

**C. S. Lewis**  
**Writing and Publishing Literary Criticism with Oxford**  
**University Press and Cambridge University Press**

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Article abstract

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**C. S. LEWIS:**  
**Writing and Publishing Literary Criticism  
with Oxford University Press and  
Cambridge University Press**

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ABSTRACT

This essay uses unpublished archival material to explore what this reveals about the commissioning, gestation, editing, and publishing of several key works of literary criticism by C. S. Lewis: *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (1936), *The Oxford History of English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (1954), *Studies in Words* (1960), and *The Discarded Image* (1964). Our analysis looks at a range of connecting areas, including the complex labour structures and systems of patronage which operated during the period under consideration, as well as the peer review processes, assessments of potential reading markets, the practicalities of authorial revision and typesetting, and the intersections between pedagogical practice and publishing which all these demonstrate. The materials in the archives we drew upon to conduct this research were author marketing questionnaires; book cover designs; letters between Lewis, his press editors, bibliographers, and press reviewers; and cuttings from post-publication reviews. This case study makes an important contribution to our understanding of the role played by mid-twentieth century academic publishers to the production of knowledge in the English-speaking world.

RÉSUMÉ

Les archives inédites d'ouvrages de critique littéraire de C. S. Lewis (*The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* [1936], *The Oxford History of English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* [1954], *Studies in Words* [1960] et *The Discarded Image* [1964]) sont d'intérêt notamment en ce que révèlent la commande, la gestation, la révision et la publication des œuvres. Notre analyse

fait ressortir les convergences entre l'organisation du travail et le mécénat propres à la période, le processus d'évaluation par les pairs et les études de marché, ainsi que la mise en livre par les interventions de l'auteur et la composition typographique. Sont alors mis en évidence des liens entre la pratique pédagogique et l'édition. Pour mener cette analyse, nous avons interrogé les archives : questionnaires de mise en marché; couvertures des ouvrages; correspondance de Lewis avec des correcteurs, des bibliographes et des critiques; coupures de journaux recensant la réception. La présente étude de cas apporte une contribution importante à la compréhension du rôle qu'ont pu jouer, au milieu du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les maisons spécialisées dans l'édition savante en matière de production des savoirs dans le monde anglophone.

This essay draws on the sociology of publishing, cultural and intellectual history to present a case study from mid-twentieth century English literary academic publishing that highlights how university presses contributed to literary, editorial and cultural fields through their commercial practices. Our case study thus identifies how the work of academic publishers exposes the permeability of intellectual, pedagogic and economic spheres.

Publishers' contributions to the production of knowledge are examined through a focus on C. S. Lewis's academic writings, drawing on diverse archives that demonstrate the complex and contingent forces that shape the preservation of records of scholarly publishing; the critical information held in publishing archives and how they illuminate the mutual interdependence of academic and publishing knowledge networks; and the range of stakeholders—commercial, intellectual, educational and other—with a vested interest in the production of the academic monograph as a marketable material artefact.<sup>1</sup> Lewis's career as an academic specialising in English Literature at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (1918–1963), provides an ideal case study for interrogating the role of the publisher within the literary field. Drawing on a wide range of genres deposited in publishing, university, and college archives, including autobiographical accounts, memoirs, letters, reviews, inaugural lectures, publishers' paratexts, advance information sheets and marketing questionnaires, we consider what the communications between academic editors and their authors reveal about academic publishing's engagement with the book market, and the cultural politics and economic conditions that shaped their practice. We will also reflect on the dual status of university publishers as lettered and business individuals, using this to enhance our understanding of how their specific role

as mediators in production shaped literary studies as an academic discipline. This essay provides new insight into the life of a key public intellectual and prolific popular author by examining his scholarly profile through the lens of his publishing practices and the cultural, imperial, institutional and commercial networks within which these were embedded.

## **Theoretical and Biographical Contexts**

In the canon of British literature and Christian thought, Lewis remains a “subject of intense concern and lively controversy that spills far outside the confines of normal academic discourse.”<sup>2</sup> In addition, his fictional works for children and adults continue to attract attention and debate: “Children’s book editors, curious teenagers, literature professors, revered clergy, children as young as five, and many others responded with great feeling to Lewis’s books and that phenomenon has continued for sixty years.”<sup>3</sup> This is reflected in the extensive bibliography of scholarly, journalistic and more informal writings that have been produced about him.<sup>4</sup> However, as the rights to his works are not in the public domain but shared by several publishers who are “naturally more interested in sales than Lewis’s academic reputation,” his work is constantly being repackaged; although a proper critical edition of his work is both needed and deserved, it is clear that will not appear for some time.<sup>5</sup> This complex publishing situation means that excavating and interrogating the textual histories of Lewis’s works is a necessary scholarly task in helping to establish the relationships between Lewis and different editors and publishing houses, academic and trade, and to examine how this has impacted on the way his ideas and fictions have been presented to readers. Our case study takes the archives of Cambridge and Oxford University Presses as its key focus, using these to reveal Lewis’s academic publishing history through the papers of key employees and scholars who acted as editors for the presses. This emphasises how publishers’ archives enrich and complicate our understanding of intellectual and textual histories in the discipline of English Literature.

