

C. S. Lewis and America, 1936-1947: Roman Catholics

(I) Orientation

- (A) American access to Lewis's books (1935-1947): *see reverse*
- (B) The remarkable response of American Catholics to the books of C. S. Lewis
- (C) American Catholicism in this era:
 - (1) Theologian William Cavanaugh
 - (2) Merton Society President William Shannon
 - (3) Historian Karen Johnson
 - (4) General American Protestant concerns

(II) Catholic Lewis Criticism

- (A) The publications:
 - America* (Jesuit weekly)
 - Thought* (Jesuit Fordham University, quarterly)
 - Commonweal* (independent, lay weekly)
 - The Catholic World* (Paulist monthly)
 - The American Ecclesiastical Review* (Catholic Univ. of America, quarterly)
 - New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune*
- (B) Appreciation from
 - Bernard Conway, CSP --layman George Shuster
 - layman Thomas Sugrue --William Donaghy, S.J.
 - Harold Gardiner, S.J. (but pushback from Philip Donnelly, S.J.)
 - Some ambivalence: Anne Jackson Fremantle
- (C) The first comprehensive American assessments
 - Charles Brady (Canisius) in *America* (1944)
 - Victor Hamm (Marquette) in *Thought* (1945)
- (D) The reasons American Catholics liked C. S. Lewis
 - literary excellence, creativity, Christian orthodoxy (though weak on the church)
 - his lay status
 - context: periodicals prepared for serious reviewing

(III) Theological, Philosophical, Ethical, and Ecclesiastical Questions

- (A) *The American Ecclesiastical Review*: doctrinal points, unapproved non-Catholic authors
- (B) Thomas Merton on *The Personal Heresy* (1939)
- (C) Natural Law, the Tao (Notre Dame Professor Leo Ward)
- (D) John LaFarge, S.J.: lay Catholics and race

(IV) Taking Stock

- (A) Lewis as a layman
- (B) Lewis as a non-Catholic
- (C) Lewis, the Jesuits, and a classical education
- (D) Lewis and Natural Law (the Tao)

Publication or Availability of C. S. Lewis' books in the U.S., 1935-1947*

Literary Scholarship

1936. *The Allegory of Love* (Clarendon, 1936; no separate U.S. publication until 1960)
1939. *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* (OUP, 1939; no separate U.S. publication listed)
1939. *The Personal Heresy*, with E. M. W. Tillyard (OUP, 1939; no separate U.S. publication listed)
1942. *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (OUP, Oct. 1942; no separate U.S. publication listed)
1947. As editor, *George MacDonald: An Anthology* (Macmillan; in U.K., 1946)

Imaginative Writing

1935. *The Pilgrim's Regress* (Sheed & Ward; in U.K., 1933).
- 1943, Feb. 16. *The Screwtape Letters* (Macmillan; in U.K., 1942)
- 1943, Sept. 28. *Out of the Silent Planet* (Macmillan; in U.K., 1938).
- 1944, Apr. 11. *Perelandra* (Macmillan, also Avon paperback; in U.K., 1943).
- 1946, Feb. 26. *The Great Divorce* (Macmillan; in U.K., 1946).
- 1946, May 21. *That Hideous Strength* (Macmillan; also Avon paperback, in U.K., 1945).

Christian Exposition

- 1943, Sept. 7. *The Case for Christianity* (Macmillan; in U.K., as *Broadcast Talks*, 1942)
- 1943, Oct. 26. *The Problem of Pain* (Macmillan; in U.K., 1940).
- 1944, Jan. 18. *Christian Behaviour* (Macmillan; in U.K., 1943).
- 1945, Mar. 20. *Beyond Personality: The Christian Idea of God* (Macmillan; in U.K., 1944).
- 1947, Apr. 8. *The Abolition of Man* (Macmillan; in U.K., OUP, 1943).
- 1947, Sept. *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (Macmillan; in U.K., 1947).

A Catholic scorecard (at least two reviews)

Enthusiasm: *Pilgrim's Regress*, *Screwtape Letters*, *Perelandra*, *Great Divorce*, *Abolition of Man*

Mostly positive: *Out of the Silent Planet*, *The Case for Christianity*, *The Problem of Pain*

Mixed: *Beyond Personality*, *That Hideous Strength*

*From Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Complete Guide to His Life and Works* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996).