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King Arthur Was an Elf!

An Imaginary, Composite, Inklings Arthuriad

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The recent publication of *The Fall of Arthur*, an unfinished poem by J.R.R. Tolkien, revealed a startling, previously-unknown aspect of Tolkien's legendarium. The key is found in notes Tolkien left about how he intended the fragmentary *Fall of Arthur* to continue. Christopher Tolkien includes the following details in his editorial matter about how the story could have connected up to the larger Legendarium.

First, Gawain's ship was perhaps going to be named *Wingelot* (*The Fall of Arthur* 129, 158); *Wingelot* or *Vingilot* is the name of Earendel's ship in *The Silmarillion* (304).

Second, in the final confrontation, Mordred would fatally wound Arthur, Arthur would kill Mordred, and Arthur would be carried away to the West for healing. Lancelot, arriving too late, would set sail into the West, searching for his king, never to return. Tolkien left notes saying: "Lancelot gets a boat and sails west and never returns. Eärendel passage" (*Fall of Arthur* 136) and "Lancelot parts from Guinevere and sets sail for Benwick but turns west and follows after Arthur. And never returns from the sea. Whether he found him in Avalon and will return no one knows" (*Fall of Arthur* 137). In other words, Lancelot functions somewhat like

Eärendel—the half-elven mariner who used the *silmaril* to sail into the Uttermost West and reach the Undying Lands. Both Lancelot and Eärendel sail into the West, seeking a lost paradise. (*Silmarillion* 309).

Third, at this same time, apparently, Tolkien wrote a fragment of a poem about Eärendel's Quest, including these lines:

> Eärendel goeth on eager quest
> to magic islands beyond the miles of the sea,
> past the hills of Avalon and the halls of the moon,
> the dragon's portals and the dark mountains
> of the Bay of Faery on the borders of the world. (*Arthur* 137-8)

And then another fragment about Arthur's grave:

No mound hath Arthur	in mortal land
under moon or sun	who in _____ _____
beyond the miles of the sea	and the magic islands
beyond the halls of night	upon Heaven's borders
~~the~~ dragon's portals	and the dark mountains
of the Bay of Avalon	on the borders of the world.
up[on] Earth's border	in Avalon ~~sleeping~~ biding. (138)

These three comparisons—Gawain's ship to Earendel's, Lancelot to Eärendel, and Avalon to Faërie and to Valinor—enable an imaginative reader to speculate that if Tolkien had finished *The Fall of Arthur*, he could have woven it together with *The Silmarillion* so that his elvish history mapped onto the legends of Arthur, forming the mythological and linguistic foundation on which "real" English history and language were based. In addition, he could have collaborated with C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams on *their* Arthurian legends, creating a totalizing myth greater than any they wrote individually. Of course, Tolkien did not attempt

any such unification with the writings of these friends, and would not have approved of this idea: he once wrote in a letter that he "actively disliked [Williams's] Arthurian-Byzantine mythology, and still think that it spoiled the trilogy of C.S.L." (*Letters* 349) And yet, all three of them did write Arthurian works, and all three did meet to share in very collaborative ways, and all three of them did share some fundamental beliefs about the world. Therefore, I think it is fruitful to compare the texts that do exist and see what can be gained from such a side-by-side study.

This paper, then, briefly examines the implications of an imaginary, composite, Inklings Arthuriad. In it, I compare a few points of the Arthurian geography and characters of *The Fall of Arthur, The Silmarillion,* and *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien with two books by C.S. Lewis—*Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*—and two by Charles *Williams—Taliessin Through Logres* and *The Region of the Summer Stars.*

There are several other Arthurian works by the Inklings that ought to be examined, and many other directions this examination could go, so that is why I am editing an academic volume entitled *The Inklings and King Arthur.* This book will study all the Arthurian works of the Inklings, as well as influential ones by their predecessors and contemporaries, in great detail. You can read more about this project here.

For now, we will look at one particular element of the main Arthurian works by these three primarily Inklings: their mythological geographies, or the maps they devised for these tales, along with some of the implications of these topographies and their spatial and cultural orientation.

I. Tolkien's Mythological Geography

The development of Tolkien's Middle-earth geography is covered in depth in *The History of Middle-earth,* especially Volume Four, *The Shaping of Middle-earth,* and Volume Nine, *Sauron Defeated.* Here I only focus on a few key moments, to show how his ideas of the planet and the political geography of his Legendarium developed and then (more importantly), how these relate to his version of the King Arthur story.

