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An Inklings' Bibliography (26)

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Abstract
A series of bibliographies of primary and secondary works concerning the Inklings.

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AN INKLINGS' BIBLIOGRAPHY
[26] Compiled by Joe R. Christopher

This Bibliography is an annotated checklist covering both primary and secondary materials on J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and the other Inklings. Authors and readers are encouraged to send off prints or bibliographic references to the compiler:
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Two brief previously unpublished excerpts from letters from Lewis to Barfield, p. 118; the first of 16 December 1947; the second, 1948.] Paper, $6.95.

The first publication of a verse play by Barfield which was written about 1937 (p. 8) and produced once, in 1948 (p. 7). It is a re-telling of the intertwined myths of Orpheus and his half-brother Aristaeus, based on the version in Vergil's fourth Georgic (p. 7).

(a) Owen Barfield, "Forward" (dated 1982), pp. 7-10 [Lewis, 7, 9]. Barfield gives the background to his play. Lewis suggested the subject when Barfield wanted to write a drama. Barfield mentions two themes in the play: (i) "the nature of consciousness' and more particularly the evolution of consciousness in the individual and the race; with, integrally related to that, the theme of sacrificial death and rebirth"; (ii) "the theme or enigma of the relation between man and woman" (p. 8). The latter is discussed, briefly--not the first, since Ulreich deals with it in his "Afterword"--in the second. The play is a telling for prophecy. The first paragraph, Barfield says that this second theme ends in a question: "Can Eros become Agape?" (his italics, p. 10). Presumably the reunion of Orpheus and Euridice in Hades and their entrance into the Elysian Fields (off stage at the end of the play) is what suggests this question.

(b) "A Note on the Production", p. 11. Presumably by Barfield; undated, but presumably written before the original production. Some comments on the use of the Choruses, the possible use of masks by some of the figures in Hades, the sound of Cerberus' barking, etc.

(c) Owen Barfield, "Orpheus: A Poetic Drama in Four Acts", pp. 13-112. I.i. Orpheus comes upon the Nereids and chooses Eurydice (alliterative meter). I.ii. Orpheus and Eurydice converse (Kalevala meter). She leaves and Aristaeus enters; Orpheus and Aristaeus discover themselves to be half brothers (blank verse). Orpheus and Eurydice converse off stage (iambic hexameters). Euridice is stung by a serpent while fleeing Elysium; Orpheus enters, and then speaks to the same individuals (lyric measures, blank verse, some heroic couplets). Orpheus enters, singing, and then speaks to the same individuals (lyric measures, blank verse, some heroic couplets). Orpheus enters, singing, and then speaks to the same individuals (lyric measures, blank verse, some heroic couplets). Orpheus enters, singing, and then speaks to the same individuals (lyric measures, blank verse, some heroic couplets).

(d) Owen Barfield, "Program Note for the Original Production" (1948), pp. 113-116. Barfield mainly retells the myth to prepare the reader for what he was to see, but he suggests several areas of meaning very briefly and discusses--in light of the play--the function of revelation in civilization and in mechanism more fully.

(e) John C. Ulreich, Jr., "Afterword" (1983), pp. 117-137 [Barfieldian original material, 119 (two quotes of Aristotle); probably letter to Ulreich), 120 (one quotation, from a letter to Ulreich), 135 (one quotation, either from a letter to or a conversation with, Ulreich); Lewis, 117-120 (including two excerpts from previously unpublished letters from Lewis to Barfield, the former dated 16 December 1947, the second, 1948, p. 118), 122, 137]. The first part of Ulreich's essay tells of his discovery of the existence of the ms. of the play, his reading of it, and his decision to find a publisher (pp. 117-20). Then Ulreich offers a survey of Barfield's books and his basic ideas, particularly the importance of
the imagination in the individual's consciousness (pp. 121-126). Urelich gives "a brief recapitulation of Saving the Appearances" as a statement of the nature of the consciousness which is applicable to Orpheus—"the summary of original participation" of human consciousness in phenomena around it; the "non-participating", objective thought (which is the current stage, mainly); and the possibility of 'final participation'—a thing like the Romantics attempted (pp. 126-129).