Pierre Bourdieu clarifies the significance of these histories within the field of cultural production, because for him the publisher is the credit-bearing agent who establishes the work’s value: “Entering the field of literature is not so much like going into religion as getting into a select club: the publisher is one

of those prestigious sponsors . . . who effusively recommend their candidate.”<sup>6</sup> The publisher creates a critical part of the circle of belief, which Bourdieu argues is closed by the readers, or consumers, of the final product, and together these form the “field of production”, which encompasses all the actions and processes that go into book production. The evidence of these interactions results in a more authentic understanding of what Bourdieu calls “the social alchemy” of the production process.<sup>7</sup> This more dynamic view insists that, in terms of intellectual histories, as well as those of other cultural histories, the struggles and challenges that take place are essential aspects constituting the field’s history, not just because of the fuller picture they provide, but also because they give the field a temporal dimension. This temporal dimension, viewed through the lens of archival holdings of paratextual material, enables the work of any writer to be examined as part of a matrix of people who all operate on the text over different time periods. As time passes, as new editions of texts are produced, or remediations of those texts, and as the context of the field they are part of changes around them, the status of any text that continues as an active part of that field becomes charged with a rich patina of influences and responses. Jerome McGann has noted the vitality of these histories:

Interpretation is a social act—a specific deed of critical reflection made in a concert of related moves and frames of reference (social, political, institutional) that constitute the present as an interpreted inheritance from a past that has been fashioned by other interpreting agents. All these multiple agencies leave the documents marked with their diverse intentions and purposes, many of which were unapparent even to those who executed those purposes.<sup>8</sup>

In the publishing archives connected to Lewis’s scholarly outputs, these redeterminations are visible traces of those “other interpreting agents.” Lewis’s work, in all its genres, can justifiably claim to be more widely known today than it ever was in his own lifetime.<sup>9</sup> For a man who declared himself to be a “dinosaur” in his inaugural lecture—itself a passionate defence of reading exemplifying a deep awareness of how historical contexts shapes the creation of texts—this is vindication indeed, and makes him a rewarding case study for book culture research.<sup>10</sup>

Though Lewis is famous for his publications in many genres, the focus of this essay is on four works of literary criticism that he produced with academic presses. Lewis was born in Belfast in 1898, but most of his education was undertaken in England. He won a classical scholarship to University College, Oxford in December 1916, but his education was interrupted by World War One, and it was not until January 1919 that he returned to read for classical honour moderations; he received a first in 1920. This was followed by a first in *literae humaniores* in 1922, and the same in English language and literature in 1923. In 1925 he was elected by Magdalen College, Oxford, as a fellow and tutor in English language and literature. He remained in this role for almost thirty years. During this period, he wrote two books considered here, *The Allegory of Love* (1936), which analysed medieval allegory and courtly love, and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (1954), which was based in part on the Clark lectures he had given in Cambridge in 1944.

Lewis was passed over twice for professorships at Oxford: the Merton Chair of English Literature in 1946 and the Chair of Poetry in 1950. J. R. R. Tolkien suggested that Lewis's international success as an author of popular works of theology resulted in this professional neglect: for an Oxford don at that time to write anything other than detective novels outside of their field was unforgivable.<sup>11</sup> There is evidence that this negative attitude also shaped the production and reception of his academic writing in subtle ways.<sup>12</sup> Somewhat reluctantly, Lewis accepted a newly established Chair in Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge in 1954, which he was offered partly as a result of *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*, his volume in the Oxford History of English Literature (OHEL) series, published that year, providing a substantive reappraisal of humanism.<sup>13</sup> He was also granted a fellowship at Magdalene College in Cambridge. The standard Oxford course he had taught on medieval thought and belief was reworked for students in Cambridge, and was published (posthumously) as *The Discarded Image* (1964). The final book we consider, *Studies in Words* (1960), was also driven by pedagogical concerns, as Lewis sought to communicate to students that words which they thought they knew the meaning of could vary widely over the centuries: for example, "nature," "wit," "free," "sense" and "world." These last two titles were both published by Cambridge University Press.

## Oxford

The Oxford University Press archive holds author files for both *The Allegory of Love* and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*.<sup>14</sup> There is an eclectic range of documents touching on matters as diverse as Lewis's prose style and punctuation, the limited agency an author had in determining the titles of his work, and how this could shift as one's career developed—as Lewis's did between 1936 and 1954—issues of contingent labour, particularly in relation to the compilation of bibliographies, the student market, matters of taste, and how these shaped academic reference works and their saleability.

Lewis wrote a rather diffident letter, which was effectively a book proposal for his first major academic publication, *Allegory of Love*, to Robert Chapman, Secretary of the Press, on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1935. He calls his book, *The Allegorical Love Poem*, and offers a brief précis of the contents on four small sides of college-headed notepaper, concluding: "This is an arrogant letter, but it is an advertisement. Please let me know if you would like to see the MS."<sup>15</sup> The Press was interested and, following receipt of the manuscript, swiftly initiated the production process. However, the title of the book proved to be a point of contention, with Lewis finally settling on *The House of Busirane*, "if you think the original (and truthful) one too forbidding."<sup>16</sup> Unsurprisingly, Kenneth Sisam, the New Zealand Rhodes scholar, medievalist and lexicographer, at that time Assistant Secretary to Chapman, annotated this suggestion with the brief comment: "Impossible—the original is better."<sup>17</sup> John Mulgan, the in-house editor, wrote several days later, observing that Lewis's more allusive suggestion *The House of Busirane* might cause his scholarly monograph to get lost among the novels in booksellers' short-title catalogues and noting the Press's preference for *The Allegory of Love* as it gives "a better idea of the general and philosophical nature of your book than The Allegorical Love Poem, which conveys something more specialized and technical."<sup>18</sup> It was published as *The Allegory of Love* in May 1936, but Lewis regretted his acquiescence, noting in a letter to a later Press secretary, Daniel Davin, when deciding on the title of his second major academic publication, on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1954: "After all, the title of a book shd. (sic.) be in the author's style. I am always rather sorry that your predecessors induced me to change The Allegorical Love Poem into The Allegory of Love. It was certainly a change for the worse."<sup>19</sup> It still rankled almost twenty years later and, as a