First was the period of Tolkien's earliest Earendil poem, which he read aloud to the Exeter College Essay Club on 27 November 1914 (Garth 52; *Letters* 8). At this time, his mythological geography was only in its baby form. But then, 1915, Tolkien went to war. And ever since he faced the Germans in battle, from that point on he located evil in the East and sent his mariner seeking for a lost paradise in the West.

Second was the time when Tolkien thought of a flat earth before the fall of Númenor. Also, "Qenya at this stage equates Germans with barbarity. *Kalimban* is 'Barbary', Germany'." (Garth 128). But then, in 1915, Tolkien began writing the Qenya lexicon and the poem "Kortirion among the Trees." In these works, "The home of the Valar is *Valinor* or 'Asgard,' which lies at the feet of lofty, snow-capped *Taniqetil* at the western rim of the flat earth" (Garth 126). Note again this Northern orientation in these early days. This also may be the stage of the map from the *Ambarkanta,* showing the planet as a flat disk before the fall of Numenor (*The Shaping of Middle-earth,* 236). This is all before Tolkien went to war.

The third phase was the time in which Tol Eressëa became associated with Avalon (for a full history of the concept of Avallon, see *Sauron Defeated*). This seems to be a moment when Tolkien considered going a different direction with the mythology: he seems to have been pondering using the pre-existing Arthurian materials instead of writing his own elvish

Legendarium. This may be the time Christopher wrote about: Tolkien's vision for his lifework as "a massive and explicit linking of his own legends with those of many other places and times: all concerned with the stories and the dreams of peoples who dwelt by the coasts of the great Western Sea" (*The Lost Road* 98). This was going on especially when he was developing the myth of Numenor (Atlantis) and (perhaps) *The Fall of Arthur*.

The fourth period was the time of Tolkien's "Atlantis-haunting." Tolkien wrote in a letter about moving from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings*, and one element that came into it was:

> What I might call my Atlantis-haunting. This legend or myth or dim memory of some ancient history has always troubled me. In sleep I had the dreadful dream of the ineluctable Wave, either coming out of the quiet sea, or coming in towering over the green islands....It always ends by surrender, and I awake gasping out of deep water....When C. S. Lewis and I tossed up, and he was to write on space-travel and I on time-travel, I began an abortive book of time-travel of which the end was to be the presence of my hero in the drowning of Atlantis. This was to be called *Númenor*, the Land in the West....so I brought all the stuff I had written on the originally unrelated legends of Númenor into relation with the main mythology. (*Letters* 347; cf. 213).

This is the time when the earth became round (*The Shaping of Middle-earth*, 246). Tolkien wrote that "the whole 'legendarium' contains a transition from a flat world...to a globe" (*Letters* 197).

Finally, during the development of the *Silmarillion*, "The West" takes on its fullest significance. What is that significance? Put simply, "the West is Heaven (or Paradise)" (Lobdell 50).

I have two resources to recommend to you on this topic of "The West" in Tolkien's Legendarium: Jared Lobdell has provided a survey of references to "the West" in *Lord of the Rings* in his chapter "In the Far Northwest of the Old World" in Harold Bloom's *J.R.R. Tolkien's*

The Lord of the Rings, and Charles Huttar gave a talk on the deep spiritual significance of Western Isles in his Scholar Guest of Honor address given at *Mythcon XXXV*, 31 July 2004, entitled "'Deep Lies the Sea-Longing': Inklings of Home." Huttar is rewriting this article to include *The Fall of Arthur*, and this revision is meant to be included in my collection on *The Inklings and King Arthur*. In it, Huttar points out that for Tolkien, "the western sea has an ambiguous meaning, inviting but potentially sinister"; it engendered a sad and sweet longing in those who would cross the sea to their true home, but leave this world and its loves behind. It is a path and a barrier (Huttar).

Of course, the matter of the development of Tolkien's geography is far more complicated than this neat list suggests, as Tolkien continued to try to revise it all his life, to sort out the problems presented by Elvish knowledge vs. hobbit/human knowledge, to develop a frame-narrative, etc. At a couple of points he even tried to create continuity by the use of time travel and/or dreams.

