EDITORS' FOREWORD

2021 was the year of the fifth conference devoted to the life and work of C. S. Lewis (and other Inklings), its theme being the same as the title of the collection of essays *Of This and Other Worlds*, in which Lewis discusses aspects of "story-making" particularly in relation to fairy tales and science fiction. But this title is so generous that it may be tackled from various, even unexpected, angles, so literary theorists, cultural studies and arts specialists, linguists, theologians, psychologists, philosophers, quantum physicists and even biologists, biochemists or biophysicists were expected to join.

One may think of this world and the other world in religious terms, the vision of the "other world" being strongly informed by the linguistic and cultural community that entertains it. One may also think of the perceivable world and any conceivable or imaginary, i. e., fictional, world. When we say "conceivable", we may include here the world within the human body, where each cell somehow encapsulates the history and the architecture of the human species. As for imaginary /fictional worlds, we operate with them on an everyday basis—when reading books, telling jokes or tall tales, making up white lies... or exercising our imagination in other jocular ways. With minimum effort, one can postulate the existence of at least as many worlds as there are people on this planet, to say nothing of the universes created in the books of fiction.

When humans interact, they operate with different universes of discourse, which can often generate tension and conflicts. (A typical example is the discussion of a theist with an atheist—where God is present in one's universe and absent in the other's.) Very often, though, through dialogue we can wisely enrich each other's universes. We hope that the publication of the present issue, with its prevailingly interdisciplinary nature, will contribute to this type of enrichment.

The very world that we perceive with our senses may initially have appeared as a project in the infinite Mind that we conventionally call God. Lewis

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himself looked upon God in terms of a novel writer, who may create more than one universe just as a writer may create more than one novel: thus, God adjusts the very image of himself to the universe he creates, for instance, Jesus Christ for humans and the lion Aslan for the inhabitants of Narnia.

We commonly celebrate three facets of Lewis: Lewis the "lay theologian", Lewis the literary scholar and critic, and Lewis the author of fiction, and, generally, Lewis as a versatile writer who was able to carefully select "literary genres to suit the material he wished to present". (Jerry Root. 2013. Web.) To this we would like to add Lewis the friend—since he is also famous as the catalyst of a group of close friends who made themselves known in Oxford in the 1930s and '40s as the *Inklings* (a name suggesting both "ink-drops" and "vague ideas") and met once or twice a week to discuss the multifarious aspects of the human spirit and, in particular, to study human imagination, the worlds created by it, and the role it has in structuring individual and collective destinies at various levels, including the planetary and the cosmic. (See „Introduction" in *C. S. Lewis – His Life and His Heritage* edited by Teodora Ghivirigă and Daniela Vasiliu, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași, 2021.) The group attracted a number of personalities of variable stature as minor or occasional participants in the Inklings' debates. In the *Linguaculture* issues devoted to C. S. Lewis and the Inklings (see Vol. 5, No2/2014, Vol. 10, No. 2/2019 and the present issue, i.e., Vol. 13, No.1/2022) you will encounter the names of J. R. R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, Owen Barfield, as well as names of predecessors, contemporaries and other "kindred spirits".

Most of the papers in this issue cohesively presented themselves in clusters that discuss the same or similar texts/topics, or use the same or similar approaches. For instance, the two papers that open the volume are concerned with Lewis's theoretical investigation of stories—whether aimed specifically at children or meant for a general readership regardless of age—as vehicles of meaning and windows into other worlds.

Historian **Paul Michelson**'s ample exposition offers bibliographical insight into the publication of one of the most relevant of Lewis's essays, "On Stories", where the famous Inkling makes an attempt at clarifying the status of Stories (with a capital letter), that is, of fantasy in current terminology, and their ultimate purpose: far from being bland material to "merely" entertain children, a lower form of literature scorned by many critics and some adult readers alike, they are the manifestation of the greatest force behind all good poetry and literature in general—imagination. It is that, as Lewis points out in a famous quote, which makes stories approachable and fertile: "No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally . . . worth reading at the age of fifty." Professor Michelson supplements this point by a critical excursion into the various influences and sources for both Lewis's original unconventional ideas on "Story"

and the actual essay, mentioning Chesterton, along with Barfield, Tolkien and some less substantial ones, and referring to other essays where Lewis delves into the secret elusive Kappa element that makes stories—or Stories—not only interesting and enjoyable, but also significant and transformative, effectual intimations of "other worlds".