more established academic, Lewis tried to hold his ground over the title of his volume in the OHEL series, stating: “The title I authorise is English Literature (excluding Drama) in the Sixteenth Century: the completion of the Clark Lectures [date].”<sup>20</sup> The Press and series editors spent time tactfully negotiating with Lewis which elements should be included in the title, and which deferred to the preface. The title page demonstrates the compromise that was finally achieved: details of the Clark Lectures are recorded, but do not form part of the book’s title.<sup>21</sup>

Focusing on the editing and publication process foregrounds the patronage networks and contingent labour that underwrote the scholarly and commercial endeavours of Oxford University Press. Davin, whom Lewis was writing to in the early 1950s about his OHEL volume, was the last of many New Zealanders who had been helped by Kenneth Sisam in Oxford.<sup>22</sup> Mulgan, mentioned above, was one of Sisam’s earlier protégés. Sisam had competed with J. R. R. Tolkien for the Chair in Anglo-Saxon at Oxford and narrowly missed it. Instead, he forged a career as an eminent medievalist alongside his role in publishing and succeeded Chapman as Secretary to the Delegates of the Press in 1942. He, in turn, was replaced by his compatriot, Davin, who remained an Irish New Zealander rather than a British subject with “an unswerving sympathy for the underdog, the underpaid and underprivileged”: the “creative capital that might have supported his own writings he had spent too generously refining the writings of others.”<sup>23</sup> However, though Mulgan and Davin benefited from “a particular late Imperial dynamic” whereby “the cream of the colonies were recruited to the cultural heart of the UK,”<sup>24</sup> this was not replicated as successfully in the post-war period with another New Zealander, Basil Dowling. This could be because Dowling was educated wholly in New Zealand, rather than awarded a prestigious Oxford scholarship, or because of his committed pacifism (for which he was imprisoned) during World War Two.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, Davin demonstrated scholarly generosity and an empathetic concern for those in precarious employment in the way he fulfilled his editorial role at the Press.

The OHEL series, in which Lewis’s volume was due to be published, was under the general editorship of F. P. Wilson and Bonamy Dobrée. On March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1952, Davin wrote to Lewis, noting that Wilson had informed the Press that his volume was nearing completion “and is going to be everything that



we knew it would be.”<sup>26</sup> However, the bibliography presented a difficulty. Lewis had neither the time nor the inclination to produce the kind necessary “for the style of the series.”<sup>27</sup> The Press’s employees demonstrate remarkable tact in their correspondence. Davin writes:

Perhaps the following suggestion may meet the problem. One, Basil Dowling, a friend of mine and Jack Bennett’s, with a New Zealand degree in history, who is reference librarian in Otago University, is on leave in England for a few months and family reasons. He is anxious to have something to do and my hope is that this is a task he could carry through. I have already made a discreet inquiry and find he would be willing (he adds, proud) to try.<sup>28</sup>

Davin suggests that Dowling be asked to provide a bibliographical sample and, if Lewis and Wilson are satisfied, that he be paid one hundred pounds out of Lewis’s royalties to complete the bibliography in full. Lewis agreed, stipulating that ideally both he and Wilson would have an opportunity to examine the specimen and that it should focus on an author who fell wholly before 1580, or on Sidney or Spenser.<sup>29</sup>

Dowling decided to settle in England and took a post teaching at a prep school in Surrey. This job did not pay him enough to support his family and, unlike Mulgan and Davin, he was unsuccessful in obtaining a comparatively well-paid post at the Press. Several letters in the author files make his financial insecurity and the importance of Davin’s patronage very clear. Despite Davin’s generosity and Lewis’s apparent gratitude for Dowling’s work on the bibliography (though Lewis did decide to make a fair copy himself, rather than relying on the latter for assistance), Wilson, as one of the general editors for the series, does not appear to be impressed. He wrote in some frustration to Davin, from the Huntington Library, on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1953: “I have now returned to Lewis all that Dowling has sent me.” But it was obviously far from the final draft:

Many biographies of individual authors have yet to reach me, and all the other sections. I find the task very time-consuming and distasteful. For weeks I have given up an hour a day (1–2.p.m.) to correcting and adding to Dowling’s work. I expect Lewis will go up in smoke, but I do not see how the volume can be published in this series without a bibliography. I only hope he won’t hold a

pistol to your head and say that if we insist on a bibliography he will publish outside the series. I may say that while I have made additions the general effect of my work has been greatly to reduce the size of the bibliography, and I have asked Lewis to reduce still further the information given about books of criticism and articles.<sup>30</sup>

