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Novelist of Christian Postmodernism

C.S. Lewis's literary approach is the result of both his philosophical antipathy toward modernist thought and his literary passion for pre-modern classics, but he resolutely introduces himself as a writer with two cultural roots: Christian classics and pagan myths. His preference for old writings covers a variety of types of myths: Greek, Latin, Northern, and medieval. He is aware that his taste for the medieval world is negatively labeled as "old" by the modernist critics as he states in "De Descriptione Temporum."[1] However, he declares, in the same year, that he represents not only "the old Western culture"[2] but also "the mist . . . pagan, romantic and polytheistic in grain."[3]

Against the modernist age that elevates reason above faith, Lewis does not dilute reason and faith, but evaluates both the Gospel (Christianity) and pagan myths (pre-Christian stories). He speaks in a way that mixes both word (the human explanation) and image (the supernatural guidance). By employing the harmony of both styles, he questions not only the boundaries between popular and serious genres, but also the limitations of human language.

Lewis creates a harmony of contradictory worldviews—Christianity and pagan mythology. This euphonious tendacy is not only the reason

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1. Lewis, "De Descriptione Temporum," 12.

2. Ibid.

3. Lewis, foreword to *Smoke on the Mountain*, 1. *Smoke on the Mountain* was published almost in the same year as "De Descriptione Temporum" was presented in 1954.

for his conversion from atheism to deism, but also his motivation to write novels through the contradictory perspectives and literary genres. As a critic, he expresses his comprehension of a modernist novel characterized by author-controlled autonomy. As a reader, even though he wishes to read fantasy works similar to medieval romances, he can find only a few among contemporary publications. J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Joy Davidman are the exceptional cases among the twentieth century writers.

As a writer, therefore, Lewis chooses fantasy as the literary form which is best for him to communicate to the contemporary reader—the reconciliation of Christianity and mythology. Although he has his first collection of poetry published before 1930, he keeps writing novels from the 1930s nearly until his death. Based on his own World War I experiences at the front, he finds his generation numb to the meaning of language because he was devoid of fear (human emotions) during the actual fighting.[4] As a novelist, he writes for the readers who have experienced wars, but after his death, his works come to speak to postmodernist minds.

To a post-war audience entangled in multiple values, Lewis speaks even after his death to his reader in the postmodern world. More of his books are posthumously published. The scholar of medieval literature appeals to postmodern readers as he writes his novels with literary techniques similar to those commonly used in the Middle Ages, including meta-fiction (a story within a story) and an ambiguous boundary not only between fact and fiction, but also between author, narrator, and character. The comparison of his works and postmodernist writings will reveal that his choice of speech is appropriate to appeal to the reader of a postmodern world.

Four postmodern British novelists have been selected for comparison with the postmodern approaches of Lewis from among the authors mentioned in Patricia Waugh's *Metafiction* (1996): Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, Doris Lessing, and John Fowles. All four started writing in Britain around the 1960s, about the time of Lewis's death. Their novels are characterized by their inclusion of a metafictional world that reflects language within the dialogic process. Waugh affirms that meta-fiction reveals the impossibility of such a resolution, counter to realistic fiction in which the conflict of voices is rectified through their subjection to the supreme voice.

The contrasting ground of two voices is a concept introduced by Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin. He regards language as voices

4. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 227.

"diametrically opposed to its original direction" as the word for "the arena of conflict between two voices."[5] As such, Bakhtin's semantic direction is a reflection of his assertion of human language being in a constant process.[6] He accepts two communicative styles—absolute truth and context-based perception. Crystal Downing affirms that Bakhtin's sign is related to a dialogue, context-situated.[7]

Lewis's approach is inspired mainly by reading both medieval romances and nineteenth century novels. An analysis of the main source material will clarify the rhetorical stance of his writing technique. The selection of materials is based on the book reviews recounted in Lewis's autobiography *Surprised by Joy* (1955), and also in his letters, mainly to his brother Warnie and his best friend Arthur Greeves in Ireland. The correspondence between Lewis and Arthur Greeves proceeded between the 1930s to his death in 1963.

