

**【研究論文】**

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**[Abstract]****C. S. Lewis: Semi-Pagan Romantic**

C. S. Lewis, despite being famous as an apologist for Christianity, paradoxically embraced pagan religion and a romantic worldview, both of which differ dramatically from traditional Christianity. With its belief in the trustworthiness of human imaginative inspiration and spiritual communion with nature, romanticism represents a worldview distinct from that of Christianity, which looks to mercy for fallen humankind from a transcendent divine being. Lewis's religious conversion brought him to an experience of nostalgic religious romanticism. In his writings, Lewis's romantic orientation manifests itself especially in the roles he assigns to myth and imagination as avenues of divine revelation. Lewis also exhibited an aversion to doctrine and an accommodating attitude toward pagan religion in both its polytheistic and pantheistic forms. Lewis's romanticism and compromise with paganism put him in stark contrast to Biblical writers and many Christian thinkers past and present.

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Key words: C. S. Lewis, paganism, romanticism, myth, Christianity

**Introduction**

In a tribute to his fame and influence, C. S. Lewis appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine's issue for September 3, 1947. Two weeks after that, Lewis published a poem celebrating the Roman god Jove's joy in making the world.<sup>1</sup> Thus a man considered by many to be the twentieth century's foremost apologist for traditional Christianity elevated pagan religion. That illustrates very well the paradox of C. S. Lewis, who seemed to embrace Christianity yet held fast to paganism and romanticism.

Lewis's oddities and contradictions have not gone unnoticed, even among his fans. Many have commented on his rejection of the doctrine of Christ's substitutionary atonement for sin on the cross, a central doctrine of the faith. The peculiarities of Lewis often stem from the way in which imagination and aesthetic sensibility played such a prominent role in his life and thought. At heart he was really a religious romantic, and it is not an overstatement to call him a "semi-pagan romantic."

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<sup>1</sup> James Como, *C. S. Lewis: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 65.

This article will begin by describing romanticism, noting how it differs dramatically from traditional Christianity. Then we will look at Lewis's religious conversion, which brought him back into the sphere of nostalgic religious romanticism. The roles of myth, imagination, and revelation in Lewis's thinking make clear his romantic orientation. Consistent with that outlook, we find in Lewis an aversion to doctrinal clarity and contention. This analysis will also explore his attitude toward paganism, which was very accommodating. Finally, I will contrast Lewis's ideas with those of prominent Christian apologists of the past, such as the Biblical writers and Augustine.

### C. S. Lewis's Romanticism

Lewis declared his attachment to romanticism on many occasions. In his glowing review of *The Lord of the Rings*, titled "The Gods Return to Earth," he praised the novel for being a truly romantic work and lamented the unpopularity of romanticism at the time.<sup>2</sup> Actually, Lewis belonged to a group of writers who all can be considered religious romantics and knew each other well. The group included Charles Williams and J. R. R. Tolkien, who both exercised an enormous influence on Lewis.<sup>3</sup>

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the romantic movement was a reaction against Enlightenment rationalism, which attempted to comprehend reality mainly through reason and scientific inquiry. Instead, romanticism focused on human emotions and experiences, including sexual attraction and enjoyment of the world of nature. It is difficult to pin down precisely, and various definitions have been offered, but useful for our purposes is Fairchild's explanation in his *Religious Trends in English Poetry*. He explains romanticism as "an expression of faith in the natural goodness, strength, and creativity of all human energies. The taproot of romanticism. . . is an eternal and universal fact of consciousness: man's desire for self-trust, self-expression, self-expansion."<sup>4</sup>

Fairchild also sees significant problems in trying to reconcile romanticism and Christianity:

I consider romanticism non-Christian solely because it fails to recognize the two fundamental principles of supernaturalistic religion. . . [Christianity is] a religion of human insufficiency, which offers redemption at the cost of humility and self-surrender, and . . . [Romanticism is] a religion of human sufficiency, which denies the necessity of redemption and offers man limitless self-expansion at no greater cost than the will to affirm his own goodness as part of a good universe; [Christianity is] a religion in which grace descends to man from a great outward Reality completely independent of his desires and imaginings. . .<sup>5</sup>

Here Fairchild illuminates the basic incompatibility of the two worldviews, which constitute a radical contrast. Christianity focuses on human sin and spiritual inability; romanticism elevates human

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<sup>2</sup> "C. S. Lewis Reviews The Lord of the Rings," updated November 17, 2018,

<https://epistleofdude.wordpress.com/2018/11/17/c-s-lewis-reviews-the-lord-of-the-rings/>.