Lewis considered the work provided by Dowling and supplemented by Wilson to be sufficient to enable him to finish the bibliography and publish his monograph in the series. However, he notes in a letter on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1953: “I’m damned with doing Bibliographies for my OHEL vol.” and there are repeated references in later correspondence to the length of time and labour it took to finalise the proofs.<sup>31</sup> Lewis’s book was successful. Helen Gardner called it “brilliantly written, compulsively readable, and constantly illuminated by sentences that are as true as they are witty.”<sup>32</sup> Approximately five years later Davin wrote as follows: “The time seems to have come for us to reprint your O.H.E.L. volume. Are there any corrections you would like made?”<sup>33</sup> Lewis’s response is laconic and consists of a handwritten note on the typescript letter from the Press—“Yes, there are lots, but I can hardly do it at the moment. When is “deadline”?”<sup>34</sup> Given that he had recently moved to Cambridge to take up his professorship and had married Joy Davidson, who was seriously ill with cancer, the previous year, Lewis’s response was, perhaps, to be expected. There is another annotation, also on the original typescript letter, which indicates the Press’s apparent response: “? need Sep.”<sup>35</sup> This correspondence demonstrates the important ways in which Dowling, Davin and Wilson contributed to the production of Lewis’s most substantial work of literary criticism, exemplifying Bourdieu’s “social alchemy”: “These are contributions, including the most obscure, which the partial materialism of economism ignores, and which only have to be taken into account in order to see that the production of a work of art, i.e. of the artist, is no exception to the law of social energy.”<sup>36</sup>

## Cambridge

The documentation for *Studies in Words* and *The Discarded Image* in Cambridge University Press archive is reasonably extensive and demonstrates how Lewis constructed himself as an author: through advance information files and drafts of blurbs; the ways in which both Lewis and the publisher imagined

and defined the general reader, across both English and North American markets; the significant extent to which Lewis's academic works were translated; and the role that the university press played in disciplinary formation, particularly in negotiating and shaping the complex relationships between the general reader, undergraduate students, the structure of an English degree, and periodization.

Several of these issues are foregrounded by a brief letter that Lewis wrote from his house at The Kilns, Oxford, to Colin Eccleshare, Assistant Manager at Cambridge University Press on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1962, approximately eleven months before he died. This letter evidences Lewis's awareness of the marketing potential for academic books: he had, after all, by this time garnered international fame of a sort known by few university dons. Writing of what would become *The Discarded Image*, Lewis observes:

The catch about this book, between ourselves, is that people are likely to regard it as following (for the Middle Ages) the path blazed for the Elizabethans in [Tillyard's] Elizabethan World Picture. The real relation is almost the reverse. The lectures (Prolegomena to Medieval Poetry) on which this is based were what started M. W. T. up, and he asked my advice about a similar introduction for the Elizabethans. If he were alive he would be the first to say this for us—he was no poacher. But it would leave a bad taste if we now put the facts as bluntly as I've put them to you. Perhaps you could say that my book and World Picture were both the progeny of discussion between him and me, away back in the '20s?

The book hopes to have a triple appeal. The chapters on 'Selected Materials' may contain some things worth the attention of scholars. The main body of the book is more for students. But, thirdly, the general reader may perhaps find my treatment is of larger interest, for I am concerned with this old 'image' of the universe not merely as a curio, nor even merely as 'notes' to the literature, but also for its emotional and aesthetic impact. This leads me in the end to reflections on the character of all cosmic images, including our own, which I believe people ought to consider.

Can you make a blurb out of all of this?<sup>37</sup>

Here Lewis demonstrates the same scrupulous concern for academic integrity that prompted him to describe his academic *magnum opus* with Oxford University Press as a “completion” of the Clark Lectures. But the letter also shows the slow germination of his thought, the intersection between his pedagogical roles and his academic publications, and his clear (and subsequently validated sense) that what he wrote had a “triple appeal”: to academic colleagues, to students, and to the general reader.<sup>38</sup> Lewis, arguably, has only two Oxford peers who have evidenced the “emotional and aesthetic impact” of this “old image” of the universe for the “general reader” in such a powerful way: J. R. R. Tolkien and Philip Pullman. However, Lewis continued to demonstrate a characteristic lack of acumen in his choice of academic book titles. The transcript of a telephone conversation with Ben Nelson regarding the American market for *The Discarded Image* includes the following assessment:

This is an extraordinary book; as impressive a work of intellectual history as I have read in a decade. Now for the first time I can see the unity in C. S. Lewis’ thought—and see him as a foremost philosopher of civilization and the history of culture. . . . It is a superb, thrilling book with a miserable title.<sup>39</sup>

The final phrase of the transcript is underlined in pencil in the file at Cambridge University Press.