LEWIS'S NOTION OF MODERNIST LITERATURE

Lewis could be categorized in the same religious paradigm as modernists until his conversion to Christianity in 1931. He became a theist in 1929, but became a Christian in 1931. Although nowadays he is well-known as a Christian author, he was an atheist until the 1920s. He can be categorized on the same philosophical platform as James George Frazer, who regards religion as the human effort to make sense of the incomprehensible. At the age of sixteen, as an ardent reader of Frazer's famous book, *The Golden Bough* (1890), Lewis became unexpectedly fascinated by Frazer's modernist concept of mythology: "dying gods" and "fertility rites."[8] He, however, loses his passion for modernistic concept of gods.

Lewis's first novel, *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933), displays his change of notions about God. This novel, written two years after his conversion to Christianity, is an allegorical depiction of his anti-modernism. Late in his life, he orally describes himself as an anti-modernist when he accepts his Cambridge professorship in 1954. The analysis of both the Cambridge address "De Descriptione Temporum" and his first novel, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, will clarify the reasons for Lewis's shift away from his zeal for modernism.

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5. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 106.

6. C. Downing, *Changing Signs of Truth*, 300.

7. Ibid., 306.

8. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 386.

Lewis presents modernist thought as the destroyer of the philosophical heritage of Western culture. He turns away from the visions of other contemporary poets. In his Cambridge professor acceptance speech in 1954, "De Descriptione Temporum," he highlights a separation between the Waverly works and the modern time. To the audience, he introduces himself as "a dinosaur of the old Western Culture, almost extinct."[9] He expresses astonishment at the impossibility of agreement of opinions in the modern age, referring to an academic conference where there was no agreement reached among attending scholars as to the meaning of modernist poet T.S. Eliot's poem "A Cooking Egg."[10] Although the two scholars of Oxford had no contact when "A Cooking Egg" was presented in 1920, they shared an interest in the medieval tradition, and gradually developed a friendship "on a personal level."[11] As discussed in chapter 1, their Christian thought was attacked by the modernist critic Kathleen Nott in 1953.

Lewis expresses his dismay at the modernist world in his poem "A Confession" which was published in the same year as "De Descriptione Temporum" (1954): "For twenty years I've stared my level best / . . . / In vain. I simply wasn't able."[12] He reveals his anxiety about the modernists' destruction of the historical association between the classical world and the modern society, by ridiculing Eliot's famous lines about a sunset in "The Love Song of J. Alfred" (1928).

Although Eliot seeks no meaning in this poem, Lewis expresses his doubts about Eliot and also counterattacks in his poem "A Confession": "To see if evening—any evening—would suggest / A patient etherized upon a table; / In vain I simply wasn't able."[13] Instead of "A patient" in the evening, Lewis re-evaluates the beautiful evening on the shore and the graceful departure of a ship.[14] Through his rejection of Eliot's work, Lewis uncovers the gap between stock responses (solid forms and shapes, conventional symbols) and new, subjective associations (modernist technique).

In his pre-Christian period, until the 1920s, the young Lewis shared the same concept of pagan gods as James George Frazer. By observing the visible rituals in every culture, the Scottish writer affirms that all the

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9. Lewis, "De Descriptione Temporum," 13.

10. Ibid., 9.

11. Vaus, "Lewis in Cambridge: Professional Years (1954–1963)," 205.

12. Lewis, *Poems*, 34.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

gods have no narrative with a particular place and time. Anthropologist Frazer highlights the universality of the gods to reject the historical reality of Christ. The modernist Frazer proposes that all pagan gods are of relative value. His rational proposition comes to the conclusion that the universal pattern of the gods, dying and resurrecting, is common to all cultures. Therefore, Christ is not unique, but of equal value to many other pagan gods, including the Egyptian mythological god Osiris and the Greek mythological youth Adonis.

