

4-2022

***Abolishing Man in Other Worlds: Breaking and Recovering the Chain of Being in C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* by Courtney Petrucci, *Deeper Heaven: A Reader's Guide to C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* by Christiana Hale, and *A Compass for Deep Heaven: Navigating the C.S. Lewis Ransom Trilogy*, edited by Diana Pavlac Glyer and Julianne Johnson**

Josiah Peterson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore> Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)**Recommended Citation**

Peterson, Josiah (2022) "*Abolishing Man in Other Worlds: Breaking and Recovering the Chain of Being in C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* by Courtney Petrucci, *Deeper Heaven: A Reader's Guide to C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* by Christiana Hale, and *A Compass for Deep Heaven: Navigating the C.S. Lewis Ransom Trilogy*, edited by Diana Pavlac Glyer and Julianne Johnson," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 40: No. 2, Article 15.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol40/iss2/15>

This Book Reviews is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:  
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

---

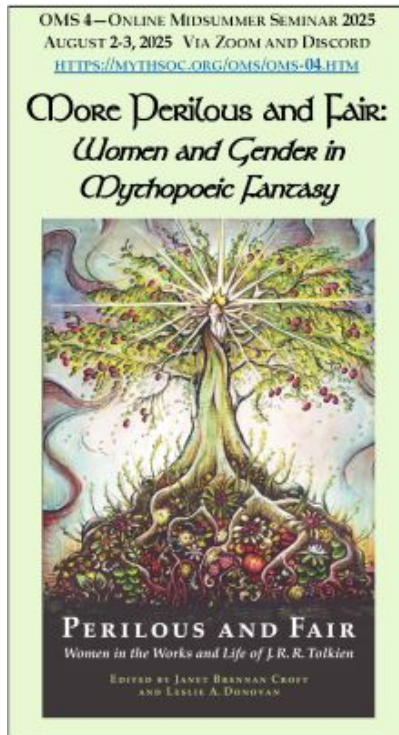
## Online MidSummer Seminar 2025

### More Perilous and Fair: Women and Gender in Mythopoeic Fantasy

August 2-5, 2024

Via Zoom and Discord

<https://www.mythsoc.org/oms/oms-04.htm>



***Abolishing Man in Other Worlds: Breaking and Recovering the Chain of Being in C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* by Courtney Petrucci, *Deeper Heaven: A Reader's Guide to C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* by Christiana Hale, and *A Compass for Deep Heaven: Navigating the C.S. Lewis Ransom Trilogy*, edited by Diana Pavlac Glyer and Julianne Johnson**

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

# R E VIEWS

**ABOLISHING MAN IN OTHER WORLDS: BREAKING AND RECOVERING THE CHAIN OF BEING IN C.S. LEWIS'S RANSOM TRILOGY.** Courtney Petrucci. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2021. 56 p. 9781532693922. \$9.79.

**DEEPER HEAVEN: A READER'S GUIDE TO C.S. LEWIS'S RANSOM TRILOGY.** Christiana Hale. Moscow, ID: Romans Road Press, 2021. 392 p. 9781944482565. \$26.95.

**A COMPASS FOR DEEP HEAVEN: NAVIGATING THE C.S. LEWIS RANSOM TRILOGY.** Edited by Diana Pavlac Glycer and Julianne Johnson. Baltimore: Square Halo Books, 2021. 198 p. 9781941106211. \$24.99.

LEWIS STUDIES HAVE COME A LONG WAY since David Downing declared the long overdue correction had begun and that Lewis's fiction—which received little scholarly attention during his lifetime—was finally receiving the attention it deserved. Writing in the introduction to his 1992 book *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy*, Downing—who would later go on with his wife Crystal to become co-director of the Wade Center at Wheaton College—wrote:

Nearly a dozen books on Lewis's fiction were published in the eighties, and there were a score of dissertations. The Modern Language Association reports that Lewis studies has become one of the most rapidly expanding areas of literary scholarship and interpretation. Apart from a half dozen introductions to Lewis's fiction, there are also five critical studies of the Narnia chronicles available, as well as an excellent book-length analysis of *Till We Have Faces*. Despite this surge of scholarly interest in the fiction of C.S. Lewis, there is still the need for a sustained analysis of the Ransom trilogy. (Downing 5)

Evidently he did not consider Martha Sammons's 1980 *A Guide through C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy* or Walter Hooper's 1987 *War in Deep Heaven: The Space Trilogy of C.S. Lewis* to be "sustained analysis," but he is not the only one.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to reviewer Joe R. Christopher's review of Schwartz's book for pointing out that Hooper's book was assimilated into his 1996 *Companion and Guide*.