Another set of documents, this time for *Studies in Words*, offers more evidence of how Lewis saw his book in its academic readership context, and also how Cambridge University Press viewed it. There are two documents: one an internal “Forthcoming Book” form, and the other an Advanced Information (AI) sheet which Lewis filled in by hand, giving details about how he understood its potential market and so on. The Forthcoming Book form is date-stamped June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1959. From this we learn the extent of the proposed print run—either 3000 or 5000, depending on the final agreed price—and that it will be a hardback, with lettering by William Harvey on the jacket. Harvey was a designer of letters influenced by Eric Gill, the renowned sculptor, typeface designer and printmaker, and he had also been assistant to Reynolds Stone, another key engraver and wood carver: his work is on the jackets of many books in the 1960s, and he freelanced for publishers such as Cambridge University Press, Heinemann, Methuen and the Bodley Head.<sup>40</sup> These details give a glimpse into an academic publishing world now locked in

the past: a tenth of those figures proposed as a print run would be more usual today, and to have lettering created especially by a designer for a book jacket an unusual occurrence. Lewis was, at this stage, an established academic writer and a fiction author with much cachet, but this indicates a significant investment on the part of the Press in his symbolic capital: “for the author . . . the only legitimate accumulation consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognised name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects . . . and therefore to give value, and to appropriate the profits from this operation.”<sup>41</sup> Evidence of Lewis’s value as an academic author is provided by the publisher’s archive: Cambridge University Press tried to persuade Lewis to publish his Clark Lectures (given at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1944), well before Lewis switched academic and publishing institutions to Cambridge in 1954.<sup>42</sup> His inaugural lecture at Cambridge in 1954 was delivered in the largest humanities lecture room, and the BBC Third Programme gave serious consideration to broadcasting it, which was a “rare honour for such an academic event.”<sup>43</sup>

*Studies in Words* was the first of Lewis’s academic works published with Cambridge University Press and a letter to his American editor, John H. McCallum on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1960 suggests that the switch in allegiance from Oxford University Press was a direct consequence of his appointment to a Chair at Cambridge: “*Studies in Words* is the first academic work I’ve written since they gave me a Chair . . . so I felt it almost an obligation to let C.U.P. do it—especially as it is so very far from ‘popular.’”<sup>44</sup>

The Forthcoming Book form gives us the Press’s summary of *Studies in Words*, which was probably put together after receipt of Lewis’s AI sheet, stamped May 22<sup>nd</sup> at Bentley House (the Press’s London home), and then June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1959 at Cambridge. Together these show us what details Lewis gave the Press to help market his book, and how they used it to create the publicity information to send out to booksellers and libraries. Question 6 on the AI sheet asks about The Book and Its Readers:

Please give a short description of your book in simple non-technical language which will be understood by salesmen and booksellers in all countries—who need to know about it in sufficient detail to direct it towards the right buyers. Please say what it is about, its main purpose, its importance as you see it.

Don't be afraid to state what would be obvious to specialists in your subject.<sup>45</sup>

Lewis's response is as follows:

In how many different senses do you use the words wit or nature (or sense itself)? How many more senses of them have you found in old authors? How did such multiplicity of meanings come about? Do you always know which sense you are using yourself? These are the questions to which this work attempts an answer as regards seven words. They have been selected mainly for the light they throw on the history of thought and sentiment. But it is hoped that the study of them will have for the reader (as it has had for the author) a more than historical interest in increasing his awareness of what we are doing when we talk. It 'belongs' on the same shelf as Pearsall Smith's Four Words, Owen Barfield's Poetic Diction, and Professor Empson's Structure of Complex Words.<sup>46</sup>

This is the way that the Press reworked Lewis's prose for their own marketing purposes:

Readers of English Literature—especially before the seventeenth century—may often realise that words like 'nature' are being used in a sense other than the present ones; that these words have a great accumulation of references and overtones which are either lost or hard to recover. What is not so often realised is that this is true of other words in later periods—and, what is more, that authors often use these key words in private senses as well. This is a barrier to understanding, and the more difficult to overcome because it is often unnoticed.<sup>47</sup>

In an effort to widen the readership (and therefore the buying market) as much as possible, it continues:

So many people will read and enjoy this lively discussion. For students of English it is essential that they should have this kind of information if they are to understand what they are reading.<sup>48</sup>

Having emphasised the student appeal, the sheet then specifies the kind of general reader that Lewis's book could potentially attract:

Interesting to the upper strata of the Partridge—or Fowler—reading public. And of course C S L has a public of his own.<sup>49</sup>

By 1960 all of the Narnia Chronicles had been published, and Lewis was known as a writer of popular theology as well as an academic. The references to Partridge and Fowler are astute comparisons: Eric Partridge, a New Zealand/British lexicographer, had already produced some of his most well-known works, such as the *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (1937) and *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (1947), which was a study of the playwright's sexual and non-sexual allusions and expressions. Henry Watson Fowler wrote *Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926). Lewis chooses instead to align his work with others by Pearsall Smith, Barfield and Empson—all three definitely more academic reading material. Reviewers remarked on what is termed today the “crossover” appeal of *Studies in Words*. The reviewer for *The Times* writes:

Within its small compass this volume contains Dr Lewis's most attractive qualities as a writer; the easy lucidity, the masculine wit (dangerous sense), the hearty polemic, the learned severity. Its effect upon the reader is to make him feel that his basic mental equipment has undergone a thorough overhaul, and it would therefore be a great pity if the volume were to be restricted in its circulation to people preparing to take a degree in English.<sup>50</sup>

David Williams, in *Time and Tide*, emphasises that “the common reader will, if he is interested in language at all—and to deserve Virginia Woolf's epithet he ought to be—find plenty to interest him on every page of this book.”<sup>51</sup> More academic journals also acknowledged this wider readership, with somewhat conflicted feelings. E. J. Dobson, writing in *The Review of English Studies* observes:

I doubt whether a reader who is not a beginner will find a great deal, in the way of pure fact, that he does not know already. A semasiologist might well find the introduction an oversimplified and incomplete account of semantic change, and a lexicographer would certainly think that there was more to be said about some of the words treated.<sup>52</sup>