Philosopher **Peter S. Williams** contributes a text about another influential essay by Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children", another defence of story telling—or fantasy or fairy tale, to quote the Britsh writer, as he is arguing—again!—that children are not a different species, mostly ignorant, naïve or incapacitated, who have to be provided with edulcorated content to keep them out of harm's way, and childishness is not a deplorable state to be hastily and safely grown out of. The same idea is also articulated by his friend and co-Inkling J. R. R. Tolkien in the essay "On Fairy-Stories": there is no such thing as "writing for children."

After drawing an interesting parallel between the tripartite structure of spirituality and various traditional triadic concepts, for instance that between the three aspects of the spirit (actions, attitudes, and assumptions) and Aristotle's rhetorical triangle Ethos, Pathos and Logos, Peter Williams proceeds to discuss the erroneous—and malicious—association of Christianity and childhood (in its derogatory sense) by personalities of repute such as British atheist and Oxford University evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins or journalist Jeffrey Taylor, and then to refute their respective positions using strong arguments from Lewis's essays. The consequence of his three-pronged defense is then transferred to apologetics and its rhetorical needs, and the image of the infantile simple-minded easily-deceived believer is banished, while the story is viewed as a legitimate route into Christianity.

The following two papers approach the same Lewisian text, namely the third novel of the *Space*—or rather Cosmic, as this was the title preferred by its author—*Trilogy*, *That Hideous Strength*, following *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*. The first paper traces Lewis's perspective on one of the crucial points in the novel—the role of the state and the humans' position and status in relation to its intruding presence. Historian **Alan Snyder** explores Lewis's ideas on this type of government in the sci-fi *cum* fantasy novel, in some of his essays—most emphatically in "The Abolition of Man", as well as in his correspondence. Claiming to have no interest in politics—ar least not in direct engagement in the political game—did not mean that he held no views on the disturbing developments around the time when the novel was written (published 1945). His discerning spirit had already identified the dangers of totalitarianism and, more allarmingly, of the kind that hitches science to itself while relegating or eliminating not just religion, but any form of spirituality and, consequently, of

common sense and decency. It is interesting that in the novel the first institution simultaneously involved in and affected by this form of social-political distortion is the university—fictional Bracton College in Edgestow— which can be read as a warning, since Lewis himself was an active and dedicated academic.

The two authors of the other paper, **Anna Gumerova** and **Valentina Sergeeva**, focus on the hybrid genre of the novel (between science-fiction and fantasy, a "modern fairy-tale for grown-ups", in the author's own words)—and how it results from the ingenious combination of real and imaginary historical elements, of genuine historically documented characters and events, and fictional or mythical ones, to create an atmosphere conducive to the catastrophic ending. A remark could be made here on the the two contributors's interesting hint at the opposition between areas of academic endeavour in the trilogy and especially in the last novel—sociology, psychology and engineering on the one hand, and philology (and history) on the other. The two authors point at the critical absence of a linguist in N.I.C.E., sought for by its villainous members in their desperate attempt at communicating with Merlin (or the person they thought was he) for their own sinister purposes, a portent of what might happen when academic endeavour is severed from its perennial values, symbolically encoded in the novel in ancient idioms, which are not just inherently arcane but also impenetrable through a loss of tradition and continuity.

Theologian **Fabian Grasll'**s study starts from two perennial questions, (1) "Is there a God?" and (2) "What may be said about God?", raised by philosophers and theologians, respectively, explores various ideas offered by Plato and Wittgenstein, as well as by Feuerbach, the father of modern atheism, and centres on what C. S. Lewis has to say in answer to both questions, as a non-professional philospher and a „lay theologian", and how he manages to "shed different and innovative light on age-old theological issues and philosophical debates". Both in his fiction and in his essays, Lewis clearly favours imagination over the intellect, the image over the abstract, although he founds his quest for Truth and meaning on both reason and imagination. A special note on the perceptive remarks about the metaphorical nature of all language, that may be of high interest for both the linguists and literary critics among the readers of this paper: in Lewis's view, there is no rift between scientific and theological language since they are both metaphorical by necessity, as is all language: there is no other way to speak about God or about reality—"[W]e can make our language duller; we cannot make it less metaphorical," he says. For Lewis, Grassl concludes, knowledge of God is possible, but can only be derived from personal acquaintance and by analogies and metaphors, respectively.