For the teenage Lewis, Christianity is a supreme fiction. From the perspective of relativism, he describes the belief as "one mythology among many."[15] In a letter to his friend Arthur Greeves in 1916, he states that mythologies are "merely man's own invention—Christ as much as Loki."[16] In the poem "Couplets," (1917) written before his conversion, Lewis admonishes gods for their haughty attitude toward human beings: "the proud gods."[17] He clearly expresses his agnostic stance in this poem.[18]

Modernist philosophers fail to contain their confusion at the demise of the old values. Modernist novelists, in the same way, excessively react to the desolate state of their minds by writing fictitiously ordered reality in the form of novels. In "De Descriptione Temporum," Lewis selects two works to epitomize the modernist literature: Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). These two modernist novelists highlight desolation by proclaiming no reality within the fictional worlds of their creation.

To both writers, Lewis displays negative reactions, referring to their incompatibility of spelling and sound. He affirms that in his notion of language, spelling and sound are counter to Joyce's mutinous selection of words in *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Four months before his death, Lewis wrote that Joyce's *silvamoonlake* is "spoiled for me by the spelling which links it up with an advertisement slogan that we're all sick of here 'Drinkapintamilkaday.'"[19] For Lewis, the form and sound matter as much as the spelling and sound.

Virginia Woolf regards her literature as a tool of her aesthetics, and James Joyce describes his literature as an inescapable sign confined in a

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15. Lewis, *They Stand Together*, 135.

16. Lewis, *The Collected Letters I*, 230–31.

17. Lewis, *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis*, 140–41.

18. Green, and Hooper, *C.S. Lewis: The Authorized and Revised Biography*, 31–32.

19. Lewis, *The Collected Letters III*, 1440.

linguistic prison. Patricia Waugh states that Woolf and Joyce mark the emergence in a new sense of being fictional,[20] while Ludwig Pfeifer asserts that Woolf and James do not represent reality in a literary sense but focus on perspectives of how to know.[21]

In "De Descriptione Temporum," Lewis contrasts his respect of history and Woolf's rejection of the past. He prefers "periods" in history, while Woolf rejects the tradition—she writes her novels in stream of consciousness to deny the past. Lewis states that: "We cannot use for literary history the technique of Mrs. Woolf's *The Waves*."[22]

Woolf and Joyce share a concept of language with the modern linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. Just as the two modernist writers have no faith in meaning and purpose in language, so Saussure believes that the words people use are not a reflection of real ideas but sound images (signifiers) that point to some shady concept (signified). As Louis Markos states, Saussure's language lacks a link between image and concept.[23]

Modernist literature is characteristic of realism, a notion of illusion under which the language of a text can be interpreted as a reflection of facts in a real world. Patricia Waugh explains the notion through the listing of five features of modernist literature: 1. the appropriate organization of plot 2. the chronological proceeding 3. the omniscient author 4. the logical link between characters' action and each personality, and 5. the causal connection between apparent details and the philosophy of existence.[24]

She proposes that modernist literature is posited on the realist worldview of the materialist, positivist, and empiricist.[25] The fictional world is a hypothetically organized reality in plot, sequence, author, character, and law. Realism is a fictional illusion in which authors invoke belief in a common phenomenological world, directing the reader to daily reality. The reader of a modernist text is led into an illusion of self-reflexive reading in which an interpretation can be constructed by directly connecting the words of the text with objects in the real world.

Lewis presents his notion of anti-modernism in his first novel, *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933), which was written two years after his conversion

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20. Waugh, *Metafiction*, 6.