Lewis notes in the Preface that though the book “is primarily addressed to students” he “hoped that others also might find it of interest.” The student focus is repeated by him in the Introduction, but it is his encouragement to “everyone,” and “any man” that reveals a deep awareness of those other

readers, without a university education, whom he is also trying to reach. The AI form is even more precise. Lewis writes there that the book would “certainly not” be suitable for schoolboys “below sixth form.”<sup>53</sup> This appeal to a wider readership is underlined later on in the book’s publishing history: it was one of the first twelve titles chosen to launch Cambridge University Press’s Canto paperback list in 1990, which *The Bookseller* identified as “leading” the batch.<sup>54</sup> Roger Burchfield, Editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* at the time, who was approached by the Press to see if he would contribute a recommendation to the 1990 Canto edition, complied with a paragraph that described it as “a brilliant book addressed to students and to lay people alike, un baffling, deeply informative, and timelessly persuasive.”<sup>55</sup> This publishing puff has endured: it is one of only two such endorsements on the current (2013) edition of the Canto title, the other one being from *The New York Times* book review of October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1960, by Bergen Evans, who praised it by saying, “Rarely is so much learning displayed with so much grace and charm.”<sup>56</sup> These comments, enriched by knowledge of the documents in the publishing archives, help to illustrate how Lewis saw his academic readers. This is significant in Lewis scholarship, because his status as an academic was and is criticized and obscured by his more popular work as a lay theologian and writer of children’s books, rather than explored from the perspective of an author whose “academic texts,” unusually for a scholar, reached a wide audience. Cambridge University Press collected pages of press clippings, for this and for the other works he published with them, that provide a rich source of contemporary responses from all around the world to Lewis’s ideas.<sup>57</sup>

The AI sheet also demonstrates Lewis’s reluctance to play an active role in promoting his own work. He seems horrified by the Press’s request for the names and addresses of people to whom they could send a “notice of publication.” He drafts a list and then vigorously crosses it out, commenting:

Sorry—I thought this was presentation notices! There is no  
colleague to whom I’d have the face to send an advertisement if  
I wasn’t giving him the book.<sup>58</sup>

There are other documents in the file on *Studies on Words* that continue the narrative of the text as it evolves after Lewis’s death, when two new chapters “and an oddment, intended for a sequel to this book” are discovered amongst



his papers.<sup>59</sup> The struggle to reconcile the cost of producing a new edition with the extra material in it, and whether to do so as a hardback or paperback, takes a few years to resolve, with the new edition finally coming out in 1967. The papers that connect to this process reveal much in the way of the Press's professional balancing of financial considerations with the intellectual need to publish a more up-to-date version of Lewis's work: costings for print runs, page extents, and projected sales figures are all discussed in detail. They demonstrate that scholarship is a collaborative endeavour between publisher and academic; the two sides sometimes have to reconcile imperatives that mean publication is delayed or the text is produced in a form different to that originally proposed.

## Conclusion

The portrait of Lewis that emerges from the university press files is of an initially diffident author with a very precise sense of the academic arguments that he wants to make, a fluent, accessible prose style, and an idiosyncratic, if somewhat naïve, approach to how his work should be publicised in print. He is initiated into the potential cost of revisions made at proof stage for the author and the importance of providing academic books with lucid and marketable titles. By the time Lewis was negotiating the publication of his second major academic monograph, the power differential in terms of knowledge base and professional influence between himself as an author and the Press had shifted. Though Lewis did not always get his way, the general editors of the series and the Press were concerned that he might choose to publish his work elsewhere if they did not accommodate the fact that he would not produce a scholarly bibliography for the work that the editors and Press considered necessary for all monographs in the series. Correspondence regarding this issue exposes important aspects of the patronage network and contingent labour that underwrote projects such as Lewis's *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*.

The file in the Cambridge University Press archive on *Studies in Words* shows that even towards the end of his academic career, Lewis was still wary of marketing directly to his friends and colleagues, and reluctant to engage too much in helping the Press find contacts they might use. It also shows an academic author who is aware of his wider reading public, and who makes

explicit references to that, both in the epitextual and peritextual evidence we have. Lewis's work does, therefore, spill "far outside the confines of normal academic discourse."<sup>60</sup> Moreover, in a wider context, this case study shows that Gérard Genette's dismissal of the publisher's epitext as a "marketing and promotional function" that "does not always involve the responsibility of the author in a very meaningful way,"<sup>61</sup> ignores a whole wealth of author-publisher interaction that sheds light on how scholarly texts come to reach their readers. Though other scholars, like McGann, stress the fact that interpretation of any text is a "concert of related moves and frames of reference," or talk about connections between authors and the people who produced them as a "web . . . each person influenced knowingly or unknowingly by the actions of the others,"<sup>62</sup> there is scope for more research in this area. As Robert Darnton has emphasised, "authors write texts, but books are made by book professionals, and the professionals exercise functions that extend far beyond manufacturing and diffusing a product."<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, our understanding of Lewis as an internationally successful writer in multiple genres, the longevity of his broad, and still very lively, fan-base, existing studies by academics, and the varied editions of his works, can all be enhanced in important ways by the new things that the university press archives at Cambridge and Oxford reveal. Textual histories, sitting within the fields of book and publishing history, demonstrate that the book is "mutable (both text and format keep changing, and much of our scholarship serves to document those changes)."<sup>64</sup> In Lewis's own words: "Change is never complete, and change never ceases. . . . Nothing is ever quite finished with; it may always begin over again."<sup>65</sup> This case study exposes the complex processes of publication and dissemination that enabled the production of Lewis's literary criticism and, in doing so, provides an important reminder of the role the publisher—as both a scholarly and commercial enterprise—plays in the creation of these material artefacts. Even the most esoteric monograph is the product of intensely collaborative human agency: Lewis's belief in the value of hearing voices from the past in order to understand where texts come from is at the heart of his inaugural lecture at Cambridge. This excavation into the publishing history of four academic works substantiates Lewis's claim that if we could hear from an Athenian about Greek tragedy, or see a real dinosaur: "At any moment some chance phrase might, unknown to [us], show us where modern scholarship had been wrong for years."<sup>66</sup>