Here are four basic points I think it is important to remember about Tolkien's Arthurian geography. First, it is meant to be "real" history, or at least to fit into an historical period in England's past. Second, it could be seen as a later phase in his great elvish pre-history; i.e., that *The Fall of Arthur*, if finished, could have been another volume after *The Silmarillion, The Hobbit,* and *The Lord of the Rings,* in which an elf-friend hears the call of the sea and follows it west. Third, Arthur and Lancelot sail West to an unknown paradise and are never seen again (as do many heroes throughout the Inklings' Arthurian works). Fourth, that Tolkien abandoned his Arthurian poem, did not finish it, and never returned to it—so I need to be careful not to put too much emphasis on this piece, nor to analyze it as if it became a permanent part of the total legendarium.

II. Williams's Mythological Geography

You are probably familiar with the map that Charles Williams got artist Lynton Lamb to draw up for publication in *Taliessin Through Logres*, a volume of Arthurian poetry published in 1938. You may also know that Williams was fascinated by the "Matter of Britain" throughout his entire life. Here is a brief summary of his Arthurian works:

The *Arthurian Commonplace Book*, probably from the 1910s and '20s, was a notebook in which he jotted ideas related to his future Arthurian masterpiece.

Arthurian themes and imagery, and even some poems, appear throughout the *Masques of Amen House* from the 1920s.

The poetry collection *Heroes and Kings,* 1930, contains several Arthurian poems, including one in which he tried out a different symbolical system than the one he ended up using in his later poetry.

War in Heaven, a novel published in 1930, is a story of a chase for the Holy Grail. It is not strictly Arthurian, although three characters are facetiously associated with Perceval, Bors, and Galahad.

Other Arthurian references are scattered throughout his other works, especially the collections of poetry, as he worked his way towards a kind of totalizing mythology. Like Tolkien, he never finished his. Indeed, it is much less complete than Tolkien's.

Let's talk a bit, then about the geographical element of Williams' Arthurian myth. As you know, Williams spent at least ten years in A.E. Waite's occult secret society, the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross [FRC]. There is even very scant evidence that he may have spent some time in a more magical society, the actual Golden Dawn, or at least conversed with Yeats and absorbed

some of that poet's more magical views.

In any case, in the FRC, he learned about how to layer systems of symbolism in order to achieve maximum significance. Here Ellic Howe's description of the Golden Dawn is applicable: he called it "an ingenious construction of arbitrary relationships between different symbolical systems" (qtd. in Morrisson 32). Williams took several ideas from the FRC and layered them together with ideas from other sources to create this map. He took the idea from Astrology that the parts of the body can be associated with the various signs of the Zodiac. He took the idea from Qabbalism that the parts of the body can be associated with particular virtues. He took the idea from a book by A.E. Waite that Jerusalem is symbolically the womb, the nurturing place of beginnings. He may have been influenced by Blake's symbolic states to create the idea of Europe as an empire whose provinces, or "themes," are associated with particular virtues. He combined and layered these together so that each province = a body part = a zodiacal sign = a virtue.

Let us glance at some of the body parts and their associated geopolitical entities. The most important place for the cycle is England, or Logres, which is the head/brain of the Imperial body. Caucasia, the buttocks, signifies natural pleasures. France is the breasts, because there, at the newly formed seminaries, students could drink the pure milk of doctrine. Rome is the hands, because there "the heart-breaking manual acts of the Pope" are performed as he serves the elements of the Eucharist. Constantinople is the navel, stomach, or functional middle of the Empire.

In Williams' mythologized history, there never was an East-West split of the church. When Islamic invasions cut Constantinople off from the rest of Europe, the physical, spiritual, and political unity of the Byzantine Empire was broken. Without England, the Empire became

headless and brainless. This is exactly the image Williams uses for Hell: he created a country or state, not on the map, called P'o-L'u, ruled by a headless Emperor. It is located somewhere off to the East, near Java (for which Williams had both personal and political reasons).

But the other most important element of Williams' Arthurian geography is also not on the map: it is Sarras, the land of the Trinity. It is an island located to the West of the British Isles. It is towards Sarras that the three achievers of the Grail—Bors, Perceval, and Galahad—sail, along with the dead body of Blanchefleur.