These three steps are like the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. With this point as his transition, Urelich turns from Saving the Appearances to his discussion of Orpheus (pp. 128-129). He extracts Eurydice at the first of the play as one who is at the stage of original participation; under the influence of Orpheus, she begins to separate from the world around her and become aware of herself as an individual—which involves repetition of pleasures. Later in the play when the animals speak to Orpheus, the poet is at the level of the Romantics, projecting his consciousness back into nature. (Urelich does not make it clear whether or not he believes Orpheus does this consciously; the play suggests it.)

Urelich's later discussion, pp. 131-132, which calls the animals "the creation of [Orpheus'] poetic imagination", does not clarify this point.

In the conclusion, it is the return of the bees to Aristaeus which allows the partial union of the world and the realm of Hades, indicated by the off-stage voices of Orpheus and Eurydice. Urelich sees the play as parallel to the evolution of human consciousness: the original participation as death and sleep in Hades symbolizing the loss of participation, as well as Orpheus's death; the sacrifice of a bull by Aristaeus prepares for "the resurrection of Orpheus and Eurydice", their movement to Elysium, and their union, mediating final participation. (Although Urelich does not say so, the death of Orpheus is out of chronological sequence in this reading, if his discussion with the animals suggests final participation; perhaps it just seems to be this, or equally likely, is a remnant of the original participation in his personality at the time. On the other hand, to worry about precise time sequences in a myth may be to turn it into a technical and mechanical procedure."

In his book, Urelich suggests other themes: the relationships of poetic activity to original inspiration (original participation) and creative imagination (final participation); various polarities in the consciousness: the "positive-negative, Hesiodic-Homeric, antithesis-antithesis-synthesis; and the repetition of memory as "the fundamental principle of human consciousness" and the dangers of repetition in making life mechanical.


(h) "Acknowledgments of those who helped make the revised Lewis bibliography possible (presumably by underwriting it), as well as "A Note on the Lindisfarne Press of the Lindisfarne Association", p. 143. The former has some names of prominence in the areas of Lewis and Barfield studies.

(i) C.S. Lewis, "A Note by C.S. Lewis" (1948), back cover. A note which appeared on the program of the original production; it is listed in Hooper's revised Lewis bibliography as D-78. (Hooper gives more information about the place of the original production than does anything in this book.) The note is a sharp text of Barfield's play: he refers to the Orpheus and Eurydice in each person, presumably meaning the mind and soul, or the ego and unconscious. "It is a mystery (not a 'problem') drama. It executes in us a re-union...."

Ford, Paul F. Companion to Narnia. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983. xlii + 451 pp. [Barfield, 53n (Aslan); Tolkien, xx (Acknowledgments), xxx-xxxii (Introduction), xxvii-xxviii (Vol. I), xxviii-xxx (Vol. II), 281n (Lucy Pevensie), 305n (Occtesian), 305 (Ogres), 306 (Orknies), 421n (Tree-People); Williams, xxx-xxxii nn (Introduction), 50n (Aslan), 131n (Deeper Magic).] Paper, $5.95.

Major changes. On p. xxxix, a listing of where to look for discussions of "Variants" between the British and American editions is added; it seems odd to put it at the first, instead of in the alphabetical sequence, but perhaps it was finished too late for insertion with the proper cross-references. On p. xxxvii, it has one error in its citation of "Aslan", it says the comparison of texts is in footnote 1; that should read footnote 91. Not all the references to differences in texts are listed after it (cf. "Dark Island"), but the alterations seem to be (the material in "Dark Island" is covered more thoroughly in "Dreams"). On p. 76, "Bridge of Beruna" has been expanded. On pp. 77-78, the text of "Biblical Allusions" has the two references to Zwingli's name in the cross-references, and adds a new second paragraph (oddly, it says there is "only one explicit reference to the Bible, and then gives two"). There have been a number of revisions in the lists of allusions to Biblical texts which follow. On pp. 77-78, not a single change has been dropped, three added, and one item revised. On p. 131, "Deeper Magic", footnote 1, has been expanded with a discussion of Charles Williams' Exchange. On p. 195, "Garden" has been revised; a typographical error is the reference to a Duffin edition of Puffin. On p. 216, "Great River" has been expanded. On p. 272, "Literary Allusions" has had forty-eight listings added as cross-references; the original edition had no cross-references. The number of listings at footnotes 1 and 2 has been dropped, three added, and one item revised. On p. 312, "Tree-People", footnote 1, has been expanded with a discussion of Charles Williams' Exchange. On p. 402, a listing of "Poetry", cross-references, has been added. In those cross-references, there should be a colon after "Calormen", not a semi-colon. On p. 402, a listing of "Sweetness", a brief note, has been added. On p. 406, the discussion of "Tarkaan" has been expanded. On p. 410, the first footnote on "Telmar, Telmarines" has been expanded. On p. 442, the first footnote on "Term-Time" has been completely revised. On p. 427, a footnote has been added to "Tumus". On pp. 442-443, the fifth footnote on "White Witch" has been revised. On p. 446, the discussion of "Woses" has been revised. It still might add that Tolkien revived the same word in his Woses in The Lord of the Rings. On p. 449, the mention of The Last Battle has been added on the chart of "Appendix One". And on p. 451, a biographical sketch of Paul Ford has been added to the book.

