lewis one of the books that most influenced his vocational attitude and philosophy of life, and he partly translated it (see: **reading of C.S. Lewis**). Written between 29–19 BC, it embodies Roman imperial values in its Trojan hero, Aeneas. He is destined to found a new city in Italy. After the fall of Troy, the home-seeking Aeneas roams the Mediterranean with his companions. Making land in North Africa, he falls in love with Dido, Queen of Carthage. He later abandons her and establishes the Trojans in Latium, where the king offers him his daughter, Lavinia, in marriage. Turnus, a rival suitor, opposes him until killed in singlehanded combat. The poem builds upon a rich tradition of classical epics, including Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad*.

Lewis read from his never-completed translation of *The Aeneid* to the Inklings\*. The readings must have had a powerful effect, as the translation seems designed to be read aloud. What has survived, which was only recently discovered, has now been published, edited, with commentary, by A.T. Reyes. It includes all of Book 1, most of Book 2, much of Book 6, and fragments from the other Books of Virgil’s poem.

**Further reading**

A.T. Reyes, *C.S. Lewis’s Lost Aeneid: Arms and the Exile* (2011)

**Aesthetica** A southern region of the world in *The Pilgrim’s Regress*\*, charted on the *Mappa Mundi*\*. In it lies the city of Thrill.

**affection** See: *The Four Loves*

**“After Ten Years”** An unfinished piece published in *The Dark Tower and Other Stories*\*. Lewis abandoned it after the death of Joy Davidman Lewis\*. It concerns Menelaus (called “Yellowhead” in the story) and his wife Helen of Troy, after the Trojan War. The intended novel appears to reflect themes of love deepened by Lewis’s friendship with Charles Williams\*, particularly the impact of Williams’s *Descent into Hell*\* (1937). It would have carried on the exploration of paganism\* most realized in Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces*\*. Menelaus, it appears, would have had to choose between true love and an idealized image of Helen, as Scudamour has to choose between two Camillas in the flawed but powerful fragment “The Dark Tower”.

**agape** See: **charity**

**Ahoshta** An elderly Tarkaan and Grand Vizier in the Narnian\* Chronicle *The Horse and His Boy*\*. He is due to marry Aravis\* in an arranged marriage. Baseborn, he works his way up the social hierarchy by intrigue and flattery. His appearance has little to attract the reluctant Aravis: he is short and wizened with age, and has a humped back.

**Alambil** One of the Narnian planets whose name means “Lady of Peace” in *The Chronicles of Narnia*\*. When in conjunction with the planet Tarva\* it spells good fortune for Narnia. See also: **Narnia: geography**

**albatross** In *The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”*\*, this large seabird leads the *Dawn Treader*\* out of the terrifying blackness surrounding the Dark Island\*, after Lucy Pevensie\* calls in desperation to Aslan\* for help. It is one of many signs of Aslan’s providence in Narnia\*. There is a long maritime tradition of the

albatross as guide and harbinger of good fortune (featured in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”).

**Alcasan, Francois** A distinguished radiologist in *That Hideous Strength*\*. An Arab, Alcasan cut short an otherwise brilliant career in France by poisoning his wife. His severed head is rescued by the N.I.C.E.\* after his execution on the guillotine and kept alive, perched on a metal bracket in a laboratory at Belbury\*. He is (in Lewis’s grim joke) the head of the Institute, embodying its belief that the human body is now an unclean irrelevance in mankind’s evolutionary development, and revealing that physical immortality is a possibility. It is, in fact, uncertain that Alcasan himself has survived, because the macrobes, the bent eldila\*, speak through his head, needing human agents for their devilish activities. He parallels the dehumanization of the Un-man\* of Perelandra\*, illustrating Lewis’s belief in the gradual abolition of humanity in modern scientific society.

Alcasan’s bearded head wears coloured glasses, making it impossible to see his tormented eyes. His skin is rather yellow, and he has a hooked nose. The top part of his skull has been removed, allowing the brain to swell out and expand. From its collar protrude the tubes and bulbs necessary to keep it alive. The mouth has to be artificially moistened, and air pumped through in puffs to allow its laboured speech.

Mark Studdock\* is introduced to the head as a sign of his deeper initiation into the N.I.C.E. Dr Dimble\* speculates that its consciousness is one of agony and hatred. See also: ***The Abolition of Man***

**Aldwinckle, Elia Estelle “Stella” (1907–1990)** While reading theology at Oxford\* University, South African-born Stella Aldwinckle came under the influence of Lewis’s friend Austin Farrer\*. In 1941, she became a member of the Oxford Pastorate, devoted to serving Oxford undergraduates. Later that year she

founded the Oxford University Socratic Club\*, choosing Lewis as its first president.

**Alexander, Samuel (1859–1938)** A realist philosopher who was important in the development of C.S. Lewis’s thought. Alexander was Professor of Philosophy at Manchester University, England, 1893–1924. He sought to develop a comprehensive system of ontological metaphysics, leading to a theory of emergent evolution. He proposed that the space–time matrix gestated matter; matter nurtured life; life evolved mind; and finally God\* emerged from mind. His books include his Gifford lectures published as *Space, Time and Deity* in 1920. He later worked on aesthetic theory and wrote *Beauty and Other Forms of Value* (1933). See also: **idealism, C.S. Lewis and; enjoyment and contemplation**

**Alimash** A Captain of the Chariots in Calormen\* in the Narnian\* Chronicle, *The Horse and His Boy*\*, and the cousin of Aravis\*. The horse Bree\* remembers him as a worthy nobleman who, after an important battle, the capture of Teebeth, filled his nosebag with sugar.

**allegory** An extended metaphor, or sustained personification. In literature, it is a figurative narrative or description that conveys a hidden meaning, often moral. Key examples in English literature are John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*. Tolkien’s\* short story *Leaf by Niggle* is an allegory, as is Lewis’s *The Pilgrim’s Regress*\*. The biblical parables have allegorical elements – allegory is a type of instruction. Lewis gives his own definition in a letter written 29 December 1958: “a composition... in which immaterial realities are represented by feigned physical objects”.

When Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* first appeared, some interpreted the One Ring as meaning the atomic bomb. In his