Williams's Sarras is taken more or less directly from two of his sources, the Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal* and Malory. There, Sarras is the place where the Hallows are when the achievers arrive. The simplest way to think about Sarras is that it is another name for Heaven (see Andriote 73). More specifically, Sarras is "island of the Trinity; also a city: 'the divine city'; 'beyond the seas of Broceliande'; everywhere by achievement and so not marked on the map" (Barber "People and Places" 11). Its earliest mention by Williams may be in *The Chapel of the Thorn*, an unpublished verse-drama. The MS is dated August 24th, 1912, in Williams's hand (p. 101). It is again used as a synonym for "Heaven" in Williams' third book of poetry, *Divorce* (Oxford University Press, 1920, pp. 10, 32). It occurs in the title poem, line 86, in a discussion of his father's blindness and impending "divorce" from this world. Williams writes:

> O if in holier hours I meet
> Your happier head in Sarras' street,
> When our blind years are done,
> What song remains shall run to pay
> Its duty, sir, from me that day,
> Your pupil and your son.

The third poem in that collection, "Ballade of a Country Day," already shows the development

of the myth in Williams' mind: the refrain of that poem is "If Sarras be, if Sarras hold the Grail."

"Celestial Cities" on pp. 30–31 of *Divorce* develops the idea of Sarras-in-London:

> When our translated cities
> Are joyous and divine,
> And through the streets of London
> The streets of Sarras shine,
> When what is hid in London
> Doth then in Sarras show…

It occurs again in *War in Heaven,* p. 47, which I quoted above. According to Roma King:

> C.W. no doubt borrowed the term from A. E. Waite's *The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail* ([London: Rebman Limited, 1909]. 133, 289, 363, 364) in which it serves an important function. In Waite's use, it is not another term for heaven itself but is called a "spiritual place in sarras on the confines of Egypt, where the Graal, upon its outward journey, dwelt for a period, and whither, after generations and centuries, it also returned for a period. As this was not the point of its origin, so it was not that of its rest; it was a stage in the passage from Salem and a stage in the transit to heaven.

There the Grail quest was consummated; there Percival and Galahad were caught up into heaven; and there their bodies were buried. From there Bors was returned to his earthly tasks. Williams uses the term ambiguously, both as a place out of time (for Percival and Galahad) and as the experience of the timeless within time (for Bors)" (King *To Michal* 271 [glossary "Sarras"]). According to Charles Huttar, "in Williams Sarras has been taken out of this world and can be reached only by supernatural means. It is across the western ocean...Williams reshapes it into an inaccessible island of granite, located not only beyond the sea but 'beyond the sun' (Region 15), also called 'the land of the Trinity' and 'the land of the perichoresis'."

My main points here are that Williams's Sarras (1) is not on the map, (2) is an island, a

place to sail to across the sea (3) lies to the West of England, and (4) is the goal of true spiritual seekers. In these ways, it strongly resembles Tolkien's Tol Eressea/Valinor/Avalon/Atlantis complex, with its Westering desire.

III. Lewis's Mythological Geography

How does C.S. Lewis, then, compare to his two primary Inklings associates on this matter of Arthurian geography? According to Charles Huttar in "Deep Lies the Sea-Longing," Lewis shared his experience of *Sehnsucht* "with his friends J.R.R. Tolkien and Charles Williams, and for them also it took the symbolic form of a fascination with the sea ('the sea-longing,' in Tolkien's phrase) and unknown lands beyond it."

Like Williams, "Lewis was a closet Arthurian from a very young age and remained one throughout his literary career" (Tolhurst 140). He wrote an Arthurian poem as early as 1919, which was rejected by Heinemann and subsequently lost ([Joe Christopher has written an interesting "Conjectural Essay" on the possible title and contents of this lost Arthurian poem](#)).

In the 1930s, he wrote his fragment of a narrative poem called "Launcelot." Then came the coin-toss with Tolkien and the decision to write time-travel and space-travel stories, which resulted in Tolkien's fragmentary *The Lost Road* and Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*, followed by his infatuation with Charles Williams and his "Charles Williams novel by C.S. Lewis," *That Hideous Strength* (Green and Hooper 205, qtd. in Schwartz 92). I want to argue that it is also his "J.R.R. Tolkien novel by C.S. Lewis," and that in *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis actually went some way towards the layering and combination of his friends' Arthurian legends that I proposed in the beginning.

It is almost as if, with his urge towards bringing his friends together, and because of the collaborative atmosphere of the Inklings (see Diana Glyer's *The Company They Keep* on this point), Lewis gathered together the threads of his friends' ideas and wove them into this novel. Not that I am suggesting Lewis knew of Tolkien's *Fall of Arthur*; I have come across no evidence one way or another. If you do, please tell me.