Minor changes. The following items are more significant for the number of them than for any individual change; basically, they show Ford's attempts to improve and polish his book through it. On p. 66, "Verses", a typographical error, has been fixed. On p. 11, "Anvard" (p. 11): "Aslan", footnote 27 (p. 50); "Aslan's
Table", footnotes 1 (p. 69); "Children" (p. 106); "Death" (p. 129); "Diggles" (p. 134); " Digory Kirke", footnotes 11 and 4 (p. 140); "Digory Kirke", footnotes 3 (p. 163) and 6 (p. 164); "Emeth" (p. 165); "Eschatology" (p. 170); "Eustace Clarence Scrubb", footnote 9 (p. 178); "Father Christmas" (p. 181); "Hardbiters", footnote 1 (p. 220); "Harfang" (p. 221); "Harfang's egg" (p. 223); "Hedgewitch" (p. 226); "Insects", footnote 1 (p. 243); "Lucy Pevensie" (p. 281); "Miraz" (p. 292); "Nikabrik" (p. 300); "Obedience", footnote 1 (p. 304); "Plato", footnotes 4 and 5 (p. 323; both of these are changes of cross-references, instead of additions); "Practical Uses", footnotes 7 (p. 333); "Queen of Underland" (p. 339); "Robes", "Royal" (p. 357); "Shasta" (p. 378; also, a cross-reference to The Last Battle is added); "Signs", footnote 2 (p. 398); "Silvans" (p. 382); "Spike­un­timely", footnote 1 (p. 399); "St. Irina's Table", beneath the item and also footnote 3 (p. 405); "Tash" (p. 407); "Tashlan" (p. 408); "Trufflehunter", footnote 4 (p. 425); "Turkish Delight" (p. 436); "Witch" (p. 442); and "Wood People" (p. 445). The largest number of additions are page numbers or footnote numbers added to citations of the "Introduction" for the discussion of "Aslan". Those added are the "Imagery", footnotes 6, 7, and 8 (p. 119); "Doors", footnote 1 (p. 146); "Dragons, Dinosaurs", footnote 1 (p. 148); "Edmund Pevensie", footnotes 3 (p. 163), 5, and 11 (p. 165); "Eustace Clarence Scrubb", footnote 2 (p. 175); "Lamb", footnote 1 (p. 263); "Plato", footnote 2 (p. 323); "Puddleglum", footnote 4 (p. 337); "Stories", footnote 1 (p. 396); and "Universalism", footnote 5 (p. 432). These additions, of page or footnote numbers were not complete; for example, "Jill Pole", footnote 3, has a reference to "Aslan" without precise information (p. 252); "Lucy Pevensie", footnote 14, has a like reference to "Aslan" (p. 282); and "Trinity" footnote 1 has a Biblical text added—but, oddly, not the source of the Harrowing of Hell tradition, despite that being discussed; cf. I Peter 3:18–20, 4:6 (p. 101).

A number of minor matters could be improved in some future edition. The penultimate sentence of "Aslan" (p. 97) is too general and dispirited, mainly due to the parenthesis (p. 56). In "As­lan's Table", a reference—is made to the "grail­like knife"; surely the knife is more like the figurative being (p. 154). "Eustace Clarence Scrubb", footnote 12, worries about "ungenerous remarks" made in the New Narnia; if a tradition needs to be cited, one may use the condemnations of various individuals, families, and institutions made by the saved souls in Dante's "Paradiso" (Canto 15). In its "Practical Uses", refers to three other fauns who are named in the Chronicles, but only gives two names after the colon (p. 183). "Pavensies", footnote 1, refers to "a humorous verse", but never names it; the poem is called "The Great Tale of Analogy", originally published in Punch and available (in libraries) in either edition of David McCord's anthology of humorous verse, What Cheer! (1945; rev. 1955) (p. 307).