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> Robert MacSwain, "Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis*, ed. Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Stephanie L. Derrick, *The Fame of C. S. Lewis: A Controversialist's Reception in Britain and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 203.

<sup>4</sup> See the website of the C. S. Lewis Society of California (<http://www.lewissociety.org/>) for lists of articles and books.

<sup>5</sup> MacSwain, "Introduction", 11.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Polity, 1993), 77.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>8</sup> Jerome McGann, *A New Republic of Letters: Memory and Scholarship in the Age of Digital Reproduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014) 78.

<sup>9</sup> Derrick, *The Fame of C.S. Lewis*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> C.S. Lewis, “De Descriptione Temporum,” in *C. S. Lewis: Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13-4.

<sup>11</sup> Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (London: Bles, 1974; rev. edn, HarperCollins 2002), 340.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the correspondence between the two general editors of the Oxford History of English Literature (OHEL) series in which Lewis’s volume was published – Bonamy Dobrée and J. P. Wilson – held at the Brotherton Library, BC MS 20C Dobrée (a) Box 17 (O.H.E.L.) This archive contains two letters from Lewis to Dobrée which were not included in the third volume of Lewis’s published letters: BC MS 20C Dobrée, Box 17 (O.H.E.L.), no. 283 and no. 285.

<sup>13</sup> Lewis was initially reluctant to accept the position, as he was responsible for his brother and a gardener in Oxford. However, he eventually took it, after Helen Gardner, who had been the Electors’ second choice, generously declined the offer.

<sup>14</sup> All quotes from the OUP Archive appear by permission of the Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press. Two author files are referenced here: *The Allegory of Love* (OP684/PBED004818) and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (OP695/PBED004883); all quotes from documents relating to these two titles are taken from the relevant file.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Lewis to Robert Chapman, Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press, dated 18 September 1935.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Lewis to John Mulgan, dated 19 March 1936. For further detail of Mulgan’s time at the Press, see Stuart Murray, “John Mulgan at the Clarendon Press,” *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, vol. 21 (2003), 73-82.

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Lewis to Robert Chapman, Secretary to the Press, dated 18 September 1935. The annotation is initialled KS.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from Mulgan to Lewis, dated 30 March 1936. See also Elizabeth Knowles, “Eleven Case Studies in the OUP Publication Process,” in *The History of Oxford University Press, Vol. 3: 1896-1970*, ed. Wm. Roger Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 406-8. Lewis replied on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1936: “I am perfectly ready for The Allegory of Love as a title. I am sure you understand more about this kind of thing than I: you certainly couldn’t understand less.”

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Lewis to Daniel Davin, Assistant Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press, dated 7 June 1954.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Lewis wrote to Joceyln Gibb on 25 December 1959 about his proposed title for *The Screwtape Letters*: “I’ve also an old grudge against the Clarendon Press for making me call my first book *The Allegory of Love* when I wanted a sober academic title like *The Allegorical Love Poem*.” Walter Hooper, ed., *C. S. Lewis: Collected Letters*, Vol. 3 (London: HarperCollins, 2006), 1115.

<sup>21</sup> The most recent edition of this volume (1990) was produced with the title *Poetry and Prose in the Sixteenth Century*, proving that titles remain vulnerable to change many years after first publication.

<sup>22</sup> Christopher Stray, “Sisam, Kenneth (1887–1971), Anglo-Saxon scholar and publisher.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 2016-05-26. Oxford University Press. Date of access 23 Apr. 2018, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-94507>.

<sup>23</sup> Jon Stallworthy, “Davin, Daniel Marcus (1913–1990), writer and publisher.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 2004-09-23. Oxford University Press. Date of access 23 Apr. 2018, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-40201>. It is significant, in this context, that Daniel Davin’s personal archive is held by the Alexander Turnbull Library in New Zealand, rather than in a repository in the United Kingdom.

<sup>24</sup> Murray, “John Mulgan,” 73.

<sup>25</sup> Lawrence Jones, *Picking up the Traces: The Making of a New Zealand Literary Culture* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2003), 101, 367-70.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Davin to Lewis, dated 18 March 1952.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Lewis to Secretary of the Press, dated 19 March 1952.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from J. P. Wilson, general editor of the OHEL series, to Davin, dated 6 March 1953.