<sup>3</sup> Robert J. Reilly, *Romantic religion : a study of Owen Barfield, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams and J.R.R. Tolkien* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Hoxie N. Fairchild, *Religious trends in English poetry*. 4, 4 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 3.

potential and creative ability. Christianity views the natural world as fallen along with mankind, while romanticism sees nature as pristine and uncorrupted. Romanticism considers ultimate reality to be within the natural world as well as within humanity itself; Christianity adheres to a transcendent God above and beyond the universe as the ultimate source of meaning. Traditional Christianity has never placed much confidence in human inspiration and invention but instead has looked to divine revelation to provide reliable truth, guidance, and salvation.

Lewis does not appear to grasp this fundamental incompatibility and instead operates within a romantic conceptual framework. We can observe this clearly in his account of his own conversion to religious belief and in his views on myth and imagination.

### Conversion to Romantic Religious Belief

By his own account, Lewis was an atheist and a materialistic rationalist before his conversion. He fully accepted the theory of evolution and rejected the existence of any invisible religious reality. However, in his childhood he had also experienced great enjoyment in escaping into a fantasy world of medieval knights and romantic adventures. Later in life, under the influence of a very gifted, skeptical tutor, he embraced a rationalistic worldview and a commitment to demanding concrete, understandable proof for one's beliefs. During those days, he rejected imagination as a source of reliable information.<sup>6</sup>

In many respects Lewis's conversion was a return to the emotional, imaginative experiences of his childhood. Jasper remarks that Lewis's big change in outlook was intellectual to some degree but was even more a kind of personal romantic awakening. In Lewis's own words, his religious awakening brought back "a particular recurrent experience which dominated my childhood and adolescence."<sup>7</sup> Lewis called this "joy" and also *Sehnsucht*, a German romantic word meaning "unsatisfied desire," "longing," or "joyful anticipation."

Afterwards, Lewis continued to balk at some of the central ideas of Christianity. For example, he did not find the story of the death and resurrection of Christ very compelling, stating that "the spontaneous appeal of the Christian story is so much less to me than that of Paganism."<sup>8</sup> He finally accepted the Passion account because Tolkien persuaded him that the Christian creed was prefigured by pagan myths about gods who died and then came back to life.<sup>9</sup> Though he thought the existence of God could be established by rational proof, he thought that Christianity could not be rationally proven but rather required an irrational "leap of faith." Lewis made that leap, which in the end brought him back to his childhood encounters with *Sehnsucht*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Humphrey Carpenter, *The Inklings : C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their friends* (London: HarperCollins, 2006), 37.

<sup>7</sup> *The Cambridge companion to C. S. Lewis*, ed. Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 223-4.

<sup>8</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings : C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their friends*, 46.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 44.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 46.

It seems best to view Lewis's religious conversion as a change from nihilistic, materialistic skepticism to romantic experientialism. His newfound religiosity simply happened to be attached to Christianity, the religion of Lewis's youth and national culture. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis declared that we can include "good Pagans," Buddhists who focus on "the Buddhist teaching about mercy," and many others with "a lot of inconsistent beliefs all jumbled up together" among the saved, so evidently specific belief in the basic tenets of Christianity is not necessary at all, in his view.<sup>11</sup>

After his conversion, Lewis viewed his pre-conversion materialistic ideology as the principle enemy of goodness and truth. He wrote many perceptive critiques of that worldview and also attacked it in his fiction. However, these writings also often exhibit a kind of tunnel vision in regard to the variegated manifestations of evil, much as a reformed alcoholic may look on alcohol as the main obstacle to human flourishing. The reality is that spiritual and moral evil can assume other forms, including religious ones. Evil can infect and distort many otherwise wholesome spheres of activity.