21. Pfeifer, "The Novel and Society," 61.

22. Lewis, "De Descriptione Temporum," 2.

23. Markos, *Lewis Agonistes*, 141.

24. Waugh, *Metafiction*, 7.

25. Ibid., 23.

to Christianity. The story begins with the escape of the atheist protagonist John from the castle of the landlord in the East Mountain to the sea of the West: the landlord is suggestive of the Creator and the sea reflects earthly paradise. During his journey, however, the young man is in distress due to his encounters with numerous modernist philosophies of the early twentieth century world, including atheism, Freudianism, nihilism, and fascism. In a dungeon, John feels like a miserable failure after facing phoniness, treachery, and hypocrisy through his meetings with modernists, including "Mr. Halways," "Gas Halfway," "Time Spirit," and "Neo Classic," who respectively represent decadence, Epicureanism, skeptic materialism, and plutolatry.

With the help of his companion, Virtue, who represents reason, John unexpectedly arrives at the back side of the East Mountain, opposite the Sea of the West which he desires to reach. Virtue, with his name suggesting a high moral standard, serves to help John, by providing moral support, restart his journey from the back side to the front side of the East Mountain. John makes a "regress" to the East, returning to re-start his journey, as the title indicates.

John's return to his home country is described with two literary forms: prose and verse. The integration of the two different forms is both a reflection of the restoration of his divided self and the suggestion of another world beyond the human construction of language. In this mixture of literary forms, seventeen poems (verse) are inserted into the allegorical work (prose). The two literary forms are exposed, tested, and rehabilitated through John's adventure. Both forms represent his divided mind between his desire to reach the Island in the West, and his desire for the Landlord in the East. In the last poem included in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, Lewis recounts the shift of John's communication from monophony to polyphony, from monologue to dialogue, until he sees joy over death: "Cannot understand / Love that mortal bears / For native, native land / All lands are theirs."[26] Lewis finally expresses the changing process of John's values as well as the true goal beyond the visible process.

At the end of *The Pilgrim's Regress*, Lewis uses a double construction similar to meta-fiction: one is the story of the protagonist John, the other is the vision of a dreamer who sees John traveling two courses. In the first journey, John makes progress, but in the return course, he makes "a regress." It is not clearly mentioned whether the dreamer will be awoken or

26. Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, 199.

not, but it is vaguely suggested that the dreamer can be united with the story of John and Virtue. This novel reveals a vision of unification of the divided selves of all people, including John, Virtue, the dreamer, and the reader. Even though the story is written in an allegorical form, the whole construction of the story is indicative of a forerunner of the postmodernist approach, as a story (John's regress) within a story (the dreamer's sleep).

APPROACHES OF POSTMODERN LITERATURE

Postmodernists react with suspicion not only toward the organized reality of modernist literature, but also to the modernist literary forms, especially their singular way of looking at reality in contrast with the postmodernist's multiple perspectives of the world. Stanley J. Grenz clarifies the different goals for the modern and postmodern writer: the former strives to seek for the fixed explanation for "a complex but . . . singular reality," while the latter strives to question the coexistence of "different realities."[27] The postmodernist novels subvert the modernist trust in autonomous objectivity.

Postmodern novels depict the narrator not as a single trustful person, but one with limited ability and with multiple perspectives. The narrator of the postmodern novel, thus, misinterprets the things he/she describes. Further, multiple narrators report the same events in different ways. Postmodern literature invites the reader to join the interpretation of the text reading and to consider which side to believe. Crystal Downing affirms that the role of the reader is the key to postmodern novels. After she contrasts the role of the reader in modern novels and postmodern works, she concludes that the reader of postmodern novels is challenged to discern the distinction between fiction and history.[28]

An analysis of the distinction between fiction and history in postmodern literature is illustrated in this paper by the use of four British novels, discussed in chronological order of publication: Irish Murdoch's *Under the Net* (1954), Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962), and John Fowls's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1960).

Iris Murdoch's first novel, *Under the Net* (1954), is a meta-fiction in which the author alludes to artificiality by parodying the first fictional world. In her story, language is not a perfect tool but a limited human

27. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 29.