"Peter Pevensie" mentions that Peter "locks the door on the end of Narnia", but it does not indicate that the Biblical source is Christ's promise of the keys to St. Peter, and hence the traditional imagery of St. Peter as the gatekeeper of Heaven (p. 312). "Pevensie", Mr. and Mrs. "right weight for his age" is a modernity; the Pevensie name first appears in the Chronicles (p. 313). "Phoenix" has the book reference afterwards to The Last Battle but no indication that the bird appears (unnamed) in The Magician's Nephew (p. 314). Several of the names of islands—such as "Seven Isles" (p. 366)—have a cross-reference to "Geography, Narnian", but the actual discussion under that heading has no mention of any islands; it also seems to have been written after Lorda Bryan Cauley's maps not to refer a reader there. "Spore Oar" probably should have a cross-reference to "Wardrobe", footnote 1, in order to indicate Lewis's source for the contraction (p. 389). "Stars" does not have a cross-reference to "Spear­Head" (p. 392); for that matter, neither does "Spear-Head" (p. 392); for that matter, neither does "Spear-Head" have a cross-reference to "Stars" (p. 389). It is possible that Lewis's "Three Sleepers" owes something to the medieval legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (p. 413). "White Stag", footnote 1, mentions medieval symbolism; but the supernatural (or superstitious) tradition of albino animals in wide spread—cf. Wordsworth's "The White Doe of Rylstone", not that the doe is hunted (p. 439). "Wood between the Woods", footnote 12, cites William Morris's The Wood Beyond the World, but gives a modern edition, not the original date, thus confusing the question of Lewis's indebtedness.

In addition to her illustrations and maps in the first edition which are carried over into this one (although appearing on different pages), Lorinda Bryan Cauley provides a color cover for this paperback edition; it is in composite illustration of a number of scenes from different volumes of the Chronicles.


Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society, retells Tolkien's story and says "In the ground there lived a hobbit" on a blank page in a student examination (Grosvenor says "a student's thesis"); and moralizes, "No machine, no electronic wizardry, can replace the single act of creation; the student's act of creation, which arrives in its own time, at its own speed, and from its own unknown source."

Howard, Thomas T. The Novels of Charles Williams. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983. xiv + 220 pp. [Lewis, 14, 32 (reference to "the personal herey"), 44-45, 53, 66, 118 (use of the phrase "weight of glory", 136 (use of the title "The Narnian idea of all humanity being female compared to God), 187; Tolkien, 14, 85, 212; Luklings generally, 14, 33 (reference of
It is surprising that Howard found an academic publisher for his book on Williams; he writes with a lively style, directly addressing this critic occasionally and using we regularly, and he writes from a Christian viewpoint, not the usual scholarly neutral. On the other hand, this is a good book on Williams' fiction, and perhaps the publisher was wise in the end.

The organization is simple: an "Introduction" and seven chapters, one on each novel, and an "Afterword". Howard sets up some limits in the introduction; each chapter will be independent, which will allow some reinforcement in the discussions (no doubt the idea is to let students, for example, check just the chapter on the novel they are assigned); each chapter discusses in some detail the opening of the novel, or the basic assumptions in it, but the latter part of the fiction does not receive the same thoroughness as the first, as the purpose is to introduce the books and clarify their bases, but not to offer full explications.

The first chapter, on Shadows of Ecbatia—since it was the first novel written, although not published first—is an example of what Howard does. In this case, the majority of the chapter is concerned with the discussion of the novel. Howard sets the book as masquerade, and thus discusses the persons as types: Roger Ingram as poetry (pp. 26-27), Isabel Ingram as womanhood (pp. 27-30), Sir Bernard Travers as irony (pp. 30-36), Caithness as priesthood (pp. 36-38), Inkamasi as majesty (pp. 38-39), Philip Travers as lover (pp. 42-44), Rosamond Murchison as hatefulness (pp. 44-45), and Nigel Considine as anti-Christ (pp. 45-46). Howard sees these discussions to make related points: for example, in connection with Sir Bernard's irony, he discusses Williams' uncertain control of his fictional tone, wanting both the supernatural and an ironic disbelief in it, neither clearly suprising; in connection with Philip Travers' love, Howard discusses the Beatrician vision of the beloved as basic to Williams' understanding of romantic love.

