

Marion E. Wade Center Friends of the Wade

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The Wade Center Gets Punch(y)

Disappointment over having to close the Wade Center during the COVID-19 pandemic has been balanced by excitement over a number of recent acquisitions. Rejoicing when friends of the Wade donated unpublished letters from C. S. Lewis about *The Abolition of Man* (1943), staff got positively punchy with the next gift: 22 volumes of *Punch* magazine, from 1898 to 1913. Famous for its humorous essays and wry cartoons, *Punch* fed the childhood imaginations of both Lewis and Dorothy L. Sayers, making the donation a wonderful resource for Wade researchers.

Indeed, Crystal Downing recently published an essay in volume 36 of the Wade's academic journal, *VII*, arguing that two *Punch* cartoons, from 1912 and 1913, may have influenced Sayers's response to Dante's *Inferno*. Having discovered the cartoons in a book on silent cinema, Crystal notes that Sayers's uncle published in *Punch*, and that Sayers compared a college incident to "a page out of *Punch*." She is therefore eager to search the magazines for other gems, like witty contributions from G.K. Chesterton, who profoundly influenced both Sayers and Lewis.

The donor, Dr. Terry Lindvall, acquired the *Punch* volumes while researching the history of humor. A Wade researcher who has authored

eleven books, Lindvall published his first, *Surprised by Laughter: The Comic World of C.S. Lewis*, in 1996.

In a letter to the Downings, who have long enjoyed his insight and humor, Lindvall explains that the gift was inspired by Jared Lobdell's *Eight Children in Narnia* (2016), which argues that "the gnomes of Bism stem in part from *Punch* caricatures of workers."

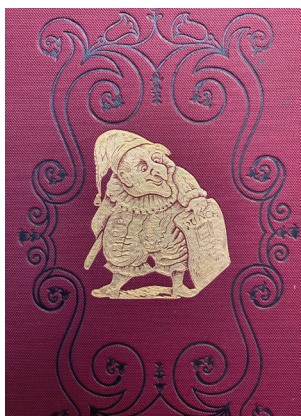
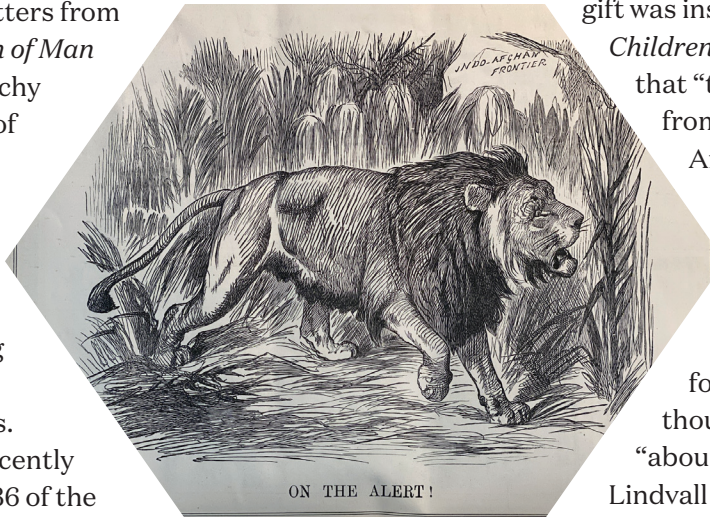
After all, Lewis reports in *Surprised by Joy* that "I pored endlessly over an almost complete set of old *Punches* which stood in my father's study. Tenniel [an illustrator] gratified my passion for 'dressed animals.'" Significantly, though children's books of the era "abound with dressed animals," as

Lindvall notes, "lions only appear in the pages of *Punch*," particularly in Sir John Tenniel's illustrations.

Lindvall also quotes from the *Pilgrim in Narnia* blog by Brenton Dickieson, another Wade researcher. In a July 13, 2015 posting, Dickieson explains that Lewis published his own verse in *Punch*, arguing in 1940 that "there is more real poetry in *Punch* now than in the highbrow periodicals." And in 1947, Lewis added a postscript to a letter, asking Arthur Greeves, "Do you read *Punch*? The poems signed N. W. [which] sometimes appear there are by me. This is a secret." Even after he became famous, as Dickieson notes, Lewis maintained his "little secret of writing for *Punch* until 1954."

Clearly, these *Punch* volumes are a boon to both Sayers and Lewis studies, and might make students of our other Wade authors punchy as well. **W**

Left: Close-up of the decorative cover for *Punch*; Center: Tenniel's "On the Alert!" illustration in *Punch*, vol CXIII, 1897, pg 91.