Also engaged in the way writers of the Inklings group use language to give intimations of the ineffable is literary critic **David Livingstone**, concerned with a less known, yet not less captivating Inkling, Charles Williams, a writer of

many talents. The paper focuses on his "supernatural thrillers" or, in Lewis's expression, "spiritual shockers", particularly on his last published novels *Descent into Hell* and *All Hallow's Eve*. All his novels, and especially these two selected by the contributor himself, with perhaps *The Place of the Lion* in tow, captivate readers through the manner in which they are successful in describing the supernatural: the reality—narrative and psychological—of his fictional worlds is shown to be doubled by an undercurrent of (Christian) spirituality that makes everything terrifyingly significant in these encounters of worlds. As the author of the paper points out, this effect is achieved, among other things, through a very personal manner of returning words to their original initial meaning, as happens with the phrase that provides the title of the paper.

In a similar line, **Anne Frederique Mochel-Caballero** traces the successful—literary and scriptural—description of a world by definition inaccessible to mortals, namely Heaven, referring specifically to the way in which the chapter in the Book of Revelation that describes the "new heaven and [a] new earth" is reflected in C. S. Lewis's concluding volume of the *Chronicles of Narnia, The Last Battle*. The challenge here is manifold: the imperfect human being's inability to imagine a place of perfection, as Lewis himself argues in several of his theoretical writings, the obvious constraints not to pervert the biblical spirit and imagery and, finally and as importantly, to speak to the readers' imagination (especially children's, but not only) in an attractive and compelling way. The two texts are followed in detail, meticulously set in parallel to identify the points of convergence and Lewis's mythopoeic solutions, successful not in terms of their content, but through the original way of engaging his readers' imagination.

A second section of the current issue has grown around several investigations into languages as worlds and how they interact. Two papers are concerned with Applied Linguistics in the area of Translation Studies, focusing on the Romanian versions of some of the Inklings' works. Linguist **Nadina Vișan** discusses the three renditions of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* through the perspective of Behrman's retranslation hypothesis, using his tool of "analytic of translation" to conduct a comparison of the three versions of the same chapter selected from Tolkien's book, with focus on the way certain strategies are used in the author's effort to engage the reader with the textual world on offer. After these strategies are identified in the source text, several elements (various types of markers) are analysed along with the translator's degree of success in retaining the ambiguity of the source text without dispelling it, which would result in an impoverished target version. The partial conclusions are subsumed to the more general one that, while the distance in time would make it reasonable to apply the retranslation hypothesis, it is not fully proved in this particular case.

The other contribution in the area of Translation Studies takes us to one

of Lewis's texts, *The Magician's Nephew*, which is analysed with a focus on the translation of sentence adverbs—a subclass of adverbs with a particular stance-expressing function and thus an important role in the expressive quality of the text. After a theoretical excursion into the Romanian and English sentence adverbs, their classification and the necessary emphasis on the different systems in the two languages, linguist **Daria Protopopescu** directs the analysis towards the translation strategies used in the two Romanian versions of the book, emphasizing successful renditions as well as cases of omission and even mistranslation. The conclusions come with a brief quantitative summary of the results and the more general statement on the strategy preferred by the Romanian translators, that of paraphrasing adverbs by means of a prepositional phrase.

The last two papers are indirectly related to texts produced by the Inklings; however, they bring their contribution to revealing further aspects of worlds in contact or passages from/into other worlds. Researcher **Donna-Alexandra Ursu's** contribution surprises the reader with a corpus-based investigation into the confessions of subjects of near-death experiences and the language used to recount themconsidered from a cognitive perspective. Using mostly Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphor and Barsalou's model of frame, she manages to identify the major image schemas of death as a target domain, which give an insight into the struggle of these people to give linguistic expression to an inexpressible state/experience. The next point she makes is the surprising convergence between Lewis's take on narrative as an access way into the transcendental, and the way most near-death experiencers construct their account as religious/spiritual episodes.

Religious life as reflected in religious discourse and the expressive use of adjectives as gates of access into the complexity of Christian spirituality is the main concern of **Mona-Ancuța Ionescu.** Focusing on the writings of a significant figure of the Eastern Church, Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, she undertakes an analysis of his texts using a pragma-linguistic approach. The researcher investigates the ways in which adjectives contribute to creating the image of this particular world through triadic patterns, parallelism and repetition, and preference for a set of specific adjectives. The tension between the expressible and the ineffable lies there, behind the apparent simplicity of the discourse.

The papers in this issue vary in their topics, approaches and even voices, and yet they all converge in making a convincing case for the remarkable ability of the human spirit to bridge or create worlds via linguistic expression. The researchers explore from different angles man's attempts at coming to terms with, to describe, and to relate reality and fiction, the common and the extraordinary, the natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine—and it would be true to say that each of them is a door worth opening.