

## A HISTORY OF C. S. LEWIS'S COLLECTED SHORTER WRITINGS, 1939-2000

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|<sup>91</sup> One hundred and sixty-three of C. S. Lewis's shorter writings were published in collected editions in the period 1939-2000. The uncollected rest of them may one day yield yet another volume of newly collected pieces, perhaps book reviews; but nothing of the sort has happened for well over a decade after 2000. As for real additions, i.e. pieces never printed anywhere before, none seem to have been made since 1990 when a small volume of reprints featured one new piece.

The publication history of collected editions so far can be divided into two periods of roughly three decades each. The first (1939-1971) was a period of progress with some confusion; the second (1971-2000) one of confusion with some progress. The end has not been happy.

The individual pieces also are divisible into two categories. There is an 'academic' category of 38 items, and a 'popular' one of 125 items. The smaller, 'academic' category is here defined as all the pieces published by Cambridge University Press in two volumes of

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\* [www.lewisiana.nl/shorterwritings.pdf](http://www.lewisiana.nl/shorterwritings.pdf), posted March 2015

Original page numbers inserted as |<sup>91</sup>, |<sup>92</sup> etc.

The present edition has an added **postscript**.

1966 and 1969, plus two early pieces only published in an Oxford U.P. volume of 1939. Although twelve of these ‘academic’ pieces and one ‘popular’ piece from the Oxford volume have appeared in more than one collection, the publication history of this group is fairly simple and poses no real problems of the sort infesting much of the ‘popular’ rest – varying titles, gaps and overlaps, and shifting range of compilation, resulting in an ongoing waste |<sub>92</sub> of readers’ time, money and mental energy. The present survey is therefore confined to the larger, ‘popular’ category, simply defined as comprising all the rest.

There is much to be said against the crude distinction between ‘popular’ and ‘academic’, and some of it will be said at the end.

In the following account each volume title at its first mention appears in **bold type** if it has been used<sup>1</sup> only in the USA, underlined if used only in the UK, and in **underlined bold type** if used on both sides of the Atlantic. Subtitles have normally been omitted; each volume’s full title, table of contents, and precise relation to all other volumes are detailed at [www.lewisiana.nl/cslessays](http://www.lewisiana.nl/cslessays).

This publication history began with an early volume, already referred to, of nine essays published by Oxford University Press: *Rehabilitations* (1939). Lewis’s academic reputation had recently been established by his book *The Allegory of Love* and further confirmed by the Gollancz Memorial Prize 1937, and he was soon to set off on his unplanned public career as a Christian apologist and lay preacher. Six of these pieces were later reprinted in the ‘academic’ Cambridge

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<sup>1</sup> As will appear from what follows, a ‘title used’ on either side of the Atlantic *may*, but need not, be a ‘volume published’ on that side only. A volume may be published on both sides but with different titles; and a title may be used on both sides but refer to different collections.

volume of 1969; two of them<sup>2</sup> were very specifically addressed to a scholarly Oxford audience of the 1930s and never reprinted. On the other hand, one of the pieces reprinted thirty years later at Cambridge was, after another three decades, found popular enough to be included as the one ‘academic’ item in the large collection published in 2000 which marks the end of this history. The last piece in *Rehabilitations*, ‘Christianity and Literature’, foreshadowed Lewis’s imminent emergence as a Christian writer, speaker, apologist and polemicist. | 93

Ten years later, with Lewis’s Christian reputation firmly established on both sides of the Atlantic, there followed the first British-American joint enterprise: five pieces selected by the author and published as *Transposition* (1949) in the UK and as *The Weight of Glory* (1949) in the USA. The American publisher was Macmillan, New York.

The next collection to appear was an exclusively American affair: *The World’s Last Night and other essays* (1960), with seven pieces, published by Harcourt, Brace & World, New York. For British readers, these pieces were to appear over the next fifteen years, distributed<sup>3</sup> among three different volumes: *They Asked for a Paper* (1962), *Screntape Proposes a Toast* (1965), and *Fern-seed and Elephants* (1975). The first and second of these British volumes were the last to be compiled by the author himself, who died in 1963. The three British volumes between them also contained three pieces<sup>4</sup> which had not yet appeared in the USA.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘The Idea of an “English School”’ and ‘Our English Syllabus’, in *Rehabilitations* (1939).

