

## THE CREATIVE HERITAGE OF CLIVE STAPLES LEWIS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY HIS PUBLICISTIC WORKS

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The relevance of the study is attributed to the fact that it attempted to examine Lewis's publicistic work, the problem of his genre and conceptual originality in view of the influence of English literary and critical thought. In this study, publicistic works by C.S. Lewis are considered in close connection with his religious and philosophical views, reflected in his work and having an impact on his artistic manner. In this regard, the purpose of this article is to analyze C.S. Lewis's publicistic works and prose referring to 1930 – 1960-ies in the light of his philosophical and aesthetic views and trace the evolution of philosophical and religious attitudes and their reflection in the writer's work. The main methods of investigating this problem are the comparative method and the method of philological analysis, the dialectical method, the method of deduction (the transition from general to particular), which allow examining C.S. Lewis's publicistic works in all its genre and ideological and philosophical diversity (essays, critical articles, philosophical and religious treatises, diaries, letters in detail).

Main results of the study. Based on the analysis of publicistic works of C.S. Lewis, the following conclusions were made: in the journalism of the 1930s-1940s, the focus was on the problem of spiritual values, the moral position of an individual; C.S. Lewis reflects on the place of God in human life, the cause of human suffering; in the journalism of the 1950s-1960s the evolution of the philosophical and religious views of the writer, who comprehends the Christian understanding of love, miracle, posthumous fate of a person were reflected. The scientifically-theoretical importance of the work, which is the revealing of the philosophical, religious and artistic-aesthetic views of C.S. Lewis (1930s-1960s) and the features of their embodiment throughout the writer's creative career are determined.

The materials of the article are of practical value for scholars of philology and religious studies, faculty members, graduate students and students, since observations and conclusions obtained during the work can be used in the lecture courses The History of Foreign Literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and The History of English Literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as well as in lecture courses on Cultural Studies, the History of the Philosophy of Science, the History of the Philosophy of Religion.

**Keywords:** publicistic works; Christian philosophy; religion; i spiritual development; apologetics; moral values; spiritual heritage

### I. INTRODUCTION

The literary heritage of the English writer, philosopher, literary critic, professor of the Cambridge and Oxford universities, a member of the British Academy of Sciences (1954), Clive Staples Lewis is diverse. He is the author of more than 40 theological, fictional and literary-critical works.

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Lewis began writing, while working in Oxford, where he taught philosophical subjects until 1954, viewing himself an atheist. Having received a bachelor's degree, and later a master's degree, he taught the English language and literature in Oxford for over 30 years. It is worth noting that he taught brilliantly, the audience was usually overcrowded. Lewis was known in Oxford as one of the most educated people; he shared his knowledge with students not only at lectures, but also in live conversations, of which his books were composed.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the philosophical treatise *The Problem of Pain* Lewis admitted: "When I entered the university, I was so close to complete dishonesty, as possible for the boy. My highest achievement was a vague dislike of cruelty and monetary dishonesty; about chastity, truthfulness and sacrifice, I knew no more than a monkey about a symphony" [1]. The most important role in the return of Lewis to God was performed by his friend, professor, a connoisseur of classical philology J.R.R. Tolkien. Tolkien's friendship with Lewis began on a literary basis. First they joined the club *Kolbitar* (the *Coalbiters*), and after the club ceased to exist, they entered another literary club – the *Inclings*. As a matter of fact, from the first meetings Tolkien, a convinced Christian, and in addition, a Catholic, also made a lot of efforts to enlighten and instruct his friend in the sacraments of faith. They talked for a long time on theological topics in spacious rooms of the *Magdalen College*, in which Lewis taught. Under the influence of these conversations, the writer fundamentally changed his beliefs, coming to the conclusion that God exists. However, he was finally shaped as a Christian, he said, only by 50 years old. As for the confession, Lewis, despite all the efforts of Tolkien, never accepted Catholicism, but "preferred to return to one of the forms of Irish Protestantism" [2].

