



Of This and Other Worlds

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Lewis, famous for his "Chronicles of Narnia" and other fantasy writings, discusses the theme of "story" - particularly in regard to fairy tales and science fiction. Essays include: "On Three Ways of Writing for Children", "On Science Fiction", "The Hobbit", "Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings", and "George Orwell" He also comments on the novels of Charles Williams, Ryder Haggard and Dorothy L Sayers.

Of This and Other Worlds Details

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From Reader Review Of This and Other Worlds for online ebook

Mina says

Lumile celelalte sunt poate la fel de adev?rate ca cea real?. Lumile pe care le descoperi atunci c?nd cite?ti o carte de fic?iune î?i descoper? valoarea prin revelarea lumii noastre. De fapt, omul având o existen?? istoric? nu se poate deta?a întru totul de lumea aceasta, a?adar scrierile fictive bune trebuie s? reveleze imagini ?i simboluri care în mod normal r?mân nev?zute ?i nu sunt luate în seam? în via?a de zi cu zi.

Irina Tranc? says

Interesting. I especially liked the essays "On Three Ways of Writing for Children", "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to Be Said", "On Juvenile Tastes", "The Hobbit", "Tolkien's Lord of The Rings" and "The Death of Words".

Sebastian Androne says

Excelent?!

David Sarkies says

Science-Fiction and Literary Criticism

9 September 2016 - Singapore (or at least the airport)

While this book was eventually published in 1983 the essays that the book contains date back to the fifties and the sixties and tend to focus on both the emerging science-fiction and fantasy genre, as well as some essays looking at literary criticism in general. The thing with science-fiction and fantasy at this time was that it was still very much a fringe genre, generally looked down upon by the critics of Lewis' day, and these essays were designed to attempt to change the perception of this new form of literature, especially since it has existed in some form or another since people first started telling stories.

What we seem to have with regards to this genre are the generally recognised classics of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, however they weren't the only people who were experimenting with this new genre – Mary Shelley had published *Frankenstein*, which is basically about a robot that hunts down its master, and *The Last Man*, which is a post-apocalyptic story of the last man left alive on Earth. However, even around Wells' time we have writers such as Rider Haggard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and the creator of Conan the Barbarian Robert E Howard. The thing is that in the case of Haggard, his stories about the adventures of Alan Quartermain, have found themselves moved out of the category of fantasy and into the category of adventure.

The reason for this is that when the world was smaller, and a lot less known, authors would imagine what the world was like in these mysterious places – Swift set his adventures out in the middle of the oceans, while Haggard set his adventures deep in the darkest parts of Africa. Even writers like Howard created a time that existed before recorded history, and created a civilisation that existed there but has since been all but

destroyed. The problem is that as we explore and map the globe, and as we make educated guesses about the pre-historic times, setting stories in these places becomes less and less believable, so authors need to look for other worlds in which to set their stories – and the main reason for setting the stories in other, imaginary, worlds, is that there is a lot less demand for realism, while setting a story in, say, Hong Kong, probably requires a lot more research (not that writers actually do that). Mind you, when they made the film version of John Carter, one of the complaints was that now we know that Mars is little more than a barren rock so creating a movie where a civil war soldier lands up in a world full of Martians isn't going to sit all that well these days.

One interesting thing that Lewis comments on was how he was disappointed with a film version of King Solomon's Mines, and how the final cliff hanger was changed to make it somewhat more exciting. I can sort of see where Lewis is coming from here, because I'm sure many of us have been seriously disappointed when one of our favourite books has been put onto the big screen. However cinema is a completely different medium to a book, in the same way that a play isn't necessarily the same as a poem – reading a play and watching a play be performed are two completely different experiences, and as I have discovered watching the play performed means that you are able to understand it a lot better. However, noting Lewis' criticism of the cinema adaptation of Rider's classic adventure tale, we begin to see cinema take on a life of its own – Indiana Jones comes to mind. In fact Lewis even suggests that when he was writing we had only seen the beginnings of this genre and the best were yet to come – well, when I think about it after Lewis' death we did see the rise of cult sci-fi classics such as Star Wars, Star Trek, and of course Doctor Who.

Lewis also writes a couple of comments on literary criticism, which I'm sure should apply to us since many of us do write reviews on books on Goodreads. Lewis suggests that one of the worse jobs to have is to be a paid book reviewer. I sort of can appreciate that. I write reviews because I enjoy writing reviews – as soon as you start getting paid to do it the pleasure somehow disappears. Mind you, I suspect that you would be lucky these days to get a paid reviewing job, particularly since many of the websites that post reviews of, well, whatever, tend to rely upon the unpaid work of schmucks like us (yet will pocket the profits gained through click-bait advertising).