<sup>3</sup> One of them (‘On obstinacy in belief’) appeared both in the 1962 and the 1965 volumes.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Is Theology Poetry?’ (*AP* and *SPT*), ‘A Slip of the Tongue’ (*SPT*) and ‘On Forgiveness’ (*FSE*). Abbreviations as used at [www.lewisiana.nl/cslessays](http://www.lewisiana.nl/cslessays).

After these somewhat disorganized beginnings, the process gathered speed and efficiency as Walter Hooper entered the scene. The late 1960s saw three other British-American joint publications with a total of seventy-six pieces: ***Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*** (1966) with thirteen pieces and published by Harcourt, New York; ***Christian Reflections*** (1967) with fourteen pieces, published by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids; and ***God in the Dock*** (1970) with forty-nine pieces, again from Eerdmans. None of their contents (with one exception<sup>5</sup>) had been previously published in a collection. *Of Other Worlds* and *Christian Reflections* were published each under a single title and in the same year in the UK and the USA; but the volume published as *God in the Dock* in the USA in 1970 was published as *Undeceptions* (1971) in the UK, with some minor differences in annotation.<sup>6</sup>

At this point in time – after the first three decades of this history – nearly all of Lewis’s ‘popular’ shorter writings had been made available in collected editions on both sides of the Atlantic, with one small gap for American readers: the three pieces published only in the UK in the period 1962-1975. This gap was filled by ***The Weight of Glory, revised and expanded edition*** (1980), from the original publisher, Macmillan. In addition to its original 1949 contents and the three items just referred to, this volume contained one newly discovered piece which was not published in the UK until seven years later.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Christianity and Literature’, in *CRf*, previously published in *Reb*.

<sup>6</sup> Another small difference is the omission, in *Undeceptions*, of the original final paragraph of ‘On the Reading of Old Books’.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Why I Am Not a Pacifist’.

In the later 1970s confusion began to creep in with two new volumes, one British-American, the other British only:

1. The 'Stories' section in *Of Other Worlds* (1966), comprising four items, was re-published along with two new narrative pieces as ***The Dark Tower and other stories*** (1977). This volume appeared under that title both in the UK and the USA.

2. A selection of thirteen pieces from the large volume *God in the Dock / Undeceptions* (1970-1971) was republished for the British market under the American title of the parent volume. The result was a British *God in the Dock* (1979) which contained only a quarter of the contents of the American volume of that title. While the two volumes called *God in the Dock* have, technically, never been offered on the same market, confusion about them has been rife ever since.

After 1980 more confusion was added. At the same time there were three real additions: |95

1. The remaining contents of the 1966 volume *Of Other Worlds*, after its narrative pieces had been reprinted in *The Dark Tower*, reappeared in a new collection called ***On Stories and other essays on literature*** (1982), along with eleven new pieces, making a total of twenty. The British edition was published in 1984 with a title which, like its contents, reflected a good deal of its original: *Of This and Other Worlds*.

2. In 1986, nineteen newly collected short pieces appeared in a British volume called *Present Concerns*. This collection does not seem to have found its way to the USA. A new gap thus appeared for American readers, which has never been filled except for those who later acquired the comprehensive British collection published in 2000.

3. Another new, small and unfilled gap for Americans was one short piece, 'Christian Reunion', discovered after Lewis's death and published as the title essay of a small British volume of 1990.

What further followed for Americans after 1980 were two volumes published by Ballantine, New York. They contained what the publisher called 'selected essays': first a selection from the American *God in the Dock* (1970) called ***The Grand Miracle*** (1982) and containing twenty-six of the original forty-nine pieces; then one from *Christian Reflections* (1967) called ***The Seeing Eye*** (1986). The latter volume is a reprint rather than a selection, since only one<sup>8</sup> of the original fourteen items was left out. Luckily for American readers, both parent volumes, *God in the Dock* (1970) and *Christian Reflections*, were later reprinted by Eerdmans. The two Ballantine volumes, therefore, may be regarded as two major factors of confusion on the American scene.

Two things remain to be noted about developments on the UK side until 2000.

1. After the British *God in the Dock* of 1977, three more selections from the same parent volume appeared in the later 1980s: *First and Second Things* (1985), *Timeless at Heart* (1987), 196 and *Christian Reunion* (1990). Between them, the four selections offered the full contents of the large parent volume, *God in the Dock / Undeceptions* of 1970-1971, plus two additional pieces discovered in the meantime.<sup>9</sup>

2. The second and third of these four selections went out of print and were used, along with the 1986 collection *Present Concerns*, as a fund to draw upon for a new volume of reprints called *Compelling Reason* (1996).