### Imagination, Myth, and Revelation

Lewis's romanticism gave rise to his ideas about imagination, religious mythology, and divine revelation. He gave a prominent role to imagination in defining belief and to myth in providing religious understanding. Furthermore, he denigrated the role of scriptural revelation. In any contest between imagination and Biblical teaching, Lewis's imagination tended to win. Since they appealed to his imagination, pagan myths often assumed a greater importance than Biblical history, and scriptural events were reduced to the status of super-myths.

The well-known English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was a pioneer of the English romantic movement in literature, and it is from his writings that Lewis and other more recent romantic writers derived a lot of their ideas. Coleridge believed that, as beings made in the divine image, people create things through their imaginations, which in his view is also the way that God creates.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Lewis believed that the products of human imagination come ultimately from God. He also considered such imaginative creation to be a duty and contended that "the romancer, who invents a whole world, is worshipping God more effectively than the mere realist who analyses that which lies about him."<sup>13</sup> Here Lewis's anti-materialist religious romanticism is clearly on display. Lewis did not stop at the idea that human imaginative creation is a kind of religious worship. He also strongly believed it to be a source of revelatory truth.<sup>14</sup>

Lewis and Tolkien included pagan mythology among the welcome products of human creative imagination. Hence such stories are not just suspect, unreliable religious fabrications but rather a

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<sup>11</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity : a revised and enlarged edition, with a new introduction, of the three books, The case for Christianity, Christian behaviour, and Beyond personality* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 176-7.

<sup>12</sup> *The Cambridge companion to C. S. Lewis*, 232.

<sup>13</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings : C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their friends*, 206.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 43.

kind of divine revelation predating the advent of Christ. Lewis viewed pagan stories about dying and rising gods as prophetic revelations of the Gospel story of Christ's death and resurrection, in which "myth became fact."<sup>15</sup> Such pagan myths can impart spiritual sustenance directly, without any need for rational, abstract analysis to derive meaning. Lewis intended his Narnia stories and other fiction to impart a similar non-rational spiritual benefit.<sup>16</sup>

On top of that, Lewis did not accept the Bible or Christian doctrine as incontestable truth. He rejected the notion of scripture as verbally inspired and treated much of it dismissively. For example, he claimed that much of the Old Testament is "hardly moral at all, and was in some ways not unlike the Pagan religions."<sup>17</sup> He believed that the Old Testament stories of Jonah and Esther were just "sacred fiction."<sup>18</sup> Moreover, he denigrated the importance of Biblical doctrine: "The doctrines we get out of the true myth are of course less true. They are translations into our concepts and ideas."<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, in his attitude to the Bible, in many respects Lewis remained a rationalist. Because reason takes precedence over revelation in Lewis's thought, Goetz concludes that Lewis cannot be considered an evangelical.<sup>20</sup> He rejected ideas in the Bible that he found impossible to comprehend rationally, such as the idea of Christ's death on the cross as a penal substitute. He called the traditional view of Christ's death as sacrificial punishment for the sins of others "a very silly theory."<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, his emotional, romantic side reacted against things like the New Testament concept of eternal punishment. In place of the frightening scriptural images, he offered his own purely imaginative, watered-down version of the afterlife in *The Great Divorce*.<sup>22</sup> Dirks points out Lewis's emotionally-driven defection from the scriptural concept of hell.<sup>23</sup>

## Lewis and Paganism

Strangely enough for someone regarded as an apologist for Christianity, pagan deities frequently make appearances in Lewis's writings. However, this is not really so surprising from a writer who candidly confessed his great affection for paganism. Lewis's writings show that he had great difficulty distinguishing pagan religiosity from Christianity. His gods often preside over the phenomena of nature or embody spiritual forces within nature. For instance, animistic spirits in trees or rivers and nature-deities play a key role in Lewis's Narnia novels.

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<sup>15</sup> *The Cambridge companion to C. S. Lewis*, 75.

<sup>16</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings : C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their friends*, 223.

<sup>17</sup> *The Cambridge companion to C. S. Lewis*, 80.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 76-8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 80.

<sup>20</sup> Stewart Goetz, *C.S. Lewis* (John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2018), 82-3.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis, *Mere Christianity : a revised and enlarged edition, with a new introduction, of the three books, The case for Christianity, Christian behaviour, and Beyond personality*, 59.