In their 2007 bibliographic overview of Lewis scholarship, Diana Pavlac Glyer and David Bratman observed that over 40 books had been written about Narnia, but they only identify two covering the Ransom trilogy: Downing's and Jared Lobdell's *The Scientifiction Novels of C.S. Lewis: Space and Time in the Ransom Stories* (2004). (They note that the former focuses on biographical and theological background, while the latter focuses on genre criticism connecting the trilogy to eighteenth-century imaginative satires; Bratman and Glyer 288.) Since 2007, Sanford Schwartz published *C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy* (2009), which is largely a structural analysis of the books of the series and Brendan and Judith Wolfe edited the collection of essays from notable Lewis scholars, *C.S. Lewis's Perelandra: Reshaping the Image of the Cosmos* (2013).

All totaled, there have been six book-length volumes dedicated to the Ransom trilogy, or some part of it, going into the 2020s, averaging about one book every six years. This makes 2021 a notable year for Ransom trilogy scholarship with the publication of three new books, from twelve new authors: Courtney Petrucci's *Abolishing Man in Other Worlds: Breaking and Recovering the Chain of Being in C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* (January), Christiana Hale's *Deeper Heaven: A Reader's Guide to C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* (February), and *A Compass for Deep Heaven: Navigating the C.S. Lewis Ransom Trilogy* edited by Diana Pavlac Glyer and Julianne Johnson (August). This review will treat each of these books individually before making observations on the three together and the trajectory of Ransom studies as a whole.

As the subtitle of *Abolishing Man in Other Worlds: Breaking and Recovering the Chain of Being in C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* suggests, Petrucci explores how the three books in the trilogy interact with the "Chain of Being," by which she means the medieval Christian model of the cosmic hierarchy. The chain starts with the creator, God, and proceeds down through rational creatures (various levels of angels and man), to non-rational creatures, down through vegetables and minerals. She draws upon Pseudo-Dionysius's *Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, which gives considerable attention to the various categories of angelic beings, but primarily relies on Lewis's own descriptions of the hierarchy from *The Discarded Image*. She quotes Lewis's observation that in the medieval model "everything has its right place, its home, the region that suits it" (*Discarded* 92). Each inhabitant of the chain has a responsibility to its neighbors and must not use its position to abuse those below or to subvert those above.<sup>2</sup> The chain idea is explicitly present in the Ransom trilogy, as the sorn

---

<sup>2</sup>Michael Ward explores this idea beautifully in his essay "An Experiment in Charity: C.S. Lewis on Love in the Literary Arts," in which he identifies four abuses of authority, namely tyranny, servility, rebellion, and remissness. Tyranny consists of ruling natural equals, servility in

Augray explains to Ransom: "There must be rule, yet how can creatures rule themselves? Beasts must be ruled by *hnau* and *hnau* by *eldila* and *eldila* by Maleldil" (*Out of the Silent Planet* 102).

Petrucci contends that "The main conflict throughout this trilogy is the disruption of the Cosmic Hierarchy of Being, the natural relationships between all beings" (8). Just as man's temptation from the beginning has been to step out of the chain in order to make himself "like God" (Genesis 3:5), so do the antagonists throughout the trilogy. Weston and Divine seek the dominance of the human species through intergalactic colonization. The Un-man tempts Tinidril to step out of the will of Maleldil. The N.I.C.E. seeks immortal life by exploiting man and nature and disregarding higher moral obligations.

The irony of course is that by stepping out of the Chain of Being in the quest for power, they instead abolish their humanity and cut themselves off from the deification (Petrucci's term) they might have enjoyed had they remained faithful in their place in the chain. In trying to become the vehicle of the world spirit, Weston becomes the "Un-man." The N.I.C.E. is ultimately thwarted both by those above (the various celestial powers operating through Merlin) and those below them on the chain of being (the animal stampede). Invoking Lewis's sermon, "The Weight of Glory," Petrucci points out that "Immortality is a reward for our obedience, and Lewis likens that reward to the consummation of obedience. [...] God's intention is to perfect humans as long as we put ourselves entirely in God's will" (14). This is most clearly seen in the elevation of Tor and Tinidril to become the new Oyerésu of Perelandra.