DIRECT FROM THE DIRECTORS

Crystal and David C. Downing

There's an old saying: "When God closes a door, he opens a window." The doors of the Marion E. Wade Center have been literally closed to the public since mid-March, due to campus-wide COVID-19 precautions. But we have found many new windows of opportunity that allow us to fulfill our mission and expand our ministry.

Last spring, Wade Associate Director Marjorie Lamp Mead wrote a devotional essay for the Blanchard Society at Wheaton College. Titled "In Times of Uncertainty," it draws insights from C.S. Lewis and others to remind readers of the timeless truth of St. Paul's words, "When I am weak, then I am strong." Marj's meditation continues to reach people through linked resources on the Wade Center's main webpage.

This summer we offered a six-week online discussion of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* fantasy epic, co-hosted by Wade archivist Laura Schmidt and David. Averaging 45 participants each week, there was much engagement with viewers from the East Coast to the West, and even one from Guatemala. We were able to reach a much larger geographical area than would have been possible with a traditional on-site discussion group.

We continue to produce a fortnightly podcast, for which technology has enabled us to host guests from across the country rather than just those who walk through our doors. Our audience has grown sharply this year, with listeners in nearly 70 countries.

The year 2020 certainly will be remembered as a time of unusual challenges. But thanks to God's providence and emerging technologies, it will also be remembered as a time of increased opportunities and expanded outreach.

Remembering Joy P. Nelson

Joy (Peterson) Nelson, a 1950 alumna of Wheaton College, loved both her alma mater and C. S. Lewis. She devoured David Downing's six Lewis books and even read Crystal's book about Sayers—primarily because she was Crystal's mother. When David and Crystal arrived for visits at the family home in Northern California, Joy would bound out of the house before they could get their luggage out of the car, breathlessly asking, "What do you think of this comment by Lewis?"



Inspired by Joy's excitement for Christ, Wheaton, and Lewis, the Downings, along with Karen and Ed Fox (Crystal's sister and brother-in-law), established an endowment at the College to honor her. Named the **Joy P. Nelson Memorial Fund**, it supports Wade operations.

Earlier this year, Crystal reached out to the many people who valued Joy's ministry in church and as a Teaching Leader for Bible Study Fellowship to tell them about the fund. Aided by a matching grant from a local foundation, she explained that the Wade could offer a match on any contribution from first-time donors. Close to twenty people, many of whom had never heard of the Wade Center before, responded with a gift. But the greatest joy for Crystal came with accompanying notes expressing their appreciation for Joy's life (1928 – 2016). **W**

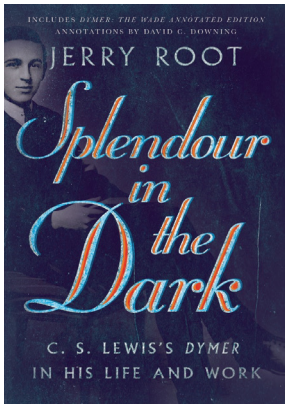
Creation's Call



Seven Things

Here's a brief look at seven exciting happenings or newsworthy items at the Wade Center:

- I. Just released from InterVarsity Press Academic is the fourth volume in the Hansen Lectureship Series: ***Splendour in the Dark: C.S. Lewis's***



***Dymor in His Life and Work* by Dr. Jerry Root.**

In it, Root contends that Lewis's early poem *Dymor* can not only shed light on the development of Lewis's literary skills but also offer a glimpse of what was to come in his intellectual and spiritual growth. Included in this volume is the **complete text of *Dymor* with**

annotations by David Downing. A virtual book launch is being planned for November 18.

- II. In the fall of 2019, the Wade Center received a **challenge grant from a local foundation to match first-time gifts.** We are delighted to report that this summer we crossed the finish line of raising \$10,000, thereby allowing us to claim the grant! Our gratitude runs deep to all who helped us reach the goal!
- III. Our gratitude continues for two donor families who designated cash gifts to the Wade, allowing us to **recently purchase two author-related materials for our collection:** a hardcover first edition of *Shadows of Ecstasy* by Charles Williams and a two-page, handwritten, unpublished letter by C.S. Lewis penned in July 1963, just months before his death.
- IV. In May of this year, the Wade Board approved the following scholars as **2020 Kilby Research Grant recipients:** Dr. Harry Lee (Hal) Poe, who has been working on a 3-part biography on Lewis; Dr. Crystal Hurd, who is writing a book on Lewis's family of origin.
- V. Anyone who has been to one of his lectures, sat in his classroom, listened to him on our Podcast, or read any of his writings knows that our very own **David Downing** is a knowledgeable scholar of C.S. Lewis, and he makes learning about Lewis (and the other Wade authors) fun and engaging. Apparently the Southern California

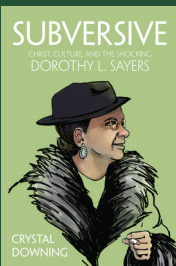
C.S. Lewis Society agrees.