In 1933, his first treatise *The Pilgrim's Regress* was published, "the allegorical apology of Christianity, reason and Romanticism" [3]. Then, in 1936, a large work *Allegory of Love* appeared in print, a kind of a study of medieval literature, thanks to which Lewis gained recognition in the scientific community. Following it, articles, treatises and essays were published one after another, among them *The Problem of Pain* (1939), where he writes about the most important and controversial issue in Christianity – the suffering that accompanies a person throughout the path of life. Lewis is trying to be extremely logical and reasoned to accept suffering as God's gift. His *Foreword to Milton's Lost Paradise* went to print, where the author appeared in a quite different capacity – as a brilliant connoisseur of medieval literature, a witty critic and solid polemicist. Next article *Christianity and Culture* (1940) features a philosophical reflection of Lewis on the culture of different epochs, beginning with the ancient period (the era of Aristotle and Plato) until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In it, Lewis notes with bitterness that literature has ceased to perform important and necessary functions of the spiritual mentor, and "has become a

breadbasket or a storehouse of the best non-Christian values” [4]. In the apologetic treatise *Mere Christianity* (1942-1943), Lewis put a problem point-blank in reference to the goals of the Christian life, about the choice between good and evil. The author devotes the philosophical treatise *The Four Loves* (1958) to the same problem where he speaks of “the various ways by which people go beyond the boundaries of ordinary life and unite with the world, other people and God” [5]. In the last years of his life, according to the memoirs of his contemporaries, Lewis’s interest in literary-critical genres was a long way from coming to an end. Thus, in 1959, the work *The Discarded Image* appeared, where he attempted to comprehend the concept of the world and the universe in the Middle Ages and Renaissance and to correlate it with analogous representations of antiquity. Two years later, in 1961, Lewis published the article *Experiment in Criticism*, which highlights the problem of reading and perception of fiction and gives criteria for evaluating the merits of works depending on their perception by readers. Shortly before his death, the article *We Have No Right to Happiness* was published (1963), where the author speaks about the crisis of faith in modern society, about the fall of morals. His last book was titled *À Grief Observed* (1963). In it, Lewis reflects on life and death, on faith and unbelief, on humility and despair, on love, on a posthumous encounter with the loved ones, on a universal resurrection.

### III. METHODS

When writing this article, we used the comparative method and method of philological analysis, the dialectical method, the method of deduction (the transition from general to particular).

### IV. A REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH

Features of C.S. Lewis’s publicistic works were dealt with in the works of Michael White, N. L. Trauberg, R. Morneau, Sayer George, **Derick Bingham**, Peter Kreeft, A. Kurayev, S. S. Averintsev and others.

The purpose of the study is to analyze publicistic works and prose of 1930 - 1960-ies written by C.S. Lewis in the light of his philosophical and aesthetic views and coverage of the evolution of philosophical and religious views, and their reflection in the writer’s creative work.

### V. KEY FINDINGS

In the works *The Problem of Pain* (1939), *Mere Christianity* (1942-1945), *The Four Loves* (1958-1959) the philosophical and moral search of C.S. Lewis, as a Christian apologist and religious thinker are most fully represented. It is pertinent to say a few words about the historical epoch in which they were created. When England declared war on Germany, Lewis, according to the memoirs of contemporaries, was horrified. He felt more and more that he “lives in the occupied

territory". In his view, "the enemy is not limited to Hitler and the fascists, but includes all the militant anti-Christian forces threatening to destroy Europe, which he knew and loved" [6]. All these concerns for the future not only of his country, but of the whole world were reflected in his work. The Russian-speaking reader discovered Lewis in the late 70's, through Samizdat, where the book *The Four Loves* (Lyubov) was published in translation of N. L. Trauberg. Until the early 90's, Lewis was almost never published, he was known only in narrow circles of church.

The main body of translations of the writer's works was performed in the 90-s and entered the complete collection of works prepared by the foundation named after Father Alexandr Men in 1991. The first Christian treatise *The Problem of Pain* (1939) was written at the very beginning of the war and dedicated to a literary discussion group, the Inklings. The book received numerous positive reviews and became a kind of bestseller. As the literary critic **Derick Bingham** writes: "... this shows the healing power of Christianity, which can help all the seekers. Many readers have found consolation in it" [6].