<sup>22</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The great divorce : a dream* (London: William Collins, 1946).

<sup>23</sup> Paul Dirks, *Is there anything good about hell?: Our discomfort about hell and its ultimate good* (Decretum Books, 2021), 68, 81-2.

In Lewis's science fiction trilogy, the beings who preside over the planets correspond to the pagan deities they are named after in English. Thus the being called "Oyarsa" of the planet Mars is the god Mars, and the god of Perelandra (the planet Venus) is Venus/Aphrodite. In addition, Lewis compares the heroine of Perelandra—the Green Lady—to the goddess Artemis.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, the trilogy's chief villains represent scientism and secularism, which Lewis considered the essential foes of goodness and human well-being.<sup>25</sup>

In the third book of the trilogy, Lewis's paganism is on most conspicuous display. Carpenter considers that novel—titled *That Hideous Strength*—to be "the essence of Lewis."<sup>26</sup> If so, then Lewis was essentially pagan. The novel is replete with paganism and the occult. After her spiritual transformation, Jane (a heroine of the novel) "was simply in a state of joy. . . she was in the sphere of Jove."<sup>27</sup> Moreover, a number of classical gods of antiquity arrive on the scene, such as "the lord of Meaning himself. . . whom men call Mercury. . ."<sup>28</sup> The novel climaxes with the resurrected sorcerer Merlin going on an occultic killing spree, humiliating and annihilating the members of NICE, an evil research institute. He is spiritually empowered for this battle by five planetary pagan deities, including Jove/Jupiter (Zeus).<sup>29</sup> In the last chapter of the book, titled "Venus at St. Anne's," Venus appears at the headquarters of the heroes in order to inspire erotic affection between husbands and wives (and some animals too).<sup>30</sup> Rather than the God of the Bible, pagan gods and a sorcerer get most of the glory for the final victory over evil.

Lewis identified himself with paganism in both its polytheistic and its pantheistic forms. In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis reveals a religious worldview closer to Eastern pantheistic nature-worship than to Christianity. Rather than a transcendent God, he chooses to discourse on the deity of Taoism, a Chinese religion that views the natural world as the ultimate reality:

The Chinese also speak of a great thing (the greatest thing) called the *Tao*. It is the reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the Creator Himself. It is Nature, it is the Way, the Road. It is the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge. . . "In ritual," say the Analects, "it is harmony with Nature that is prized."<sup>31</sup>

In this passage Lewis sounds like a New Age guru. He elevates the pantheistic concept of the *Tao* above the Creator-God. The *Tao* is "the greatest thing" and something older than the Creator-God, and it is the same as Nature (spelled, significantly, with a capital N). Therefore, his Creator-God is an inferior, non-transcendent deity. No wonder Lewis can refer to Jove as the creator of the world. In the Bible and traditional Christian theology, it is not nature but the Creator-God who is the

<sup>24</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra* (London: Bodley Head, 1964), 64.

<sup>25</sup> Rolland Hein, *Christian mythmakers* (Chicago: Cornerstone Press, 1998), 232-3.

<sup>26</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings : C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their friends*.

<sup>27</sup> C. S. Lewis, *That hideous strength : a modern fairy-tale for grown-ups* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1965), 151.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 322.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 325-50.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 359-82.

<sup>31</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The abolition of man* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 28.

ultimate, transcendent being, beyond space and time. For Lewis, at times paganism could even overshadow scripturally-grounded Christian theology.

Thus Lewis does not find much fault with pagan religion but instead censures philosophical materialism and technocratic authoritarianism.<sup>32</sup> However, at least one great modern evil —Nazism— cannot be traced to materialism or scientism alone. Certainly Hitler adhered to a race-based eugenics ideology derived in part from Darwinism, but a number of scholars have demonstrated that the Nazi movement had deep roots in nineteenth-century German romanticism, with its hatred of industrialization and its longing to return to the older German paganism.<sup>33</sup> Many Nazis were enamored with Norse mythology (as was Lewis), the occult, psychic phenomena, and pantheistic nature-worship.<sup>34</sup> Hitler and his followers aimed ultimately to abolish Christianity and replace it with something closer to pre-Christian German paganism. They viewed the Judeo-Christian, transcendent worldview as both an alien idea to Germans and as the origin of the evils of the modern world. Their genocidal hostility to Jews mainly sprang from their view of the Jews as the principle carriers of that worldview.<sup>35</sup>

### Historic Christianity Versus Lewis

Lewis's views about romanticism, imagination, mythology, and paganism conflict with those of many Jewish and Christian thinkers throughout the ages. They include the Biblical writers, church fathers like Augustine of Hippo, the Protestant Reformers, and many others in subsequent centuries.

