

Editorial Note

For writing of her convictions in a way that is “undaunted, quick-witted, and without any hint of an apology—but above all, in a way that is joyful and that causes joy in turn . . . one must be grateful to [Dorothy L. Sayers]” writes Karl Barth in the introduction to his German translation of Sayers’s *The Greatest Drama Ever Staged*. That foreword, along with a letter from Barth to Sayers, is translated into English for the first time here by David McNutt, who explores the brief but convivial relationship that developed between Sayers and Barth at the start of World War II. These characteristics of joy, wit, and courage distinguish not only Sayers’s work, but that of all the authors examined in this volume of *VII: Sayers* as well as Lewis, Tolkien, and Barfield. Further, the scholars who have plumbed the depths of such writing for us reveal that even when spinning the darkest tales or analyzing the world’s despair, these authors remained committed to winsome illumination and meaning-making.

Elsewhere in this volume, David Rozema tackles a C.S. Lewis story that—while unfinished—is one of the writer’s most disturbing works: *The Dark Tower*. What is the purpose of *The Dark Tower*, asks Rozema, if we trust that it is more than a sickening nightmare of sexual deviance? He finds his answer, and Lewis’s larger purpose, in Plato. Landon Loftin looks at Lewis also, but in tandem with Owen Barfield and in contemplation of a quandary that, while not portrayed as cruelly as in *The Dark Tower*, permeates Barfield’s writings and is, at root, similar: a modern, Western crisis of meaning that seems to have arisen in conjunction with a preoccupation with empirical, scientific knowledge as the sole source of knowledge.

We are also pleased to publish two articles related to Tolkien’s oeuvre. Doug Jackson writes of the delightful, but heretofore ignored, parallels between Tolkien’s short story “Leaf by Niggle” with Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poem, “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”: was Tolkien as “uninfluenceable” as Lewis famously declared? Graham Shea takes up a related Tolkien legend in his essay on another of the author’s short stories, “Smith of Wootton Major.” Shea looks closely at the nuances of Tolkien’s disavowal of allegory and presents readers with an engaging presentation of how Tolkien employed something much richer and more real in his own writing.

Thoughtful reviews of six recent book releases on these authors also appear in these pages, as well as on our website at no cost: <https://journals.wheaton.edu/index.php/vii/index>. A digital subscription to the journal also provides access to a full-color version of this volume.

As with many institutions, *VII* is in a season of transition. We are grateful for the dedication of Aaron Hill, who served as the journal’s production editor from 2017 to 2020, as well as for the return of Kendra Langdon Juskus,

who first edited *VII* from 2011-2015, to the editor's role. We are also excited to welcome Laura Schmidt and Tiffany Brooke Martin to the *VII* Editorial Board as peer reviewers. Laura is the archivist at the Marion E. Wade Center whose scholarly interests, while necessarily broad, focus on Tolkien. Tiffany is an independent Barfield scholar whose article "Futuristic Warnings in Owen Barfield's *Night Operation*" was published in *VII* in 2020.

We look forward to the privilege of continuing to share fresh scholarship and reflections on "undaunted, quick-witted, and . . . joyful" literature with you, the readers of *VII*, this year and in the years ahead.

MARJORIE LAMP MEAD
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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Online Content

VII is available online at journals.wheaton.edu/vii. Readers may purchase online subscription packages, in addition to print subscriptions, at our digital home. Access to reviews from this volume of the journal, as well as occasional supplemental material, is available on the website without a subscription.

Book Reviews:

- Stewart Goetz, *C.S. Lewis* (2019). Reviewed by James Beitler.
- Michael Ward, *After Humanity: A Guide to C.S. Lewis's The Abolition of Man* (2021). Reviewed by Louis Markos.
- Gary Selby, *Pursuing an Earthy Spirituality: C.S. Lewis and Incarnational Faith* (2019). Reviewed by Kristen Page.
- Steven A. Beebe, *C.S. Lewis and the Craft of Communication* (2020). Reviewed by Read Schuchardt.
- Colin Manlove, *George MacDonald's Children's Fantasies and the Divine Imagination* (2019). Reviewed by Christiana Peterson.
- Mo Moulton, *The Mutual Admiration Society: How Dorothy L. Sayers and Her Oxford Circle Remade the World for Women* (2019). Reviewed by Crystal Downing.

Concerning the Contributors

Doug Jackson

Doug Jackson is a BCCI-certified chaplain at Mercy Hospital in Ardmore, Oklahoma. He holds a B.A. in English from Grand Canyon University, a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Seminary, and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction and a D.Min. from Truett Seminary in Waco, TX. He wrote his dissertation on the application of the western Christian mystical tradition to contemporary Evangelical ministry.

Landon Loftin

Landon Loftin (M.A., B.C.C.) is a hospital chaplain at CoxHealth in Springfield, Missouri. He has a B.A. in religion and philosophy from Southwest Baptist University and an M.A. in apologetics from Houston Baptist University. He is currently a candidate for a Ph.D. in Humanities from the Great Books Honors College at Faulkner University. While his primary research interest is the work of Owen Barfield, he has also published articles and reviews on authors like C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton, and others.

David W. McNutt

David W. McNutt (Ph.D., University of Cambridge) is associate lecturer of Core Studies at Wheaton College, where he teaches courses in systematic theology, historical theology, theology and the arts, and philosophical aesthetics. He is also associate editor at IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, where he acquires and edits books in theology, philosophy, and church history and oversees several series, including *Studies in Theology and the Arts*, *Dynamics of Christian Worship*, *New Explorations in Theology*, and the *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*. His written work has appeared in several print and online journals, including *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, *Religion and the Arts*, *Cultural Encounters*, *Christianity Today*, *Christ and Pop Culture*, and *Books & Culture*. He is writing a book on Karl Barth's doctrine of creation, the arts, and a theology of creativity.

David Rozema

David Rozema (Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Utah) is the Inklings Professor of Philosophy and Literature and the director of the philosophy program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He has co-authored a book on the dialogues of Plato (*Platonic Errors: or, Plato, a Kind of Poet*, Greenwood Press, 1998) and has published numerous book chapters and essays on the works of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Soren Kierkegaard, Charles Dickens, Albert Camus, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Joseph Conrad, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Wendell Berry.

Graham Shea

Graham Shea holds an MPhil in theology and religious studies from Cambridge University, where his dissertation on Coleridge's "dynamic" theology was supervised by Malcolm Guite. He pursued an MLitt at St Andrew's University's Institute for Theology, Imagination and the Arts to study Charles Williams's theology of romantic love, until in-person classes were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. He was awarded a fellowship at the Trinity Forum Academy, where he studied the relationship between reason and imagination through cognitive linguistics and embodied cognition. He earned his B.A. in journalism and economics from Pepperdine University. This is his first academic publication.