The author himself considered the main purpose of the book was "the solution of the intellectual problem, which confronts us with pain" [4]. The article contains 8 chapters, each of which deals with questions about God's grace, about heaven and hell, about faith, about human imperfection, about the suffering of man and animals. Lewis begins the treatise with the reasoning of an atheist (as he himself was for a long time) about human existence, in which there is no place for happiness. Besides that, "... human history is full of wars, crimes and sufferings and the very life of the universe is under threat ...". After all, sometime, according to the scientists' forecasts, "the universe will become uniform, formless and cold" [4]. Based on such arguments, the unbelieving person comes to a terrible conclusion: "It is unlikely that this world was created by a kind and omnipotent spirit ... and he either does not exist at all or is indifferent to good and evil, or is simply the evil" [4].

The believing person understands the suffering in a completely different way, on whose behalf Lewis writes his book. He refutes the words of the atheist about the indifference of the Creator to His creation, arguing that the coming of the Savior to earth, His death on the cross and the Resurrection "somehow inconceivably changed for the better our relations with the terrible and righteous God" [4]. According to Lewis's deep inner conviction, God-manhood "was a devastating historical event that crowned the long centuries of spiritual preparation. ... This is not a system in which we must somehow squeeze the fact of suffering; this is a fact with which any of our systems needs to have regard for" [4]. So Lewis brings the reader to the idea that "Christianity does not resolve, but poses the problem of pain" [4].

However, an ordinary person cannot sometimes understand what God is guided with, allowing suffering. Lewis attempts to explain in his treatise that Divine ethics

is different from ours, as, figuratively speaking, “the perfect circle from the first child’s attempt to draw a wheel” [4].

Spiritual imperfection, lack of faith, prevent people from comprehending the boundless mercy of God towards them, prevent them from accepting suffering with humility, seeing in it the incomprehensible will of God. Recall that in the Holy Scripture the prophet Hosea calls suffering a wall through which we cannot find our paths and return to the first Love (Hos. 2: 6-7), and Saint Augustine, the great Christian apologist, said that “By His grace, God has imbued with some bitterness all the improper pleasures” [8]. For Lewis it is obvious that if there were no trials in our lives, we hardly aspired to self-improvement. Fifteen years later, Lewis writes in the book *Surprised by Joy* that “the hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation” [8].

From the philosophical treatise *The Problem of Pain* it follows that true love is not indifferent to the beloved, but it helps them. Having drunk the bitter cup of suffering, a person approaches God, approaches people, goes to an unblemished life, begins to understand the pain of another person, receives grace. Lewis writes: “If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty, He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy” [4]. But does this mean that God is not good enough or not powerful enough? Lewis finds the answer to this question in the Holy Scripture: “But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Hebrews 12:8). The writer is convinced that “pain is not only immediately recognizable evil”; the interpretation of suffering depends on who is suffering; <...> “indignation at other’s sufferings, though a generous passion, needs to be well managed lest it steal away patience and humility from those who suffer and plant anger and cynicism in their stead. <...> if God is Love, He is, by definition, something more than mere kindness. and it appears, from all the records, that though He has often rebuked us and condemned us, He has never regarded us with contempt. <...> He has paid us the intolerable compliment of loving us, in the deepest, most tragic, most memorable sense. Our life is, at every moment, supplied by Him: our tiny, miraculous power of free will only operates on bodies which His continual energy keeps in existence – our very power to think is His power communicated to us” [4]. “We are, not metaphorically but in very truth, a Divine work of art, something that God is making, and therefore something with which He will not be satisfied until it has a certain character.” [4]. As we see, for Lewis, as for the holy fathers of the church, the truth is that “God is the only good of the whole created world ...” and for us there are only two possibilities: to be with God, to become like Him, “to put on Christ”, and “that is, whether we like it or not, God intends to give us what we need, not what we now think we want”. [4]. So, apparently, Lewis understands the meaning of Divine Love.

