

THE LENS THROUGH WHICH TO SEE. PHILOSOPHY OF TIME IN THE WORKS OF C.S. Lewis



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Abstract

What can modern philosophers of time learn from the fictional works of C.S. Lewis? In this thesis I demonstrate that Lewis's conception of time as exemplified throughout his works, but particularly in the Chronicles of Narnia and The Great Divorce, makes up a coherent philosophy of time. This philosophy of time draws on Christian theology, particularly the works of Augustine and Boethius, but it is nonetheless applicable to the modern debates about the ontology of time. C.S. Lewis lived through the years following J.M.E. McTaggart's famous essay "The Unreality of Time" and the subsequent polarization which resulted in two distinct conceptions of time called the A-theory and the B-theory. I argue that in his fiction, and particularly in the final chapters of The Great Divorce, Lewis provides a potential answer to this division by creating a synthetic view of the relationship of A-theory and B-theory time series.

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Lewis never mentions the doctrine of propitiation, but propitiation was a necessary part of our salvation and the propitiation was made by blood. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25). Trading husbands and wives is not Christian godliness. In the book *A Severe Mercy* by Sheldon VanAuken, a personal letter is reproduced on page 191 in which Lewis suggests to VanAuken that upon his next visit to England that the two of them "must have some good, long talks together and perhaps we shall both get high." We have no way to know exactly what this means, but we do know that Lewis drank beer, wine, and whiskey on a daily basis. Lewis provides insight on Judaism in the time of the Old Testament. *Reflections on the Psalms*. Lewis explores the poetry of God's word in a devotional format. *Reflections on the Psalms*. This was not meant to be a work of scholarship, according to Lewis himself. Lewis says himself in the preface that this work is not an autobiography of his life, but instead a story of his conversion, of how he "passed from Atheism to Christianity." *Surprised by Joy*. In this book, Lewis explores how God had given him tiny glimpses of his glory in an attempt to call him into relationship. Not intended to be published, he wrote it as a way of working through the emotions that the death of his wife had upon his life, his philosophy, and his faith. *Till We Have Faces*. A retelling of the myth of Cupid and Psyche. As a teenager, Lewis was wonder-struck by the songs and legends of what he called Northernness, the ancient literature of Scandinavia preserved in the Icelandic sagas.[14] These legends intensified an inner longing that he would later call "joy". He also grew to love nature; its beauty reminded him of the stories of the North, and the stories of the North reminded him of the beauties of nature. Lewis's interest in the works of George MacDonald was part of what turned him from atheism. This can be seen particularly well through this passage in Lewis's *The Great Divorce*, chapter nine, when the semi-autobiographical main character meets MacDonald in Heaven: I tried, trembling, to tell this man all that his writings had done for me.