While the term "Chain" might sound restrictive and stultifying, Petrucci makes a point to emphasize how the arrangement is more like an elaborate dance than a prison. Using Tolkien's concepts of "recovery" and "escape" from his address "On Fairy-Stories," Petrucci argues Lewis's Ransom stories help readers recover a sense of the wonder of the universe and their place in it. There is true peace and contentment on display among the harmonious creatures of Malacandra. The newly deified Tor and Tinidril participate with the *eldila*, Ransom, the animals, and even grains of dust as part of the "Great Dance" at the end of *Perelandra*.

As the academic-sounding title and exceedingly short length might suggest, this book appears to have had its origin as an M.A. Thesis. As a thesis, it is more than decent, but one might have hoped to see the ideas fleshed out further and the editing more carefully attended to before it was published as a book, especially with a publisher that has a history of Lewis publications. She might have deepened her *Abolition* analysis to include the idea of "the head rules

---

obeying natural equals, rebellion in disobeying natural superiors, and remissness in not ruling natural inferiors (65-66). Petrucci, unfortunately, does not make use of this essay.

the belly through the chest," as a microcosm of the chain, especially in regards to the literal man without a chest in *THS*. Lewis's *Preface to Paradise Lost* is referenced in the bibliography but not explored at all in the text and may have fruitfully been compared with Pseudo-Dionysius and Lewis's *eldila*. Mark and Jane's difficulty finding their place in the Chain are omitted completely.

The inconsistent editing is both frustrating and undermines confidence in the text. The book never settles on a consistent name for its main concept, employing "The Chain of Being," "Hierarchy of Beings," "Cosmic Hierarchies of Being," and the "Christian Cosmic Chain" over the span of a few short pages. In the short introductory chapter summarizing the three books for unfamiliar readers, she switches from "Venus" to "Perelandra" without explanation. She leaves the Studdocks out entirely of her summary of *THS*. Later, an event on Malacandra is said to have happened on Perelandra, and she makes reference to Merlin's "ghost." More troubling, she also seems to have some erroneous notions about Lewis's work outside of the Ransom trilogy, suggesting that his BBC talks regarded "current events" (12) and that his prodigious output during the war focused "on scientific and religious morals and their effects on future generations" (19).

Petrucci's Chain of Being thesis covers the textual evidence well and was clearly of great concern to Lewis himself. The idea is worthy of further analysis and better editing (the latter being a somewhat unfortunate trend in Lewis studies from a variety of authors and publishers). Hopefully Petrucci's work will yield further interest in this area.

Do not let the homeschool curriculum publisher or controversial Forward contributor of *Deeper Magic: A Reader's Guide to C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* deter you from this breakout book by one of the most eloquent and erudite new Lewis scholars on the scene. Identified as a "Guide," the book is far more than a basic introduction to the texts and their contexts. Christiana Hale wants to be the "Beatrice to your Dante" (5) and wrote this book in part to her former self that found the Ransom trilogy to be unapproachable and, "well, weird" (2).

One of the first things readers will observe is Hale's writing itself. On first glance Hale's writing can appear somewhat casual, and yet familiar would be a better term. It is as if she is sitting in the room with the readers, speaking candidly, acknowledging the strangeness of the books, while eagerly offering up tools to help them see the merits. The book is awash with beautiful, original, and illuminating metaphors. It is the style of an enthusiastic and yet entirely serious English teacher who is eager to break through skepticism or hesitation on the part of her students to invoke a love of literature. This may be in part because in real life, she is a secondary school English teacher.

While the book's 35 chapters and three appendices span a range of topics, they center around "one of Lewis's favorite subjects," the medieval conception of the cosmos" (2). She argues that "unless we understand [Lewis's] love for the medieval world and his self-proclaimed efforts to re-awaken respect and admiration for the Medieval Model of the cosmos in the modern mind, we will misinterpret or even neglect many of Lewis's writings as strange and unintelligible" (3). Just as Lewis's *The Discarded Image* is meant to be a guide to modern readers approaching medieval and renaissance texts, Hale's book is meant to be a guide to the pre-modern elements in Lewis. She is well aware that the medieval model is not "true" in the scientific sense and yet contends that it is true in a deeper sense. (4) Hence *Deeper Heaven*.