All the volumes from *Of Other Worlds* (1966) up to and including *Christian Reunion* (1990), both British and American, and including the two 'academic' Cambridge volumes, were edited and prefaced by Walter Hooper. *Compelling Reason* was compiled by Murray White of

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<sup>8</sup> 'On Church Music'.

<sup>9</sup> 'Why I Am Not a Pacifist', mentioned in note 7 and already published in an American collection; and 'Christian Reunion', in the 1990 volume in which it appeared as the title essay.

HarperCollins on the basis of Hooper's work, with a brief foreword by Douglas Gresham. The title is a clear indication that Hooper had ceased to have a hand in the matter, if only because the tradition of naming each volume after one of its essays was dropped. Also, as compared with earlier essay titles and volume titles (many of which were of Hooper's invention), this new title imposed an unusually specific and arguably misguided or simplistic interpretation on Lewis's spiritual legacy.

A huge collection of what appeared to be all of Lewis's 'popular' shorter writings was at last published in 2000 by HarperCollins, London. The title was *Essay Collection and other short pieces* and the total number of items was 124. This 888-page volume was edited and briefly introduced by the otherwise unidentified Lesley Walmsley on the basis of all previous collections. Two years later a paperback edition was produced in two unnumbered volumes, one subtitled *Faith, Christianity and the Church*; the other, *Literature, Philosophy and Short Stories*. |97

The opportunity to bring this publication story to a happy end was wasted in the following ways.

1. The volume claims to bring together for the first time 'all' of Lewis's 'essays on many subjects to do with faith and life' which 'have been published in various collections over the years'. The reader is left to guess whether there is in fact any further or larger category of essays; if so, whether it might also possibly include items related to 'faith and life'; and if so, precisely on what grounds they have been excluded.

2. Each piece is introduced by a note mentioning both its original publication and subsequent collections in which it appeared; but the latter detail refers only to the *latest* reprints of collections and to col-

lections ‘now’ available – a useless frame of reference even without the confusion obtaining in the late 1990s.

3. Original publication dates of the earlier collections are stated in a list of ‘Books mentioned in this volume’ or ‘mentioned as sources’. Obviously, these original dates should have swapped places with those in the introductory notes to individual essays. That aside, the list features several unhelpfully vague remarks, and is moreover inconsistent and confused, including, for example, three books which are not volumes of essays.

4. While the reader is referred in a general way to Walter Hooper’s comprehensive 80-page bibliography (1996) of Lewis’s writings, the editor has not made any use of it.

5. While the impression is given that the collection includes all the 125 ‘popular’ pieces as defined above, two of them are silently omitted. One is the brilliant and uniquely valuable ‘Reply to Professor Haldane’, the other is the ‘Rejoinder to Dr Pittenger’.

6. In the 2002 paperback edition yet another piece is silently omitted: ‘Screwtape Proposes a Toast’.

7. Surprisingly, one ‘academic’ piece is included: ‘High and Low Brows’. | 98

8. The adjustment of page references in Walter Hooper’s original notes is occasionally bungled. Although the total number of instances is small, the reader who has noticed one of them must lose confidence in the rest.<sup>10</sup>

9. No index is provided, though such a collection clearly requires one.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, compare Walmsley’s footnote 7 and the final note in ‘Religion Without Dogma?’, as well as Walmsley’s footnote 1 in ‘The Pains of Animals’, with Hooper’s original notes in *Timeless at Heart*.

Regrettably, this *Essay Collection*, a big and untidy product of hasty publishing, may now be blocking the way to a properly edited comprehensive edition of Lewis's shorter writings.<sup>11</sup>

The distinction between 'academic' and 'popular' pieces and its relation to the 2000 *Essay Collection* is given numerical expression in the table presented at the end.

Useful distinctions could be made within the large 'popular' category. However, what remains to be noted is that the line separating 'academic' pieces from the rest is, of course, not always neat or important. On two occasions (out of four) C. S. Lewis himself was happy to bring together the 'academic' and the 'popular' in a single volume.

*Transposition* (1949) and the posthumous *Screwtape Proposes a Toast* (1965) seem to be straightforward cases of 'popular' work, although it should be remembered that most of the pieces were originally read to academic audiences.