28. C. Downing, *How Postmodernism Serves (My) Faith*, 88–89.

construction. The "net" in question is the net of language and the fiction within the fiction. The drama of protagonist Jake's chase and escape makes the reader see a double vision, both tragic and comic, serious and absurd. Patricia Waugh explains that the ability of the reader is limited in this novel.[29]

Muriel Spark (1918–2006) ultimately suggests to the reader another world beyond human imperfections in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie.* This novel of meta-fiction integrates two interpretations of what happens (a single choice by Miss Brodie and multiple preferences by her students), two periods (the 1930s and 1960s), two human relationships (the exclusive teacher–student group and the expansive author–reader communication), and the two identities of Sandy (a betrayer and a savior).

The leading protagonist, Miss Brodie, lacks an omnipotent viewpoint, but acts on the assumption that she is a perfect teacher. She mixes the assumed self-image with the reality, but the teacher emotionally acts in disguise, as if she is in her prime. She lives on a vague border between the assumption and the reality. All of her students realize the contradictions presented by Miss Brodie.

Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962) is a story within a story, in which the writing continues as if the author avoided stopping. The protagonist, Anna Wulf, is separately described in a story within a story, firstly in a realistic novel "*Free Woman,*" and next in four separate "Notebooks," colored black, yellow, blue, and golden. In the Golden Notebook, Anna writes the first sentence, passing it to another character, Saul Green. He continues to write a new story so that it is difficult to distinguish who the real author is.

Lessing tries to deconstruct the traditional discourse and construct a new reality, but she aims to not finish the plan. Although her attempt seems to be non-successful, the author purposely intends not to stop. As she inspires the reader to interpret the story in an endless process, she is as least successful in exposing the inadequacies of the modernist novels. Therefore as Waugh claims, Lessing wins a sense of discharge.[30]

John Fowles (1926–2005) similarly inspires the reader to participate by reading. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), he presents to the reader the obscure self-identity of a nineteenth century woman named Sarah. He gives the reader three different endings to her affair with Charles.

29. Waugh, *Metafiction*, 119.
30. Ibid., 77.

His novel, in conclusion, suggests that we can win freedom if we accept the provinciality of history.[31]

All of these four writers express the author as a speaker to the reader, so that the reader is asked to respond to the author's call and cooperate with them in forming an understanding of the story. The reader is expected to enter into the narrative story and become involved in the inner world of the fiction, just like a character in the story. That is a reversal of the modernist way of author-controlled autonomous values.

LEWIS'S POSTMODERNIST APPROACH

In a similar way to these four novels, Lewis takes the approach of "the fugue," repeating the story through meta-fiction. "Fugue" is a musical term meaning a piece of composition in which a short phrase is introduced and then repeated in an interwoven pattern. He applies the repetition to represent his theological affirmation of divine reality "like a fugue."[32] He regards the fugue as the complicating harmonies of God through using the similar postmodern approach "like a fugue,"[33] not to avoid death but to expect another world beyond death: "All his acts are different, but they all rhyme or echo to one another."[34]

The same term, "fugue," is used by postmodernist philosopher J. Hills Miller who describes Jacques Derrida's way of reading as "fugue."[35] He claims that, as a postmodernist, Derrida never stops writing like "the fugue" in order to avoid death. With the repetitive expressions, "fugue," Derrida wishes to avoid facing the last goal—death—so that he can prevent the beginning and the ending of the story. Miller compares Derrida's rhetoric to Bach's aria in which the same melody is repeated, "as if it could never end, until, finally, it leads to the chorale,"[36]

By repetition, Miller means to state that postmodernists resist the chronological sequence of the story and continue to ask themselves where they are. As they fear a stranger inside the self, they emphasize the difference

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31. Ibid.,125.
32. Lewis, "Miracles," 37.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Miller, "The Late Derrida,"146.
36. Ibid.

of gender and the strangeness of others, in order to erase this stranger in the self.