The book's three introductory chapters introduce the idea of cosmology (from the Greek for "order"), the influence and personality of the medieval planets and their "Kindly Enclyning," and Lewis's especial interest in the creation of "atmosphere" within a story. At this point one might suspect the book is simply a rehashing of Michael Ward's *Planet Narnia*, which Hale uses, but is far from reliant on, but this book proceeds to be much more than that.

It is difficult to concisely summarize the next three sections of the book, insofar as Hale goes into so many different topics. The three sections—one for each book in the trilogy—each begin with a short book summary and conclude with discussion questions that might be used in a classroom or small group setting. The intervening chapters in each book work thematically *and* chronologically through each story, employing all kinds of literary analysis.

For instance, throughout the book she fruitfully compares Ransom, whom we meet in the middle of life lost on a walk at dusk and ends up journeying through the heavens, with the pilgrim Dante. She examines how each book in the trilogy has parallels to each book in the *Divine Comedy*, making use of her own research and Marsha Daigle-Williamson's *Reflecting the Eternal: Dante's Divine Comedy in the Novels of C.S. Lewis*.

Much of the ground she covers has already been tread, but Hale's energetic prose makes the retread enjoyable and her erudite and perceptive vision allows her to point out sights along the way that other guides may have overlooked. In chapter 6, "The Heavens Declare," she contends that chapters four and five of *OSP*, in which Ransom is converted from the "blasphemous" modern concept of cold, dark, vacuous *space*, to the warm, bright, living *heavens*, "reveal the main purpose and focus on the entire trilogy: Lewis's desire to reintroduce us to the imaginative and emotional power of the medieval way of looking at the heavens" (51). She has plausible grounds for doing so, given Ransom's words in the last chapter-script: "what we need for the moment is not so much a body of belief as a body of people familiarized with certain ideas. If we could even effect in one per cent of our readers a change-over from the

conception of Space to the conception of Heaven, we should have made a beginning" (56, quoting Lewis 152). But she does not leave it at that. She closely reads the text of Ransom's conversion, pointing out how the fear that "possessed his whole mind" upon discovering he was in space is described as "a formless, infinite misgiving" which corresponds to how the modern man typically perceives space (52). "There are philosophical and imaginative repercussions that stem from the way we view the cosmos we live in" (53).

In chapter 17, "Along the Beam," she covers the concepts of contemplation and enjoyment, very familiar territory to most Lewis scholars. But she fruitfully applies the distinction to the nature of the temptation of both the Green Lady and Ransom, how each are tempted to step outside themselves and look at themselves from the outside. In chapter 22, "A Fit Receptacle," she examines the striking contrast between Weston and Ransom by comparing the conversation when they meet on Perelandra with Ransom's earlier conversation with (fictional) Lewis at the beginning of the book. Both Ransom and Weston are "chosen," both are part of a greater purpose, both are moved by a powerful spirit. Both characters end up serving as bridges between Earth and the outer heavens. And yet while Ransom is eager to avoid megalomania, Weston will allow no distinction "between me and the universe." She suggests Ransom's memorial to Weston may suggest that he realized that "but for the grace of God" he might have gone a similar route as Weston.

In chapter 29, "Coming to a Point," Hale contrasts the struggle in *That Hideous Strength* as "a battle between Gnostics and incarnationalists," between the powers at Belbury, which "want a sanitized, static, de-particularized world, a world devoid of anything homey or real, anything with a smell" (230) and St. Anne's, inhabited by "free men and women who are fighting a spiritual battle in order that they may drink tea and read books, plant crops and make babies, teach children and write novels" (234).

Not only can Hale write winsomely, do close readings, and character and theme analysis, she can also do her research. Her bibliography is full, including such works as *The Allegory of Love, Sixteenth Century Literature Excluding Drama, A Preface to Paradise Lost*, and the collections of Lewis's letters. She tracks the etymology of words "consider," "Elwin," ("Elwin literally means elf-friend (from the Anglo-Saxon *ælf-wine*)" 225), and "cosmology." She has a chapter dedicated to unpacking the poetic references throughout *Perelandra*, including Pope, Milton, Shakespeare, and Wordsworth, that have no doubt gone unnoted by countless readers. She has a 51-page appendix in the back of the book identifying more than 200 quotes, direct allusions, and foreign terms. (The other two appendices are a timeline of Lewis's life and a glossary for the trilogy. It is not clear why the former is included).