No less sharply the writer raises the question of the Fall, one of the main causes of suffering [9]. The doctrine of the Fall shows that “man is now a horror to God and to himself and a creature ill-adapted to the universe not because God made him so, but because he has made himself so by the abuse of his free will” [4]. Lewis, with his inherent poetry, conveys his sense of the world made by the Creator in the following way: “The world is a dance in which good descending from God, is disturbed by evil arising from the creatures, and the resulting conflict is resolved by God’s own assumption of the suffering nature which evil produces” [4]. According to the doctrine of the free fall, the evil that became a combustible material for a new, more complex good, is not created by God, but by man. This does not mean that if man did not sin, God could not have created such a beautiful symphony. But <...> we cannot know the places and times where all this “happened” or could happen. “However, to show how free a person is, I will say: if somewhere in the universe there are other kinds of it, it is quite likely that they have not sinned” [4]. This thought of C.S. Lewis coincides with the opinion of St. Theophan the Recluse about the alleged “existence of inhabitants in other worlds that they were in the will of God, preserved themselves in holiness and purity, did not violate the commandments of God and did not rebel against the will of God, as happened on our planet” [10]. Lewis will tell about this extraterrestrial humanity in *The Space Trilogy*, where his religious views also find confirmation. Here is an example of his philological research.

The meaning of “**Maleldil**” is the **Creator**.

To create science fiction works, Lewis used his philological abilities. This is reflected in his representation of the divine. The reader can pay attention to the etymological meaning of the divine name, Maleldil, when it appears in Hlab-Eribol-ef-Cordi – the old-solar tongue. Consider the following words:

*Handra* (Khandra) – the earth, the elements

*Malacandra* (Malacandra) – planet Mars, the planet as a whole

*Eldil* (Eldil) – “angel”, the mind

*Maleldil* – God

Prefixes and suffixes extend the root words. Proceeding from this, the word handra (**spleen**) - earth can be transformed into Harandra (Kharandra), which means high ground, that is, mountains. With the prefix Thulc (Tulk) it means a quiet planet (earth). With the prefix Mai- and the connecting vowel it is the name of the planet Mars, Malacandra. This prefix probably comes from the Greek adverb mala which means “very” or “extremely”. Thus, Malacandra can be translated as “a large land, the whole land”. Since Malacandra was the first planet on which there was hnau or intelligent life, its name has an additional, broader meaning. For this reason, Malacandra is a planet, something more than just the

elements of which it consists, and more than the individual forms of the earth surface that make up it.

Examine the language further: *eldil* (*eldil*) means a disembodied life form similar to, but not equivalent to, the Christian angels. The most important of the *eldila* (plural) that occur are called *Oyeresu* (singular *Oyarsa* (*Uarsa*)). But more important than them and all other creatures is *Maleldil*, the one who *Mal-eldil* (*Maleldil*) – he is more important than *eldila* (*eldil*), he is the greatest spiritual being.

Green and Hooper give a somewhat different philological interpretation, but they admit that these are just their guesses [11]. According to them, some suggest that the prefix in the word *Malacandra* originated from the Latin *mal-* which means “bad”. Meanwhile, they believe that it originated from the Hebrew word *Malak* (*Malak*) or “messenger”. This makes *Malacandra* the messenger of the earth and *Maleldil* the envoy of *eldila*. Most likely, the word *Melek* (*Melek*) or “king” is of the Hebrew origin. Both interpretations, however, are unlikely, since Lewis did not know how to read in Hebrew. In order to avoid any negative values of the prefix *mal-*, it is only necessary to mention that Lewis would not have created a new language simply by borrowing a Latin or Hebrew prefix. Old Solar language is a unique creation; its interpretation should be the focus of attention in these books [12].