The second chapter, on War in Heaven, is more nearly a plot summary than was the first chapter; instead, it is a brief but good analysis of the mystery-story plot (pp. 56-57), which most critics have passed over with bare mention. Perhaps the most remarkable digression from the plot and significance is a discussion of Williams' prose style based on the beginning of chapter five (pp. 59-61); Howard indicates three reasons for his concern with the passage, one of them having to do with the theme of the fiction. Many other incidental points are made—among them, a comparison of Williams and Lewis on the goodness of matter as means of avoiding evil (p. 53); evil's ever-upward goal of destructiveness, despite its claims, with non-fictional examples (p. 54); an explanation of Williams' maxims "This also is Thou" (p. 59); Howard avoids the problem of its source); the New Testament on Greenville; "Thou" with "Thou" in the fiction, as an example (p. 61); Williams' attitude toward Jews (pp. 64-65); and an explanation of why Prester John has not been seen at Oriel College, Oxford, recently (pp. 69-70). These points are typical of the wealth of discussion in Howard's book, and no attempt will be made to treat the later chapters this thoroughly.

The third chapter, on Many Dimensions, after an introduction on the stone of Solomon and what it symbolizes, and on Williams' avoidance of standard terms for God, focuses primarily on Chloe Burnett, the meaning of what happens to her and of her language, and the appropriateness of her sacrifice; Sir Bernard's骑 on Camelot, of course spans much space on Platonic Ideas, but the meat of the chapter is in the discussions of the progressions of Anthony Durrant and. Damaris Tigho—Howard is good on Anthony's series of visions, and he has an excellent section on the symbolism of the horse, in which Damaris calls for Anthony and is rescued by him (vide p. 119). Perhaps the most doubtful point in the chapter is Howard's identification of the Horse with archetypal Speed; surely the Horse, not mentioned by Howard, is Speed. The fifth chapter, on The Greater Trumps, is another trip through an entire plot, with careful and probably defensive, statements and overly careful variants which Howard's attempts to "translate" the occult into everyday terms, although he attempts that throughout the whole book. (And, although no doubt Howard left which he proceeds to do, although the tenth and tenth are not mentioned by title in the main survey and the ninth is discussed (mostly) before the eighth (the tenth is passed over quickly). The oddest part of this section of Howard's book is that, by his own admission, Pauline Anstruther meeting her doppleganger (p. 206), but he does not associate this fear with that she felt all her glorified double—who has spoken, the request for her name, and the fear of the name has led to change to speak. Perhaps Howard found the whole episode too complex to be treated in an introductory book, or perhaps this is an example of the skipping of later parts of books announced in his "Introduction"; but, certainly, when Howard has said he is going to explain more difficult passages, the omission does seem very odd.

Howard's "Afterword" is an attempt at placing Williams artistically. He says that more critical work needs to be done—he is thinking largely of the non-fiction and does not mention the plays—and he has tried to do several things with the novels: to explain the more difficult points, and to discuss Williams' relationship with the tradition of fiction (the latter has been done mainly in a brief comparison of contrasts throughout the book). He lists three aspects of Williams' fiction which raise doubts about it being major in literary importance: its emphasis on the occult, although the occult is for Williams and speed in its function, and the ambiguity of his belief's moral implications, which are certainly out-of-phase with the present; and its style, which Howard judges to be not "near the center of great English prose (p. 218)". Howard's comments on Williams' Christianity are more qualified than in this summary would suggest: he points to Graham Greene and others who have successfully written modern Christian works, but suggests that Williams' use
of Christian motifs, although orthodox in basis, is so odd in presentation that he at least cannot expect critical acceptance now. Finally, Howard suggests two great virtues to Williams' works: "the sheer force of Williams' imagination" (p. 219) and "the overall implications which are often on everyday details (e.g. the path of Lawrence Wentworth's damnation in Descent into Hell).

A collection of accounts, mostly autobiographical accounts, of conversions to Christianity, or sometimes from one Church to another if it seems to vitalize the person's faith. Most of the fifty accounts are clearly within this purpose; a few seem marginal. The organization is historical, by birth dates, give or take a decade. Most varieties of Christianity are represented.