In March they named him as their 2020 recipient of the *Paul F. Ford Award for Excellence in Lewis Scholarship and Teaching.* Congratulations, David!



- VI. Not to be outdone, our very own **Crystal Downing** is being recognized for her scholarship as well. She has been invited as a regular contributor to the *Christian Scholar's Review Blog*, an interdisciplinary forum for discussing how Christ animates learning. Her first submission, "Toward a Christian Film Aesthetic," was posted on September 14. In addition, the international Society of Christian Scholars asked Crystal to deliver a virtual presentation, "Changing Signs of Truth: A Christian Introduction to the Semiotics of Communication," on December 17.
- VII. Because of COVID-19 and requirements set forth by the state of Illinois and Wheaton College, the **Wade Center's Bakke Auditorium has found a new use** for this semester: a classroom for undergraduate students. Five classes are meeting in the space, including "Introduction to the Inklings and their Influencers" taught by David Downing, and "Composition Theory" by Wade board member and Associate Professor of English Jim Beitler (pictured below). We look forward to when the auditorium can return to its intended purpose, but the safety of our patrons and the campus community is the top priority. The most current information on the status of the Wade Center can always be found on our website, or by phoning or emailing us. **W**





book talk

"The people who hanged Christ never, to do them justice, accused

Him of being a bore; on the contrary, they thought Him too dynamic to be safe." Writing these words in the 1940s, Dorothy L. Sayers followed her Savior's example, which got her crucified in the press, if not on the cross. Her belief in the radical nature of Christian truth is the subject of **Crystal Downing's** new book, ***Subversive: Christ, Culture, and the Shocking Dorothy L. Sayers***.

Exploring Sayers's challenges to Christian complicity with culture, including politics, ***Subversive*** shows how edgy, often hilarious metaphors were used by Sayers to ignite new ways to think about Christianity, shocking people into seeing the truth of ancient doctrine in a new light.

Subversive is being released this fall, and the Wade is planning a virtual book launch for **December 2**. Watch your email or visit our website to see how you can join us!

Boxed with Blessings

The Wade Center received yet another exciting gift this summer: correspondence and notes by Owen Barfield, the only one of our seven authors to actually visit Wheaton and give talks for the Wade. Aiding the acquisition was Barfield's grandson, also named Owen, who keeps in touch with the Wade from his home in England.

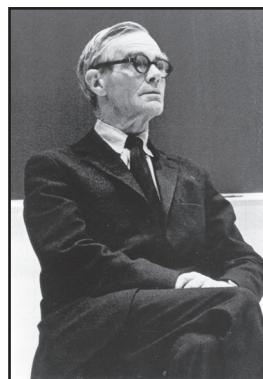
This past spring, grandson Owen communicated that Dr. Shirley Sugerman, a psychoanalyst mentored by Barfield, owned a box of his papers. When approached by the Directors, Sugerman, who published an essay on Barfield in *VII* (1994), readily agreed to the donation. The problem was getting the box from

her home in New Jersey to the Wade, since the centenarian couldn't get out of the house and was wary of delivery services.

Owen A. Barfield came to the rescue, informing us that Dr. Tiffany Martin, a Barfield scholar living near Wheaton, still had ties back East; perhaps she might be able to pick up and mail the box. When we reached out, Dr. Martin said she just happened to be driving to the East Coast in a week, making it

possible for her to fetch the box and deliver it directly to the Wade's front door!

Rather than get punchy, staff bowed grateful heads in awe over the amazing timing. **W**



Owen Barfield before speaking to Dr. Clyde S. Kilby's class at Wheaton College, April 1972.

The **Friends of the Wade** program recognizes anyone who meets one or more of the following:

- Annually gives a financial gift to the Wade of any amount
- Has cumulatively given more than \$25,000 to the Wade Center
- Has informed us that the Wade Center is in their estate plan

Friends receive this biannual print newsletter and may also receive advance notices of Wade Center news or events, and discounts where applicable. Friends may also receive a personalized tour of the facility (when permissible to do so) by contacting us to arrange a date and time. **W**