Deep comprehension of pain by Lewis allows speaking of him as one of the cleverest apologists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, impressing with his extraordinary erudition. In *The Problem of Pain* and other essays and articles, Lewis showed himself to be a brilliant connoisseur of Holy Scripture, the creations of the holy fathers of the Church, namely: Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Thomas à Kempis, Saint Augustine and others. Many of his views coincide with the views of Christian theologians of Orthodox orientation, which showed reasons for bishop Kallistos Ware, Metropolitan of Diokleia to call him anonymous Orthodox [13].

Speaking of hell and heaven, Lewis avoids all-pervading pictures of medieval painters about the cruelest tortures of sinners in hell. He agrees with the opinion of Baron von Hügel, an Austrian Catholic theologian and philosopher of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that we must not “confuse the doctrine itself with the imagery by which it may be conveyed. Our Lord speaks of Hell under three symbols: first, that of punishment (“everlasting punishment” Matt. xxv, 46); second, that of destruction (“fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell”, Matt. x, 28); and thirdly, that of privation, exclusion, or banishment into “the darkness outside”, as in the parables of the man without a wedding garment or of the wise and foolish virgins” [4]. Lewis draws attention to the finality of pain in hell for those who “enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self enslaved” [4]. Lewis will write about the spiritual crisis of

man, his resistance to divine grace and unwillingness to go to meet salvation in the philosophical parable *The Great Divorce* (1945) [14].

The ideas laid down in the treatise *The Problem of Pain* were developed in the work *The Mere Christianity*, whose chapters were compiled of the materials of his speeches at the BBC in 1942-1943. As a theologian, he cannot be attributed to either of the two camps: neither to fundamentalists and scripturists, nor to progressives and liberals [15].

According to S. S. Averintsev, “he treated liberalism with much greater skepticism than towards freedom” [16]. In the preface to his book, Lewis explains why he wrote it: “I offer no help to anyone who is hesitating between two Christian “denominations”. You will not learn from me whether you ought to become an Anglican, a Methodist, a Presbyterian, or a Roman Catholic. <...> I am a very ordinary layman of the Church of England, not especially “high”, nor especially “low”, nor especially anything else. But in this book I am not trying to convert anyone to my own position. Ever since I became a Christian I have thought that the best, perhaps the only, service I could do for my unbelieving neighbours was to explain and defend the belief that has been common to nearly all Christians at all times” [4].

The treatise *The Mere Christianity* consists of four books: *Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe*, *What Christians Believe*, *Christian Behavior and Beyond Personality: Or First Steps in the Doctrine of the Trinity*.

First of all, let us pay attention to how Lewis understands Christianity. For him, this is “a source of unspeakable consolation, the basis for the moral law, which orders to follow the straight path”. It is this that man must obey. Actually, Lewis teaches morality, but shows us the way to paradise, impossible without ambivalence, searching, internal contradictions. Having passed the “circular path” he of all people knew that it was necessary “being born again”, to learn the truth with one’s heart [17].

The writer identifies the moral law with God, which is for man “indwelling Comforter” and the most terrible horror [4]. But the more a person needs God, the more paradoxically, he wants to hide from Him. In Lewis’ understanding, this comes from the feeling that there is no condescension from the moral law to human vices, the impossibility of their justification. “It (the moral law) tells you to do the straight thing and it does not seem to care how painful, or dangerous, or difficult it is to do” [4] and only after realizing their unrighteous behavior in relation to the power behind this moral law – to God – Christianity acquires meaning for man. The writer himself was very humble about his own interpretations of the fundamental theological truths. His theology is characterized by a lack of categorical judgments. He “preferred to leave questions unresolved, just not to accept the product of his own intellectual fantasy for the decision, not to fall into what the Orthodox ascetic calls “charm”, if only not to decide for God” [16]. Hence, his rejection of liberties



in understanding the fundamentals of dogmatic theology, attempts to simplify religion at his own discretion, make it profitable for himself become clear. Alien to dualism, he clearly distinguishes between good and evil. Evil, from his point of view, is a parasite, and not something primordial and independent. It draws strength from good. Everything that pushes a bad person to an active evil, in itself is not evil, but good: determination, intelligence, beauty and, in fact, existence. That is why dualism, if you approach it with the old standard, does not work well [4]. Liberation from evil, in Lewis' understanding, is possible only through repentance, which implies "unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will" and looks like some kind of death [4].