I can also appreciate how he mentions that as a paid reviewer your TBR list literally explodes, and you have a dead-line to read all of these books. Personally, I don't like being rushed when it comes to reading a book, which is basically why I ignore review requests from people on Goodreads (and I suspect that I am not the only one). Mind you, all you need is for one bad apple and even the most interesting book will be ignored (I had some guy request I review a book, and I agreed, only to have him hound me for a couple of weeks to write the review, and didn't even get a thankyou, or a like, when I did so – I also suspect that I am not the only person who had this problem). Mind you, since my tastes generally involve authors that are, well, dead, then it is going to be difficult for a Goodreads author to fall into that category.

What caught my attention though were the reviewers that would review a book that they had never even read, or review a book in an attempt to cover up some flaws in the story (though I'm sure it isn't possible to cover up bad grammar, or spelling, unless of course you are writing poetry then theoretically anything goes, but once again, as Lewis suggested, in former times a poet was simply another name for a writer of fiction and fantasy). Mind you, I do spend an inordinate amount of time trying to patch up the apparent contradictions in the X-men films, namely because they are supposed to be all in the same universe, but the more you think about it the more it makes your head hurt. As for reviewing books that one hasn't read – I'm sure nobody actually does that on Goodreads.

Eric says

"It is usual to speak in a playfully apologetic tone about one's adult enjoyment of what are called 'children's books'. I think the convention is a silly one. No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of fifty - except, of course, books of information."

Of This and Other Worlds is a small collection of essays written by C. S. Lewis in regards to facets of writing, reading, the art of story, critique, fantasy, science fiction, myth, and literature as a whole. It also includes several essays directed at or in response to certain individual's works or critiques. As is usual for Lewis, his wit and logical examination of topics is applied here, not to theological matters, though one can see the foundations from which he approaches varying matters and hear the echo of his religious works, but to matters of art.

The proper statement is that some men like bad art: but that good art produces a response for which 'liking' is the wrong word. And this other response has, perhaps, never been produced in anyone by bad art.

Many of these essays were refreshing; refreshing in the sense that they inspired me to re-examine my own viewpoint on the fantasy genre as a whole, restoring to myself a certain enjoyment and fascination of *The Hobbit* for example, which has not been a consideration of mine for some time. Lewis' statement that a book we had a particular fondness for at ten can and should still do so when we are fifty. Not because we are lowering our standards and allowing juvenile delights to enter our hearts, but because those delights have never left us, and the genuine application of what Lewis calls the 'inevitable' is equally true at ten as it is when we are grown. The themes of life and death, love and loss, courage and fear, are themes which are not only applicable in fairy tales, far from it, but are incurred and contemplated within our personal and professional schedules.

To limit such grand aspects of life to mere fairy tales is to do a disservice to such stories, to those who enjoy them, the virtues represented, and to our spirit which is itself an immediate and an 'inevitable' which longs for that same virtue. It's not entirely distant from stating that virtue, as represented by heroes of story and legend, is not the same virtue we find when we overcome an evil in our own world; courage is courage, whether required to fight a great dragon, or to stand against racism, and when we read of it in the stories of our youth we are inspired to live as our heroes do. If we dismiss that in exchange for the dull and serious pursuit of 'adult entertainments' (those upon which a child is not sophisticated enough to understand rather than those defined by perversions) we can see that the virtues of courage, bravery, sacrifice, and heroism are things relegated to the nursery rather than to be held as pursuits in adult life. Fairy tales, fantasy, science fiction, and myth, then, are a conduit for experiencing the aspects of life that are already and ever present, allowing us to examine them as they really are - the dragons and demons of our daily life and the things we must find courage to conquer.

"For [Myth] deals with the permanent and the inevitable, whereas an hour's shelling, or perhaps a ten-mile walk, or even a dose of salts, might annihilate many of the problems in which the characters of a refined and subtle novel are entangled.

I think that Lewis may have single-handedly inspired me to reconsider the fantasy genre, at least those that break the traditional mold of stereotypical monomyth, with several of these works. In regards to his friend Tolkien's work, *The Lord of the Rings*, which he praises, he states:

The value of the myth is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which has been hidden by 'the veil of familiarity'. the child enjoys his cold meat (otherwise dull to him) by pretending it is buffalo, just killed with his own bow and arrow. And the child is wise. The real meat comes back to him more savoury for having been dipped in a story; you might say that only then is it the real meat.