A potential weakness of the book is its narrowly medieval focus. While it may be true that “Lewis has far more in common with Dante, Milton, Spencer, and Chaucer than with either Wells or Asimov” (221-22), he was still familiar with modern authors and modern thought. Her appendix notes for Ransom’s discussion with Weston include references to scripture, but not to Hegel, though Weston’s “Spirit” obsession is a pretty clear allusion and Lewis himself once flirted with Hegelianism.<sup>3</sup> She namechecks H.G. Wells and David Lindsay, but does nothing to explore the science-fiction genre, outside of Lewis’s own observations on the different sub-genres. Even if only for the sake of contrast, modern works could have added value to this already strong book.

That said, Hale is not so caught up in the medieval model as to fail to recognize its shortcomings. She is well aware of its scientific inaccuracies—the beautiful map of Lewis’s Ransom Trilogy cosmos has the sun in the center. More significant still, she recognizes that the medieval placement of earth in the lowest place of the universe, the center, misses out on the real glories of the Earth and its drama. She believes Lewis feels the same way, for while “Mankind may very well be at the bottom of a stair whose top is bathed in starlight [...] in Lewis’s view, the eyes of Deeper Heaven look *down*” (270).

The last book to come out last year, *A Compass for Deep Heaven: Navigating the C.S. Lewis Ransom Trilogy*, includes ten chapters covering nine topics of interest to the Ransom trilogy: Myth, Monsters/Sci-fi, Science/Scientism, War, the Medieval cosmos, Pride, the Arthurian legend (two chapters), Natural Law, and a somewhat nebulous chapter centered around character arcs. None of the writing is attributed to Diana Pavlac Glyer, who appears to be the “editor” chiefly insofar as each of the other ten contributors (there is also an introduction chapter introducing Lewis and outlining the book) came together as part of an “Oxbridge Tutorial” through Pacific University’s Honors College back in 2018-2019 (Cooley). While not all the chapters are equally strong, having originated as undergraduate papers, they are fairly impressive. A few chapters have made meaningful strides in advancing the scholarship on the Ransom trilogy.

Rachel Roller’s chapter, “Science on the Silent Planet” and Daniel Hsieh’s two chapters “Arthurian Legend in Deep Heaven” and “Ransoming Logres,” not only exceed those of their peers in length and the number of footnotes, but also in the depth of inquiry and the artistry of writing.

Roller’s opening line comes from a *New York Times* book review from 1979, “Lewis knew nothing about science except that he hated it” (53) and follows it up with evidence to back up the review’s unsupported claim,

---

<sup>3</sup> See the “Checkmate” chapter of *Surprised by Joy*, which includes, “My watered Hegelianism wouldn’t serve for tutorial purposes” (272) and “The fox had been dislodged from the Hegelian wood” (275).

including quotes from Lewis's tutor, Kirkpatrick, and accounts from Lewis's friends of his ignorance of basic scientific facts. She then proceeds to challenge the popular opinion by pointing out Lewis's familiarity with *some* parts of science and particular scientists, through his works like *Sixteenth Century Lit* and *Miracles*. She explores his critical relationship with eminent biochemist, J.B.S. Haldane, and does not simply rely on Lewis's famous "Reply" in *God in the Dock*. She explores Haldane's short story, "The Last Judgement," which features characters very much like Lewis's Weston from *OSP*, except that in Haldane's case, they are the heroes. Quoting Haldane, she records "The human race will prove that its destiny is in eternity and infinity, and that the value of the individual is negligible by comparison" (58). Little wonder Haldane was a sharp critic of Lewis. After exploring the topic of scientism in relation to the trilogy, Roller concludes with a discussion of the New Natural Philosophy, which Lewis suggests might be what is needed to avoid the abolition of man.

Hsieh examines the role and implications of the Pendragon and Fisher King, Merlin, Avalon, and Logres in *THS*, and to a lesser extent, *Perelandra*. He makes use of Geoffrey Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain*, Lewis's *Arthurian Torso*, and Sørina Higgins's seminal work *The Inklings and King Arthur*. The examination of Logres, and Charles Williams's vision of the faithful remnant, the true England, is especially helpful for explaining a concept that otherwise lacks meaning for the unfamiliar reader.

Coming in a close third place is Jacob Meyer's "The Monsters Are Due on Malacandra." He makes meaningful comparisons between Lewis's work and that of Wells' *The First Men in the Moon*, David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. His comparison of the science fiction authors' views of "monsters" is the best part, but leaves out the most striking passage from *OSP* that speaks directly to that subject. Ransom fully expects the creatures he meets on Mars to be malevolent, and realizes that this was the result of his modern prejudice. Meyer lists the various sub-genres of science fiction that Lewis identifies and then never returns to them again. Neither does Meyer mention Lewis's engagement with Wells's work outside of a footnote that really ought to have been in the text.