The other two volumes are different. As noted before, *Rehabilitations* (1939) appeared before Lewis's debut as a Christian apologist and lay preacher. The volume was a sampling of his work | 99 TABLE | 100 as an Oxford don and literary critic, published by his local University Press. He nevertheless included one paper<sup>12</sup> which was originally "read to a religious society in Oxford" (not further specified) and later reprinted in *Christian Reflections*.

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<sup>11</sup> For anyone wondering why Walter Hooper was not available in the 1990s to provide this story with a happy ending, the answer came almost simultaneously with the *Essay Collection*. In the same year, 2000, the first of three volumes of C. S. Lewis's *Collected Letters* appeared, followed by the second and third in 2002 and 2006 – Hooper's *magnum opus* with a total of 4,000 pages, many hundreds of notes and 150 pages of index.

<sup>12</sup> 'Christianity and Literature'.

Finally, there is *They Asked for a Paper* (1962). In Lewis's *Collected Letters* there is some correspondence with his publisher, Jocelyn Gibb, about the preparations for this volume. On 16 April 1961 Lewis wrote,

The book begins to shape in my mind ... with a progression from lit. thro' ethics to theology

and on 3 June 1961, discussing ideas for the book's title:

If you want to emphasise the theme 'Jekyll meets Hyde', I suppose one cd. have something like *On Two Fronts* or *Janus*. Or *Essays from Bletchley* [i.e. a train stop halfway between Oxford and Cambridge], with a little prefatory note explaining that as I oscillate physically between Oxford and Cambridge so I oscillate mentally between the literary & the religious themes.

Interestingly, Lewis seems to admit, perhaps indeed to endorse, a notion of his own public role as a case of Jekyll and Hyde. He does not specify which part of him was which: literary Jekyll and religious Hyde, or the other way round. Nor, perhaps, would he have been pleased with a general distinction between 'popular' and 'academic' work. The distinction he makes here is between 'literary' and 'religious'. This, however, would hardly make a better criterion for what is and what is not worth keeping in print.

The conclusion to draw from these and other distinctions is perhaps that the categories really should all be united. I still hope that C. S. Lewis's shorter writings will one day receive the definitive, comprehensive and lovingly attentive treatment they deserve.

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C. S. LEWIS'S SHORTER WRITINGS

*published in collections, 1939-2000*

125	Popular *
<u>+ 38</u>	Academic †
<b>163</b>	<b>total of pieces published in collections, 1939-2000</b>

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CONTENTS OF *ESSAY COLLECTION* (2000) ‡

*All reprinted from earlier collections*

125	Popular, total
<u>- 2</u>	Popular, not in <i>EC</i> (or -3 in paperback ed. 2002)
123	Popular, in <i>EC</i>
<u>+ 1</u>	Academic, in <i>EC</i>
<b>124</b>	<b>total of pieces in <i>EC</i> (or 123 in pbk 2002)</b>

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NOT INCLUDED IN *ESSAY COLLECTION* (2000)

*...though published in earlier collections*

2	Popular, not in <i>EC</i> (3 in paperback ed. 2002)
<u>+ 37</u>	Academic, not in <i>EC</i>
<b>39</b>	<b>total of pieces not in <i>EC</i> (40 in pbk. 2002)</b>

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\* *Popular*: All of Lewis's shorter writings published in collections, 1939-2000, excepting the Academic.

† *Academic*: 14 + 22 pieces included in two Cambridge volumes of 1966 and 1969 respectively + two pieces only published in 1939.

‡ *EC*'s table of contents suggests a total of 135 (or 134) rather than 124 (or 123) items. This is due to a different treatment of the 'Letters' section: a single item in previous editions, it appears as twelve separately numbered small pieces in *EC*.

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## Postscript (2015)

A late and perhaps final addition to the canon of collected shorter writings by C. S. Lewis appeared in 2013. Under the title *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, Cambridge University Press published a collection of 53 pieces ranging in length from less than a page to 8,500 words, edited by Walter Hooper. Most of these pieces had not been published in any earlier collection of Lewis's shorter writings, and two of them ('Lucretius' and 'Image and Imagination') had not been previously published at all. The exceptions were four book reviews (three on J. R. R. Tolkien and one on Rider Haggard) published in *Of This and Other Worlds* (1982), and two essays first published in *Rehabilitations* (1939), mentioned above in footnote 2. A review of *Image and Imagination* including a fuller account of the contents is available at

[www.inklings-studies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/hooper\\_csl\\_image\\_smilde.pdf](http://www.inklings-studies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/hooper_csl_image_smilde.pdf)