Now, *That Hideous Strength* is probably the most harshly criticized of all Lewis's mature works. It is a bit of a gallimaufry. But Sanford Schwartz argues convincingly in *C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier* that this is due to Lewis's interactions with the scientific issues of his day and to his use of genre: Schwartz claims that by reading Williams, Lewis learned how to baptize and sanctify the Gothic genre in his own works, and that in *That Hideous Strength*, high Arthurian romance competes with and eventually conquers the Gothic. This would mean that we should look not only for Arthurian content in the Inklings' works, but for structures and generic conventions of Arthurian chronicle or romance as shaping mechanisms in their works.

I want to talk about two startling elements of *That Hideous Strength*, ones that have been severely critiqued. The first is the inclusion of the name "Numinor." The second is the use of Merlin and the Pendragon in what was supposed to be a non-Arthurian work of space-travel and science-fiction.

I would like to suggest that, by including "Numinor" from Tolkien and Merlin/Pendragon from Williams, Lewis was gesturing towards ways that their mythologies could be unified. Lewis scholar Brenton Dickieson suggested a metaphor to me: *That Hideous Strength* is a "Janus" book, facing both the Arthuriad and Middle-earth. The character, significance, and power of his character Elwin Ransom suggests that the long elvish history, including the foundering of Atlantis/Numenor, was the pre-history to the real history of

England, and that Arthur is but one in a long line of kings descended from the Men of West, just as Merlin is a remnant of the power of the Valar in the Undying Lands. Of course Ransom's first name is "Elwin," "which is a version of Ælfwine" (Carpenter 174) or Elf-Friend, and CSL's Elwin is the Pendragon. This suggests that Elwin Ransom is descended from Arthur, who is turn was part of a long line of Elf-Friends who were in communication with the Elves and through them with the Valar and through them with Iluvatar Himself. If we add sea-going Lancelot and Earendil to that story, we get a narrative that potentially stretches from the creation of the world to at least the end of Tolkien's earthly life and could be projected out to the end of the world. It is a narrative that focuses on a spiritual, rather than a political, history of England and Europe, but that has implications for the external events at every stage of human history.

So that's a beautiful bit of imagination. But of course Lewis doesn't tell that story, nor does he leave it there. He can't be that simple, can he? He has to go and integrate more myths, other sources, entirely separate strains of European literature. He has to go and put his Avalon out in space, on the planet Venus. That would seem to spoil my whole speculation. There goes any connection with Tolkien's Avalon/Tol Eressea/Valinor and Williams' Sarras, right?

Well, maybe not. "Hesperus, of course, whose name in Greek also means the West, is the evening star...and not a star but a planet, Venus. No great leap was required, then, for Lewis in describing Venus or Perelandra to locate the golden apples there" (Huttar) and to put his apple-laden land, Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Insula Pomorum," his Avalon, on Venus. We learn at the end of *That Hideous Strength* that Elwin Ransom is going to stay with Arthur on "Aphallin," a "distant island which the descendants of Tor and Tinidril will not find for a hundred centuries" on Perelandra/Venus (*That Hideous Strength* 441; Huttar) For more than 30 years Lewis followed his longing on the path towards what he called his "Avalon-Hesperides-Western

business" *(All My Road 31).* Michael Ward in *Planet Narnia* has, of course, provided a deep and profound examination of Lewis' use of Venus as a "Name for God," an emblem of "Divine Love" (166). Ward also examines Williams' use of Venus, "the third Heaven," as a horizonless, formless, energy for fertility and making. All of this Western imagery, discussion of Venus, and introduction of apple-laden lands could bring us to an examination of *The Magician's Nephew,* where a fruit tree stands in a Western garden and where "Aslan is Venus incarnate" (Ward 187), and *Till We Have Faces,* where Psyche longs to marry the god of the West Wind.

So what all of this apparently tangential material means is that Lewis does not destroy that potential imaginative layering; he enriches and complicates it by adding the mythology of Venus to other strands of the Arthurian legend. Does this mean, then, that the Inklings were writing one big complex of Arthurian literature that could be piled up to create a figurative palimpsest, a comparative mythological geography? Yes and no.

IV. Comparative Mythological Geography

In all three writers' worlds, evil is in the East; this is not surprising in an England threatened by Nazi Germany (and many other "eastern" invasions throughout its history). God's country is in the opposite direction, across the sea, connected with ancient legends about Hesperus, the evening star, Venus, the light in the West, and magical islands out in the sea.