<sup>31</sup> Hooper, *Letters*, p. 347. Despite its lengthy gestation, Lewis obviously enjoyed aspects of the preparation of this monograph. Helen Gardner, in her obituary, notes: “One sometimes feels that the word ‘unreadable’ had no meaning for him. To sit opposite him in Duke Humphrey when he was moving steadily through some huge double-columned folio in his reading for his Oxford History was to have an object lesson in what concentration meant. He seemed to create a wall of stillness around him.” Helen Gardner, “Clive Staples Lewis 1898-1963,” in *The Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 51 (1965), 419.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 426.

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<sup>33</sup> Letter from Davin to Lewis, dated 31 July 1958.

<sup>34</sup> Annotation in Lewis's hand (undated).

<sup>35</sup> Annotation in another hand (apparently the Press's response to Lewis's query about "deadline").

<sup>36</sup> Bourdieu, 81.

<sup>37</sup> All quotes from the CUP Archive appear by permission of the Secretary to the Syndicate of Cambridge University Press. Cambridge University Library, University Archives, PRESS 3/1/5/1248, letter from Lewis to Colin Eccleshare at Cambridge University Press, 28<sup>th</sup> December 1962. This letter is reproduced in Hooper, *Letters*, Vol. 3, 1397-8.

<sup>38</sup> Gardner states that Lewis was a born lecturer, observing: "His most famous Oxford lectures were the two bi-weekly courses he called 'Prolegomena to Medieval Studies' and 'Prolegomena to Renaissance Studies', in which he reduced to order and clarity, and illuminated with wit and imagination, a vast range of recondite reading. The substance of these lectures is embodied in his posthumously published book *The Discarded Image* (1964)." Gardner, "Clive Staples Lewis," 422.

<sup>39</sup> CUL, UA PRESS 3/1/5/1248, transcript of telephone conversation with Ben Nelson, dated 26 June 1963.

<sup>40</sup> See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/michael-harvey-type-designer-inspired-by-gill-8916505.html>

<sup>41</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 75.

<sup>42</sup> As evidenced by an unsigned copy of a letter to Lewis in the Cambridge University Press archive, dated 29 January 1944: UA Pr. C. L./ 115. No reply from Lewis is extant in the Press archive.

<sup>43</sup> Alister McGrath, *C.S. Lewis: A Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2013), 316.

<sup>44</sup> Hooper, *Letters*, 1179. In David McKitterick's *History of Cambridge University Press, Vol III*, there is one short, intriguing sentence: "The Bennetts brought C. S. Lewis." This refers to the medieval literary historian, and long-time serving Chairman of the Cambridge University Press Syndicate, H. S. Bennett, and his wife Joan, herself a literary scholar. In Michael Black's collection of reminiscences of working at the Press, he also makes reference to H.S. Bennett's part in bringing Lewis's new academic works to CUP. See David McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press, Volume III: New Worlds for Learning 1873-1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 382; Michael Black, *Learning to be a Publisher* (Cambridge: The University Press, 2011), 67.

<sup>45</sup> CUL, UA PRESS 3/1/5/1248, Advance Information Sheet.

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

<sup>47</sup> CUL, UA PRESS 3/1/5/1248, Forthcoming Cambridge Book.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> “The Dialect of the Tribe,” *The Times* (London, England), Thursday, Sep 15, 1960; 15; Issue 54877.

<sup>51</sup> David Williams, “Words, Words, Words,” *Time and Tide*, Oct 1, 1960.

<sup>52</sup> E. J. Dobson, “*Studies in Words* by C. S. Lewis,” *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 13, no. 52 (Nov. 1962), 433.

<sup>53</sup> CUL, UA PRESS 3/1/5/1248, Advance Information Sheet.

<sup>54</sup> Sarah Broadbent, “Promotions,” *The Bookseller*, 29 June 1990.

<sup>55</sup> CUL, UA PRESS 3/1/5/1248, letter from Roger Burchfield to Josie Dixon, 22 January 1990.

<sup>56</sup> Bergen Evans, “But What Does It Mean?,” *New York Times*, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1960, 38.

<sup>57</sup> See CUL, UA PRESS 3/3/3/77 (Newspaper Clippings H-L, 1960); UA Press 3/3/3/85 (Newspaper Clippings I – M, 1961).

<sup>58</sup> CUL, UA PRESS 3/1/5/1248, Advance Information Sheet.

<sup>59</sup> CUL, UA PRESS 3/1/5/1248, memo from RWD to PGB on 10 April 1964.

<sup>60</sup> MacSwain, “Introduction,” 3.

<sup>61</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 347.

<sup>62</sup> Leslie Howsam, “The Study of Book History,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Leslie Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Darnton, *The Case for Books* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009) xvi.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>65</sup> Lewis, “De Descriptione Temporum,” 2.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 13.

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The archives consulted while researching this article include: Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, the papers of Bonamy Dobrée held at the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, the papers of E. K. Chambers – particularly his correspondence with Kenneth Sisam, and Helen Gardner’s papers at St Hilda’s College and Merton College, Oxford. We have also consulted with the research librarian at the Alexander Turnbull Library in New Zealand about Daniel Davin’s papers – especially his correspondence with Kenneth Sisam, Basil Dowling and Bonamy Dobrée. Of particular interest are two letters which Lewis wrote to Dobrée as one of the general editors of the OHEL series, which are held at the Brotherton Library, but not included in the third volume of Lewis’s collected letters. References to specific items and their location within these archives are provided in the endnotes.

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