Nothing in the Bible supports Lewis's views about myth or imagination. Both before and after the Biblical flood, the book of Genesis records, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).<sup>36</sup> Some English translations use the word *imaginations* in place of *thoughts*. In any case, scripturally speaking, human thoughts include imaginations, and all human thinking is infected with evil, with the result that it cannot be trusted.

Among various types of thoughts, imagination does not enjoy any special status as an avenue of divine inspiration. Jeremiah 23:16 implicates false prophets because they "tell a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the LORD." In Deuteronomy 13 Moses specifically warns Israelites against following a "dreamer of dreams" who entices them to pursue idolatry. Lewis and the religious romantics before him did not deal much with the strong likelihood that deception

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<sup>32</sup> *The Magician's twin : C.S. Lewis on science, scientism, and society*, ed. John G. West (Seattle: Discovery Institute Press, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> R. Mark Musser, *Nazi oaks : the green sacrifice of the Judeo-Christian worldview in the Holocaust* (Advantage Books, 2010), 81-155.

<sup>34</sup> Eric Kurlander, *Hitler's monsters : a supernatural history of the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> Musser, *Nazi oaks : the green sacrifice of the Judeo-Christian worldview in the Holocaust*, 253-82.

<sup>36</sup> Lockman Foundation, *New American standard Bible : text edition* (1997). Henceforth all Biblical quotations will be from this translation.



would be the product of corrupt human imagination.

In the New Testament, 2 Peter 1:16 declares that “we did not follow cleverly devised tales” in preaching about Jesus. The word used for “cleverly devised tales” is the Greek word *muthos*, which is the origin of the English word *myth*. At that time it also meant “myth” or “fable” and was the word normally used for stories about the gods in Greek religion. The writer is obviously contrasting the apostolic, eye-witness verified Gospel accounts with dubious stories like those in Greek mythology.

Beginning with the Old Testament, it is impossible to reconcile the Biblical stance toward paganism with Lewis’s views. Far from being supportive of Lewis’s ideas, much of the Old Testament was apparently written as a polemic against paganism. Explicit examples of this include Elijah’s famous confrontation with 400 prophets of Baal (I Kings 18). Elijah heaps scorn on the impotence of this nature-deity, Baal, who was also a fertility god, suggesting that Baal is perhaps occupied and cannot attend to the prayers of his prophets. Afterwards, God answers Elijah’s prayer miraculously, sending fire from heaven to consume a water-soaked animal sacrifice. In the same vein, many psalms declare that the awesome God of Israel is unlike any pagan deity (e. g., Psalm 95:3, 96:4-5, Psalm 115:4-8). The Old Testament writers condemned pagan idolatry as apostasy bringing down judgment and destruction.

Though Lewis declared that pagan myths are not lies but rather veiled revelation, this does not seem to be the view of New Testament writers such as Paul, Peter, and Luke. In Lewis’s novel *That Hideous Strength*, the god Mercury appears to help deliver the heroes, but according to the Book of Acts, in the city of Lystra the apostle Paul had a very different experience with Mercury. After Paul and Barnabas miraculously healed a handicapped man by the power of the Holy Spirit, the listening crowd tried to worship them as manifestations of Zeus and Hermes (Mercury in the Roman pantheon). Rather than facilitating their Gospel declaration, the paganism in Lystra became a barrier to comprehension (Acts 14:8-16).

Paul himself explains why such misunderstandings happen in his letter to the Romans. Rather than being a kind of incomplete, preparatory revelation, as Lewis contended, pagan religion expresses human religious corruption, a perversion of revealed truth about a transcendent deity. In pagan idolatry people “exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures” (Romans 1:23). Corrupted human religious imagination springs from inward antagonism to the real God.