In all three writers' worlds, heroic characters achieve a great quest and leave this earthly realm for a heavenly one, attaining a spiritual fulfillment that has both historical and personal implications for England and for the individual Christian.

If Tolkien had finished *The Fall of Arthur* and if the Inklings had put all their Arthurian

ideas together, they could have produced the kind of totalizing English mythology that Tolkien attempted, but abandoned.

What would have happened had they been put together? Here are five suggestions, especially areas of difference or contradiction.

First, there would be problems with astronomy and cosmology. Is the world round or flat? Is Avalon on an island beyond Ireland, or on the planet Venus?

Second, what happened to Arthur? In Tolkien, he is on Avalon/Tol Earessea/or Valinor. In Lewis, he is on Venus. In Williams, he is dead.

Third, all three have contemporary heirs of Arthur who are still alive in 20th-century England. For Tolkien, Arthur's heirs are either the kings of England or the elf-friends. For Lewis, it is the line of the Pendragon: Ransom; then possibly Arthur Denniston (as a member of the New York C.S. Lewis Society suggested to me); then Mark & Jane's child—always one person to teach spiritual truth and keep Logres alive. Similarly, in Williams, there will always be a "household" or members of something very much like an occult secret society to pass down the truths about co-inherence. All three, then, are about a kind of secret tradition passed on.

Fourth, what about Merlin? There is no Merlin in Tolkien's *Fall of Arthur*; his role is taken by Gandalf in *Lord of the Rings*. Would Gandalf have appeared in *The Fall of Arthur* if Tolkien had continued working on it? If so, that works together beautifully with Lewis' and Williams' versions, because Merlin is operative in Williams' poetry and then goes into hibernation and is woken up again in Lewis'. The Gandalf/Merlin figure could have been a point of consistency across the three historical eras: (1) the time of the elves, Valar, and Maiar; (2) the time of Arthur (Roman/Saxon Britain); (3) 20th-century England.

Fifth, the importance of sacred objects. There is no Grail in Tolkien's story; he did not

like the Arthurian material because it was too Christian (Carpenter, qtd. in Lacon); there are sacred spaces/places in his geography instead. There is no Grail in Lewis; the people are the focus of the sacred energy (i.e., Merlin taking the Oyeresu into him, or Ransom serving a role like High Priest, etc.). In Williams, the Grail is central. As he was planning his Arthurian poetry, Williams wrote an essay on the history of the Eucharist, and his poem is "the great modern Grail poem" of the 20th century (Dodds 1). This illustrates their spiritual differences: Tolkien was a Roman Catholic who kept any explicit reference to Christianity out of his works, since they are set in a pre-Christian (even, some works, a pre-human) world; Lewis was a "mere" Anglican, wanting to teach plain doctrine; and Williams was an Anglican and an occult master channeling spiritual, sexual, and creative energies for doctrinal purposes.

VII. Conclusions?

And yet, what is the point of this comparison? There is no composite Inklings Arthuriad. Tolkien did not finish *The Fall of Arthur*. He stopped.

Why did he stop? "Tolkien had been interested in Arthurian literature since childhood" (Hughes 125) and Carpenter records that the Arthurian legends "excited him" when he was a boy (Carpenter 30), but:

> during the nineteen-twenties and thirties Tolkien's imagination was running
> along two distinct courses that did not meet. On the one side were the stories
> composed for mere amusement, often specifically for the entertainment of his
> children. On the other were the grander themes, sometimes Arthurian or Celtic,
> but usually associated with his own legends. (Carpenter 174-5).

The difficulties of the larger Legendarium, especially the evolution of *The Silmarillion* and the

attempts to write *The Lost Road*, may have distracted him from finishing *The Fall of Arthur* (*Fall of Arthur* 154).

And, of course, we cannot examine a work of literature that does not exist. From one point of view, this entire talk today has been a waste of time: I have been presenting features of a non-existent book. There is no *Legend of King Arthur* by Lewis, Tolkien, and Williams. From another point of view, I hope it has not been a waste of time, because of course I have been talking about texts that do exist: *The Fall of Arthur*, all of Tolkien's drafts and notebooks, Lewis's "Launcelot" fragment, and all of their published works. A greater theoretical pitfall would be to discuss authorial intentionality and focus solely on which texts represent their "final intention." We do not have that work. It was not written. But we do have those texts I have been discussing today, and I hope I have shed some light on them. I also hope to examine these questions much more closely and at more length in the forthcoming collection *The Inklings and King Arthur*.

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