If you are tired of the real landscape, look at it in a mirror. By putting bread, gold, horse, apple, or the very roads into a myth, we do not retreat from reality: we rediscover it. As long as the story lingers in our mind, the real things are more themselves. [The Lord of the Rings] applies the treatment not only to bread or apple but to good and evil, to our endless perils, our anguish, and our joys. By dipping them in myth we see them more clearly. I do not think [Tolkien] could have done it any other way.

The phrase 'dipped in story' has an almost self-evident exuberance that manifests its own energy, just as what Lewis is suggesting happens when we read fantasy and then examine the pillars of our lives through the lens of the fantastic. His treatise on fantasy and his reasoning for loving it so was enough to convince me to hasten a reading of *The Worm Ouroboros* and one of *The Lord of the Rings* this year; I'll add them to my list.

Of This and Other Worlds is a very welcome series of discourses that offer the Lewis reader a view on matters not necessarily Christian-centric. Recommended for readers of Lewis' other works, those who appreciate the fantasy genre and wish to have many of its virtues articulated in concise fashion, or those interested in literary criticism.

Karith Amel says

I absolutely ADORE this collection of essays about the lingering power of fantasy and story . . .

L.S. says

„N-ai s? g?se?ti o can? de ceai destul de mare sau o carte destul de lung? c?t s?-mi fie pe potriv?” (CS Lewis). O carte care ?ncepe cu un asemenea citat poart? cu sine promisiunea unei lecturi ?mplinite. Cartea – o colec?ie de eseuri – este un demers recuperator al Pove?tii, o reabilitare a ei ?ntr-o lume postmodern? lipsit? de fascina?ia mir?rii, sec?tuit? de lucrurile spiritului ?i ?n c?utare de semnifica?ie. Lumea pove?tilor „pare a fi existat cu mult ?nainte ca noi s? d?m peste ea”, cu personaje ?i creaturi „ad?nc ?nr?d?cinate ?n p?m?ntul ?i istoria lui, ?n izvoarele ad?nci din s?ngele ?i din tradi?iile noastre ?n care ?i au ob?r?ia”. Este o revalorizare a bucuriei (de a citi) ?i o recuperare a sentimentului de a fi copil?ros.

Imagina?ia omului este plasat? c?t mai departe (?n timp ?i spa?iu) de p?m?nt, dezlipit? de teluric, departe de via?a cotidian? tehnicizat? ?i de ritmicitatea unei vie?i galopante. Dar spiritul omului este f?cut pentru aventur?. Copii au spiritul cel mai liber, cel mai dornic s? exploreze. „C?nd am devenit b?rbat am l?sat deoparte lucrurile copil?re?ti, printre ele ?i teama de a fi copil?ros ?i dorin?a de a fi foarte matur”, spune autorul.

continuarea <http://liftingshadows.wordpress.com/2...>

SemneBune says

Basmul a ?nceput s? fie din ce ?n ce mai exclus din vie?ile noastre. A tr?i pe calea basmului a devenit pentru cei mai mul?i un soi de ancorare defectuoas? ?n anii copil?riei. Cred totu?i c? dator?m basmelor ?ntreaga plas? a destinului nostru, ?esut? pân? acum din valorile cunoscute ?ntâi din pove?ti, c?ci am invadat realitatea prin intermediul acestora. ?nc? tr?im un basm, pe care îl neg?m ?ns?. ?n fa?a acestuia ne acoperim ochii, privind la via?? ca printr-o vat? dens?, ?n care abia recunoa?tem ceva. Deoarece demult ?tiam c? nu exist? simple pove?ti, ar trebui s? ?tim c? nu exist? nici vie?i f?r? poveste. Tr?im cu aceea?i emo?ie evenimente

definite de logica basmului, în dimensiuni construite individual.

de la surs?: C.S.Lewis- "Despre lumea aceasta ?i despre alte lumi" – SemneBune
<http://semnebune.ro/2014/c-s-lewis-de...>

Athos says

Interesting to see more "unedited" Lewis: wordy and sometimes repeating examples, but his clear thoughts always stand out.

I admire his viewpoint on writing for children by respecting them and writing what the author himself/herself enjoys and has in common with the audience. Also liked the idea that adulthood shouldn't abandon the joys of childhood, only add to them new pleasures (referring mainly but not exclusively to readership).

There's a brief dialogue at the end that was transcribed from a cassette recording, in which the host, Lewis, tells one of his guests, the author Kingsley Amis, that if he's looking for an ashtray he can use the carpet! hah!

Cloud says

Must read for those who read and write fiction, and who love literature. My favorite essay was The Parthenon and the Optative--great food for thought for a future English teacher!