The postmodernists' nightmare of death makes a digression in writing, as Miller illustrates in Derrida's postmodernist reading of Daniel Defoe and John Donne. With the repetition of a story within a story, the author avoids the grand story of death and the self who is possessed by death: the protagonist of *Robinson Crusoe* repeatedly asks the question of who the footprints belong to, but avoids making a decision; and John Donne's *Holy Sonnet* is a poem obsessed with death.[37]

Unlike Derrida, who associates the flight from death with postmodernist repetition, Lewis compares the intertwined harmony of "the fugue" to the reality of God. As the postmodernist novelists do, Lewis purposely makes ambiguous boundaries between fact and fiction, presenting a blurring identity of narrator and character, but he writes to reveal not the terror of death as Miller proposes. He ends stories with death to uncover the ambiguity of life. For him, death is not the end. He describes the end of his stories with a protagonist's vague disappearance, as we can see in the ambiguous ending of some characters: Ransom in *That Hideous Strength* (*THS*), Reepicheep in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, and Queen Orual in *Till We Have Faces)*. These characters disappear from the story with ambiguous ends, which suggests that each character is transported into an unknown dimension.

Lewis and postmodernist writers similarly employ the vague borders of fact and fiction to de-center traditional values, but he uses the same technique to doubt the modernist's dualistic dominance of reason over faith, naturalism over supernaturalism. When the narrator of *THS* enters into the fiction as a character, the persona "I" appears.[38] Although his identity and his relation with the other characters are unknown, he may be considered to be the same person as the narrator of the other books of the Space Trilogy. The persona "I" of *THS* is in a position to move freely between the borders of fact and fiction, between dream and reality.

Lewis's postmodern literary approaches are rooted in his reading experiences. His source materials widely cover Hebrew-Greco-Roman classics; Greek, Roman, and Nordic pagan mythologies; fantasy literature; and

37. Ibid., 157.

38. The persona I in this section is based on my oral presentation for *Perelandra Project* "*Perelandra*: the Postmodern Concept of the Persona *I*" at Oxford University on June 27, 2009.

the work of his contemporary female writers. Through reading these works, Lewis regards the act of reading as a collaborative effort of both reader and author: through the text, the author interacts with the reader. Bruce L. Edwards regards Lewis's meaning of a text as a blend of not only the reader's willing participation in the literary process, but also the author's intention to interact with the reader. Lewis makes detailed accounts of his reading experiences in his autobiography *Surprised by Joy* (1955), and in letters written between the 1930s and the 1960s. An analysis of Lewis's reading experience will clarify his roots in Christian postmodernist approaches to the Bible, mythology (Greco-Roman and Nordic), Western classics, and sexuality in another world.

The Bible

Lewis's literary approach is biblically influenced in two ways: the concept of limited human language and the Apostle Paul-type communication approach.[39] Lewis expresses his view of human language when he proclaims his belief in the Gospel, the basic story of Christianity in which the eternal divine and the limited flesh are integrated. In *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (1954), he compares this acknowledgment of language to the translation of the Bible, writing that "all translations of scripture are tendentious."[40] As to the biblical translation, he claims that the divine Word is incarnated within imperfect human language, so that [Tyndale's and More's Bible translations] are influenced by human interpretation: "translation by its very nature, is a continuous implicit commentary."[41]

In the Incarnation of Christ, Lewis sees the harmony of the divine Word (perfect) and human language (imperfect), affirming that language is a reflection of imperfect human beings: translation is no exception. As translation is subject to the erosion of time, he ultimately argues that the King James Version is changeable in time. He insists on a newer translation to provide better access for the modern reader.[42]

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39. In this paper, I regard the Bible (including both the Old Testament and New Testament) as a comprehensive entity made of the original texts, Hebrew and Greek, and their translated versions by scripture scholars according to their vernacular languages and times.

40. Martindale and Root, eds, *The Quotable Lewis*, 75.

41. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*, 75.