But just to repent and become a good person is not enough, this is not a "guarantee of salvation". Here is what Lewis thinks about it: "A world of nice people, content in their own niceness, looking no further, turned away from God, would be just as desperately in need of salvation as a miserable world – and might even be more difficult to save. For mere improvement is not redemption, though redemption always improves people even here and now and will, in the end, improve them to a degree we cannot yet imagine. God became man to turn creatures into sons: not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man" [4]. Thus, from the philosophical treatise it is clear that for the writer the meaning and essence of Christianity is "to put on Christ, <...> Christ says: "Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked – the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours" [4].

Reading the philosophical and religious treatise of Lewis, one often sees the word Love. In all its completeness, he reveals the meaning of Love in his work *The Four Loves*, written in 1958-1959. The author reflects on four kinds of love [18]. In Greek there are four words denoting this feeling. So, *storge* denotes love-affection which Lewis calls "the most unreasonable" kind of love, since it borders on selfishness. An example of this is King Lear, who could not live without the affection of his daughters [4]. But love-affection inevitably leads to pathological manias. Such is the love of Orul to Psyche in Lewis' novel-parable *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (1954-1955), rightly called by the critic À. Arkhipova "appropriating", ruining not only Orual's beloved, but nearly ruined herself. Not such is a form of love as *filia*, meaning the friendship that arises between people when they are united by common interests or social circle. It is prioritized by Lewis. In one of the letters he asks whether there is more pleasure on earth than to gather around the fire together with friends – Christians? [16]. He notes that in times past friendship was considered the most complete and happy of human relations, and the present world is deprived of it [4]. Friendship is completely free from want, he writes. It is pure, it does not seek its own, it serves the truth [4]. This cannot be said about *eros* – a sensual love, devoid of all spiritual [19]. Called once

“romantic love”, this passion concludes two poles: it can be creative, giving life, and maybe destructive, even deadly, and only *agape* is love in the Christian sense of love for those who do not deserve it. God loves us with such love. Lewis writes: “This primal love is Gift-love. In God there is no hunger that needs to be filled, only plenteousness that desires to give” [4]. In the light of this problem, Lewis sees the purpose of the Christian life in “reunion with the loved dead” [4]. This idea of the General Resurrection is one of the fundamental Christian tenets [20]. So, according to N. A. Trauberg, the spiritual legacy of the writer is very important for Christians in that he “shows us again and again not an egocentric, but God-centered world” [3].

## VI. CONCLUSION

In this article, an attempt is made to fill a lack of works devoted to the work of the great English Christian writer Clive Staples Lewis, who had an enormous influence on the 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural heritage. The importance of the study of C.S. Lewis’s creative works is that he became the first who widely used various publicistic genres in his oeuvres, filling them with profound religious and philosophical content [21]. The development of Lewis as an essayist and prose writer is the evolution of a Christian writer. The analysis of publicistic works of the 1930-1960-ies allowed revealing the foundations of his Christian worldview.

In his work, the writer paid special attention to such important components of the Christian person’s life as pain, salvation, sin, death, repentance, love, joy, Resurrection. The theological orientation of his works is manifested in the refinement of these concepts. In the author’s opinion, the meaning of man’s spiritual and moral perfection lies in his/her comprehension of God [22].

Placed at the heart of the work of the 1930-s and 1960-s are the problems of good and evil, faith and salvation, the origin of evil and its effects in the world where evil is overcome, as Lewis strongly believed, through an appeal to God. During this period, the writer focuses on the problem of the Christian understanding of love and marriage, a miracle and its place in human life, which is most fully reflected in such essays as *Miracles*, *The Four Loves*, *A Grief Observed* written in the form of philosophical reasoning. Thus, the publicistic works of C.S. Lewis revealed his personality as a unique phenomenon in world culture, concentrating his philosophical, spiritual and aesthetic search in them.

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