Co-editor Julianne Johnson's chapter, "More than Myth," is a helpful distillation of much of what has been said on the topic by Lewis and his secondary sources, but does not break new ground and leaves a few areas fuzzy. The mythic elements in the trilogy are said to help convey the idea of the supernatural, the Trinity, Eden and Sin, and redemption. Reading the chapter invites some unanswered questions, such as whether myths are automatically good? What about Lewis's description of "Wellsianity" in his essay "Is Theology Poetry?" At times, as is very easy to do in this subject, the analysis of myth sounds like it could just as easily apply to stories in general. Still, the chapter is

a valuable resource for people first venturing into the subject, and points to many other resources in its bibliography.

"The Wars of Our World" examines the wartime context of Lewis's writing of the trilogy, and looks at how the trilogy highlights the responsibility to take action against evil. The Second World War was a big part of Lewis's life, from his nightly patrol requirements, to his taking in of children from London into his home (74). He points out the warlike elements in the trilogy, including refugees and physical combat, and the easy parallels between the N.I.C.E. and the Nazis. He discusses the time to tarry, the temptation to avoid one's duty, and the necessity of fighting, and even violence. Amazingly, this chapter does not use "Why I'm Not a Pacifist," nor make reference to "watchful Mars" or the fact that there is a world war going on in the background of *Perelandra*.

As for the remaining chapters, the Medieval Cosmos chapter harkens back to the lost wisdom of hierarchy, order, and gender, but is incurably abstract and feels rushed. The Pride chapter is more telling than showing and is so riddled with inverted sentences it is difficult to read. "The Cosmic Way" (mis-labeled in the introductory chapter as "The Cosmic *Tao*") explores the reality and unity of the transcendentals, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, by way of Natural Law. It has more typos than any other chapter and is probably not going to be of help to anyone not already familiar with the concepts to begin with.

The final chapter, "Voices in His Head" is hard to pin down. The Introduction indicates that it will take an "in-depth look into who is speaking with the narrative voice within each book" and explain the significance of the variance (10), which sounds like it could be a very interesting literary analysis since Lewis literally writes himself into the first two books. When one gets to the chapter, however, it is mostly a loosely applied metaphor describing character as going from being "asleep" to being "awake." Even loosely applied, it is debatable that the proper "awakening" moment is identified for each character, as for instance Mark's awakening is identified as occurring after he sees the "Head" rather than after his experience in the Objective room (168). An added "coming of age" angle does not help matters, while the added metaphor of "silence" and "singing" is at least more grounded in the text. That said, the conclusion of the chapter is actually quite beautiful, and a fitting ending to the book.

The chapters are all over the place when it comes to what they assume about the reader's prior familiarity with the trilogy. Even within the same chapter, an author will go from referencing specific plot details as common knowledge to carefully explaining the context of a very well-known event. There are no book summaries offered, though the tenth chapter is so plot heavy it might have served the book better to have placed it first.

As implied earlier, there are simply glaring omissions in several of the chapters which prevent this book from offering as much value as it might have had all the contributors gone as far as Roller and Hsieh.

Taking the three books as a whole, several trends stand out regarding Ransom scholarship. First, it is the *Ransom trilogy* now. While Petrucci slips up and says “Space trilogy” in one chapter, and Louis Markos, who contributed the poorly advertised forward to *Compass*, includes “Cosmic Trilogy” as a possibility, by and large all the authors have coalesced around “Ransom Trilogy” as the appropriate way of referring to the books. Downing was on to this in 1992. Lobdell’s efforts at “Scientifiction”—in recognition of the difficulty of defining books that precede the genre divisions of fantasy and science fiction—did not catch on. (He’s only cited in Petrucci). Douglas Wilson’s forward to Hale’s book is an enjoyable polemic in the strident style *a la* Christopher Hitchens or Antonin Scalia, on why the books should not be referred to as the “Space Trilogy,” and also includes some interesting observations regarding the “heavenly host” and the “star of Bethlehem” that may make orthodox Christians ponder.