42. The discussion of Lewis's concept of limited human language, is based on my

From his reading of the Bible, Lewis deepens his understanding of the Christian postmodernist approach of speaking differently to reach the contemporary reader. The Apostle Paul employs different approaches according to different cultures. He preaches in Hebrew directly out of the Scripture at the Synagogue (Jewish church) (Acts 17:2 NRSV), and he speaks to the Greeks through Greek poems while in Athens (Acts 17:28–29). Similarly, Lewis enters into the discourse of his target reader, telling his story with their discourse and finally subverting the retold story as a Gospel meta-narrative. When Lewis retells his story with the target discourse, he uses the same approach as postmodernist novelists.

Paul the Apostle, formerly called Saul of Tarsus (AD 5–67), is the first Hebrew missionary of Christianity in Europe. Standing on the Areopagus, he pays respect to his Greek audience by reciting a quotation from Greek poets, so that he prepares their minds before they listen to him:

> For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. (Acts 17:28–29, NRSV)

The first part of Paul's quotation "For in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) is from the Cretan philosopher Epimenides (between the seventh and the sixth centuries BC). The second quotation "we are God's offspring" is from the poetry *Phaenomena* by Stoic philosopher Aratus. Aratus speaks of Zeus as being the supreme God: "Let us begin from Jove. Let every mortal raise."[43] By "his offspring," Paul originally means "Zeus's offspring" but he converts the story into a biblical context: "we are the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29).[44]

Paul first captures the minds of the Greek audience (Acts 17) by behaving according to the target community and ultimately retelling the Greek discourse according to his meta-narrative, the Gospel. The Areopagus, situated on the Hill of Ares, is a center of politics, culture, and religion in ancient Greece: Ares is the god of war in Greek mythology. The Areopagus

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article "C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*: Christian Postmodernism and 'The Inverted Telescope'" orally presented for the First C.S. Lewis Conference in France at Lille Catholic University (June 3, 2011) and later published in *Persona and Paradox: Issues of Identity for C.S. Lewis, His Friends and Associates* (July 2012).

43. Henry, "Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete)," n.p.

44. Ibid.

functions as a city–state institution where all Athenians and those from other countries come to hear new stories.

The Apostle Paul's strategy has not often been discussed until the twenty-first century. The strategy as the approach of Christian postmodernism is credited by four critics: D.A. Carson, Curtis Chang, Louis Markos, and Brian Godawa. Although the four writers do not use the term "postmodernism," it is certain that they regard Paul's approach to mean Christian postmodernism in the sense that he retells the target story and subverts the narrative according to his own story, the Gospel.

Just like the Apostle Paul, Lewis is vigilant regarding the best communicative way to reach the contemporary reader in "the post-Christian world."[45] Both Louis Markos and Brian Godawa evaluate Lewis's imaginative novels as equivalent to Paul's strategy, revised for the twentieth century. The four, in their publications in the twenty-first century, highlight Paul's approach though using different phrasing of the method, as D.A. Carson calls it "the priority" for example.[46]

Curtis Chang affirms that the subversion is a strategy found among three historical Christian writers, not only Paul but also St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. He explains the three-fold subversion as Paul's faith in taking "every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5 NRSV).[47] In his essay "Athens Revisited" (2000), D.A. Carson observes "the priority" that Paul adopts in his arguments (Acts 17:22–31) and establishes the biblical "metanarrative" before the Gospel. In *From Achilles to Christ* (2007), Louis Markos affirms that Paul uses the pagan verses in parallel with the Old Testament to draw the Greeks' attention from an unknown God to a God known as Christ. In *Word Pictures: Knowing God through Story & Imagination* (2009), Brian Godawa agrees with Chang about Paul's subversive way of uniting Christianity and the local culture, finally subverting the Greek concept of God.

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45. Lewis, "De Descriptione Temporum," 5.

46. Carson, "Athens Revisited," 391. Confer to the other cases in Chang's *Engaging Unbelief* (136), Markos's *From Achilles to Christ* (16), Godawa's *Word Pictures* (136).

47. Chang, *Engaging Unbelief*, 136.