The mention of Lewis in the "Introduction" is trivial. Kerr and Mulder point out that culture and literary "colloquial conversion experience": "Pascal's testimony is not that of C.S. Lewis" (p. xii). Later, in the section on Lewis, the editors supply a satisfactory seven-paragraph note on Lewis as an instructor in the faith (pp. 199-200); the account which follows is excerpts taken from Surprised by Joy, Chs. XIV-XV (pp. 200-204). The ellipses are marked; twice the editors have begun a new paragraph after an ellipse when the original material was one long paragraph. In general, the selections are well chosen and make a readable account of Lewis's conversion to Theism and then to Christianity.

The final account in the book is from Charles W. Colson's autobiography, Born Again (1976). Lewis is mentioned once in the editors' note (p. 258) and several times in Colson's narrative (pp. 261-263). Colson tells of a friend who speaks of his own conversion and reads him the chapter on pride in Lewis's Mere Christianity: Colson—this is during the Watergate days—finds Lewis describing his perfectly. Note: Colson's Born Again was listed in IB(3).

Williams is mentioned twice in the note on Evelyn Underhill (p. 184). The second simply indicates he edited Underhill's letters; the first is more interesting:

...after the devastation of World War I, which decimated a whole British generation, there emerged here and there distinctive figures who looked for a peace that "passes understanding. Names like Dean Inge, Rev. W. Tyton, Hywel Hughes, Baron Friedrich von Hugel, Charles Williams, and Evelyn Underhill became widely known among a select company of spiritual seekers.

This is an unusual context for Williams; and, in comparison with somewhat like Underhill's conducted retreats, it seems exaggerated. On the other hand, perhaps as a member (and actually the leader) of the Company of the Co-inherence, he qualifies.


Owens' first chapter, despite beginning in a coffee shop, is almost an update of Wordsworth's "The Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood": humans are born into this world of Time, mostly forget Jerusalem and their Father, and accept Time (which leads to Death) as all there is; Owens, she says, is a spy who tries to keep awake in the world and be conscious of the true relationship. She returns to this theme at the end of the book, but on the way she has such chapters as her ninth which begins with the EPR effect (that described by Albert Einstein, Boris Podolsky, and Nathan Rosen) and the Bell Theorum (that of John S. Bell) according to which, if one of a pair of protons is changed in a spin pattern, the other changes faster than light (or any other type of known message, all of which are slower than light) can travel between the two. Owens writes, in her rhetorical way, ...the cogs and levers are not, after all, dead and dumb and conquerable. They are not even really cogs and levers, but droplets of intelligence, agile and quick, murmuring to one another through means both expansive and intimate. [p. 113]

In short, the heavens, the protons, etc. show forth the glory of God.

Barfield is cited often in Owens' book. Since Saving the Appearances is his only book appearing in the bibliography (p. 148) -- neither Lewis nor Tolkien is listed there at all -- presumably that is the book which is either quoted or paraphrased on the pages listed in the headnote above; but none of findings or citations in the text, so most materials are difficult to identify with certainty. A reference to Simplicius in a quotation on p. 96 allows easy identification, through the index of Barfield's book, to p. 144 of Saving the Appearances (London: Faber and Faber, 1957). A statement like the following would seem at first glance to be almost untraceable:

As Owen Barfield has insisted, we can no longer be satisfied with a "religious" truth that fails to implicate matter -- and vice versa. [p. xii]

But this turns out to be a direct quotation, beginning with we, of the first sentence of Barfield's letter on the back cover, and not from Saving the Appearances at all. At any rate, the Barfield influence is the most important of the references to Lewis and Tolkien.

The references to Lewis and Tolkien are not so significant. Lewis is quoted on the resurrection of dogs (p. 50) and on God's presence in the world (p. 69); Tolkien's life -- specifically, his writing about Middle-earth in a garage made into an office -- is used as an example of using one's gifts where God places him, and Tolkien and the author are contrasted to the easy assignment given Thoreau (p. 21).

The lack of footnotes and a thorough bibliography is not a bothersome flaw in this sort of book. Owens is trying to write an urban Walden with current scientific knowledge as part of her basis for religious truth (her religious truth is more Christian than Thoreau's); after all, Walden did not have scholarly footnotes or a bibliography.