The future of Lewis studies has been forever changed by Michael Ward’s groundbreaking *Planet Narnia*, which has everyone jumping on the medieval train. Downing’s more biographical approach was either thorough enough or did not catch on. Similarly, Lobdell’s genre criticism, and Schwartz’s form criticism. These new books mostly went in for theme criticism and the themes they chose were by-and-large medieval.

*The Dark Tower* was entirely ignored. None of the books even acknowledge it, making one wonder whether they were unaware or simply uninterested in the 1966 discovery of Lewis’s incomplete manuscript of a time-travel book he started writing after *Out of the Silent Planet*. Hooper announced it. Downing considers it. Lobdell dedicates much of his book to it, speculating on what it might cover and considering the series as a “quartet.” Schwartz at least gives it several pages.

Alongside the writing, the Ransom trilogy is inspiring artwork. *Deeper Heaven* is accompanied by a beautiful “Map of the Ransom Trilogy Cosmos” and a bookmark to match the beautiful cover. *Compass* includes almost a dozen original illustrations, from a creative interpretation of a *pfifltriggi*, to an appropriately cringe-worthy Alcasan head.

Perhaps most interestingly, the overwhelming majority of this work came from outside professional academia. All of the previous authors on the Ransom trilogy were working in an institution of higher learning, except for Walter Hooper who previously came from one. None of these authors are, except Rachel Roller who is pursuing her doctorate in analytical chemistry at Notre Dame. While each book points to the scholarly interest in Lewis

increasing, the academic positions for Lewis scholars are still limited. We might expect more work in the future to come from high school teachers, ministry workers, and students of other disciplines. The diverse, real world experience that these authors bring will add new flavor into the Lewis scholarship. Let us celebrate and encourage these newly published authors who are exploring—all six previous books received at least one citation in last year's three—and in some cases meaningfully expanding, the field of Lewis scholarship.

—Josiah Peterson

#### WORKS CITED

- Bratman, David and Diana Pavlac Glycer. "C.S. Lewis Scholarship: A Bibliographic Overview," *C.S. Lewis: Life Works, and Legacy Volume 4 Scholar, Teacher, & Public Intellectual*, edited by Bruce Edwards. Praeger, 2007, pp. 283-302.
- Christopher, Joe R. "C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier" *Mythlore*, vol. 28, no.3/4 (#109/110), 2010, pp. 193–97.
- Cooley, Peter. "APU Honors College Book Hits No. 1 on Amazon Best Seller Lists," 25 October 2021. [www.apu.edu/articles/x/](http://www.apu.edu/articles/x/)
- Daigle-Williamson, Marsha, *Reflecting the Eternal: Dante's Divine Comedy in the Novels of C.S. Lewis*. Hendrickson Publishers, 2015.
- Downing, David. *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy*. U of Massachusetts P, 1992.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Discarded Image*. Cambridge UP, 1964.
- . *Surprised by Joy*, New York: Harper, 2017.
- . *Out of the Silent Planet*. 1938. Scribner, 2003.
- Lobdell, Jared. *The Scientifiction Novels of C.S. Lewis*. McFarland, 2004.
- Sammons, Martha. *A Guide Through C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy*. Cornerstone Books, 1980.
- Schwartz, Sandford. *C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy*. Oxford UP, 2009.
- "Thesis Theater: Kate Neville, Cynthia Smith, Courtney Petrucci," Signum University, March 23, 2017. [signumuniversity.org/event/march-2017-thesis-theater/](http://signumuniversity.org/event/march-2017-thesis-theater/)
- Ward, Michael. "An Experiment in Charity: C.S. Lewis on Love in the Literary Arts," reproduced in *After Humanity*, Word on Fire Academic, 2021.
- Wolfe, Judith. *C.S. Lewis's Perelandra: Reshaping the Image of the Cosmos*. Kent State UP, 2013.



**NO ORDINARY PEOPLE: 21 FRIENDSHIPS OF C.S. LEWIS.** Joel D. Heck. Hamden, CT: Winged Lion Press, 2022, 395 p. 9781935688228. \$19.50.

IN HIS MOST RECENT PUBLICATION, *NO ORDINARY PEOPLE: Twenty-one Friendships of C.S. Lewis*, Joel Heck tells us that "Lewis celebrates friendship, in part because the world ignores it. That's why this book is needed—to restore an appreciation for friendship in a world where so many relationships are belittled, ignored, or sexualized" (Heck 4). In addition to stressing the intrinsic value of friendship, Heck's analysis offers a studious itinerary of shared biographies that