Lewis held that pagan dying-god myths prefigured the Gospel story, but ancient dying-god myths differed markedly from the New Testament accounts of the death and resurrection of Christ. For example, the story of the Canaanite god Baal’s death and coming back to life happens in the context of his fight with Mot, the god of death. It appears to be related to the seasonal cycle and agricultural fertility. Mot kills Baal, and then Baal’s sister-consort Anath violently kills Mot. After that, Baal is resurrected, has sex with Anath, and the land recovers from drought.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, there are no god-battles, agricultural events, or sexual congress between deities in Jesus’s death and

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<sup>37</sup> *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988), 411.

coming back from the grave.

Unlike Lewis, Augustine of Hippo had no illusions about the nobility of pagan religion. Vanhoozer comments that while Augustine rejected Manichean Gnostic myths after his conversion, Lewis clung to them.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Augustine's *City of God* severely censured the paganism of Greece and Rome. To begin with, his book points out that these pagan gods gave no moral guidelines to anyone. Since according to myth the gods engaged in activities like murder and rape, they could hardly be moral role models or moral teachers. Consistent with the character of these gods, their festivals and worship were filled with obscenities and impurity.<sup>39</sup>

In his book *Inventing the Individual* Siedentop discusses the trendy fascination with classical paganism during the Renaissance. He remarks that Renaissance artists and intellectuals often had an idealized view of the classical world that omitted its ugly elements. They did not realize how radically the advent of Christianity had morally altered Europe. In particular, Christianity had introduced the novel ideas of individual human worth and moral equality.<sup>40</sup> In ancient Greece and Rome, infanticide and other evils had gone unquestioned. Lewis's writings reflect a similarly sanitized concept of classical paganism.

## Conclusion

When academics fall in love with a theory, it often no longer matters to them whether or not that theory accords with reality. Lewis himself noted this fondness for theories among academics and commented that their theories frequently have no worth.<sup>41</sup> However, some of Lewis's own ideas are also suitable targets for that criticism. For example, his oxymoron "the true myth" is a nonsensical abstraction divorced from the real world. Furthermore, his artificial distinction between story and doctrine ignores the fact that the stories of the Bible often communicate doctrinal information about matters such as the nature of God and sin.<sup>42</sup> Christ's death for sin and resurrection are treated as both events and doctrines in the New Testament.

Lewis is at his best in exposing rationalistic intellectual hubris, warning of the dangers of a tyrannical technocracy based on such thinking. The eugenics movement of the first half of the twentieth century illustrates very well the pertinence of his warnings. That movement led to the forced sterilization of thousands of the "unfit" in many countries. Even more so, twentieth-century mass murders under the aegis of Marxist-Leninist governments demonstrate the dark possibilities of rationalistic materialism. Such things can happen when people view human beings as nothing more

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<sup>38</sup> *The Cambridge companion to C. S. Lewis*, 75.

<sup>39</sup> Augustine and Philip Schaff, *St. Augustin's City of God and Christian doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956), 47-8.

<sup>40</sup> Larry Siedentop, *Inventing the individual : the origins of Western liberalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 333-48.

<sup>41</sup> Hein, *Christian mythmakers*, 242-3.

<sup>42</sup> For example, during the story of Moses, God reveals a number of his attributes. Assertions about divine attributes are doctrines (Exodus 34:5-7).

than the products of chance and evolution.

However, Lewis's personal religious journey and the materialistic trend of the time blinded him to other significant threats. He failed to see that human religious imagination can be equally depraved and murderous. Nor did he recognize that as a worldview romanticism is no more Christian than rationalism. Throughout the ages, paganism and romanticism have also often worked against the well-being of mankind, as evidenced by their attendant phenomena such as human sacrifice and decadent sexual morality.

When Lewis tried to amalgamate his personal views with Christianity, the Gospel message was compromised and obscured. Pagan gods and the alien ideology of romanticism were elevated instead. Unlike Lewis, many in the past have recognized the great divide that separates Christianity from everything else that competes for belief and allegiance. From the beginning Christian preachers have called on people to turn away from their idols and put their whole trust in the atoning death of a unique Son of God — two things that C. S. Lewis never did.

