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**Sceptics and Non-believers in the Works of C. S. Lewis as a  
Reflection of his Early Atheism**

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### Zásady pro vypracování:

Although C. S. Lewis is most known for his religious fiction and his Christian thinking, there are prominent sceptic characters in his works, whose objections against faith in general very often reflect the objections C. S. Lewis had himself before he became a devoted Christian. Through these characters, I explore what led them to their scepticism, atheism, what arguments they use against faith and how all of this is connected with C. S. Lewis's personal religious journey.

1. Introduction
2. Social background and context
3. Clive Staples Lewis's biography & his religious journey
4. Analysis of the selected works
5. Conclusion

### Seznam doporučené literatury:

- Lewis, Clive Staples. *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1970.  
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Kemp, Thomas. *The New British Christianity of C. S. Lewis*. Louisiana State University, 2019.

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### **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma “Sceptics and Non-believers in the Works of C. S. Lewis as a Reflection of his Early Atheism” vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne.....

Podpis.....

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## 1 Introduction

When one speaks of C. S. Lewis, the first thing that often comes to mind are his remarkable *Chronicles of Narnia* as well as his Christian beliefs as he is widely considered to be the Christian author of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the modern world with his ground-breaking fiction and non-fiction. There are, however, other aspects of Lewis's life, which might seem rather surprising to many, for instance, he was not always such a devoted Christian as many would assume. On the contrary, there were times in his life, that he spent being an atheist and a sceptic and there were many factors that played a role in Lewis's faith and beliefs in general. The background information about Great Britain, its writers, and the changes in writing because of World War I will consequently be presented in this thesis, as well as the general switch in the Christian beliefs during and after World War I. The post-war times are mentioned in this thesis as the background information to Lewis's writing as he was deployed to go fight in the trenches during World War I himself, and it was during these times, that he was writing atheistic poetry. Hence, his religious journey was not an easy one and Lewis went through numerous transitions.

To explain Lewis's atheism and scepticism, one needs to consider what he went through as a child and a young adult, therefore, Lewis's early life regarding his journey as a Christian will be analysed in this thesis as well. This part will be focused on Lewis's childhood, his experience at several boarding schools as well as his experience as a soldier in World War I. And finally, I will touch on Lewis's conversion back to Christianity and shortly mention his successful career at Oxford and Cambridge.

The main concern of this thesis, however, will be finding links and resemblances between the sceptical characters in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and Lewis's own scepticism and the causes of it thereof. Thus, my main focus will be on the themes of alienation from family, rebellion, loneliness, the mythology of Jesus and Aslan, and Irish identity. At the beginning of each chapter in the literary analysis, my aim is to first introduce the theme regarding Lewis's religious journey and consequently relate it to the story of the fictional character being discussed. The bachelor thesis will not only analyse Lewis's scepticism and some of the causes of it, but will present characters in his works, which strongly resemble the actions and the experiences of the Christian author himself.

## 2 Social background and context

In this chapter, I draw upon *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe, and a Great War* written by Joseph Loconte when describing the times of World War I and its effects on British society.<sup>1</sup> My primary focus will be on the post-war times in England, its consequences, and its challenges. I have chosen to write about this time period in order to explain what Lewis lived through as an atheist and, therefore, I also attempt to look for the connection between World War I and Lewis's scepticism. I consider it crucial to introduce the background of the society, which defined Lewis's early years in order to have a better understanding of his religious thinking. Firstly, there are numerous ways in which World War I changed the lives of many people. We could speak of the suffering of soldiers being deployed, the depression that many families experienced due to the loss of their loved ones, or the Christian faith that so many forgot to hold onto. The saviours of this period might have been writers and artists in general since some of them tried to describe the challenges of this era the best they could. There is no doubt, however, that these times brought anxiety, uncertainty, and an unfamiliar sense of hope for something far away from Christianity, hope in human progress, and the abilities of a man, which turned the focus from belief in god to the belief in humans and their limited power. I will explain some of the changes in both writing and faith, that took place during World War I and in the post-wartime in Great Britain.

### 2.1 Change in writing in Great Britain after WWI

Firstly, it is important to discuss one of the two major historic events of the 20th century. I will look at the major impact it left on British society and its faith and beliefs. Great Britain does not believe in the separation of church and the head of state, since the head of state is the head of the Anglican church, the queen, "Cross and Crown must be kept together."<sup>2</sup> It is hard to imagine how else people would justify World War I and its devastating consequences, other than by blaming Christianity, which was extremely politicised during the war. It has been proven that living through such depressing times and experiencing the economy and the society change so drastically turns everything upside down. People lose their faith and usually find comfort in depressing art, which they can personally relate to. As Joseph Loconte said: "Like no

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Loconte, *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe, and a Great War* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

other force in history, the First World War permanently altered the political and cultural landscape of Europe, America and the West.”<sup>3</sup>

It comes as no surprise that artists, painters, and writers decided to depict these challenging times in their art and writing. War was often perceived as the source of evil and it must have been difficult to imagine the light at the end of the tunnel. Loconte further argues that: “The unprecedented butchery of the war produced not only a deep sense of grief and disillusionment. It created a feeling of helplessness, a psychological gloom among the survivors.”<sup>4</sup> Writers all over the world shifted their style to help the reader find some comfort and understanding, to provide them with a transition to new, different times.

For instance, William Carlos Williams, an American poet was judged for his real dark poetry, since he was describing things exactly as they were: “By the road to the contagious hospital.”<sup>5</sup> He was often heavily criticized for his straightforward and raw style of writing, as well as for his positive outlook of the post-war times, which he also depicted in *Spring and All*. William Carlos Williams saw the end of World War I as an opportunity to plant new seeds and to rise again despite the challenges of it. One of the many great British poets, T.S. Eliot took a similar approach. In his satirical poem *The Waste Land*, he describes the shift in society, the realities of war, and also the connection to Christianity.

What other ways were there to communicate the struggles and the injustice of the war, rather than through literature, despite the costs it came with. One of the many great writers, Ernest Hemingway said in *Men at War: The Best War Stories of All Time* that “The only true writing that came through during the war was in poetry. One reason for this is that poets are not arrested as quickly as prose writers.”<sup>6</sup> There was a certain need to adapt to the new challenging times, to appeal to the new type of consumer of literature, which was very often an individual, shattered by war, lost in their thoughts, desperately looking for some comfort and compassion. The mood of some of the book titles during this time period spoke for itself: Burns’s *Modern Civilization and Trial*

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<sup>3</sup> Loconte, *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe and a Great War*, xii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>5</sup> William C. Williams, *Spring and All* (Paris: Contact Pub. Co., 1923), 11.

<sup>6</sup> Hemingway, Ernest and William Kozlenko, *Men and War: The Best War Stories of All Time* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1942), xiii.

(1931) or Dearmer's *Christianity and the Crisis* (1933), as Loconte mentioned in his *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe and a Great War*.

With the obvious shift in mood in all areas of art, modernism in literature was becoming more popular due to the different needs of self-expression after the war. Modernism was considered a break from traditional writing in both prose and poetry. The reader of a modernist work has to read in-between the lines to understand the text and be more active in his own interpretation. *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot is a great example of a typical modernist work since it explores the isolation and depression which the post-war generation suffered from. It specifically highlights the alienation of the post-war society and the survivors of war traumatized by their past. For instance, in the first part of the poem, the "Burial of the Dead" one finds symbolism of the great suffering of alienation and loneliness that many survivors of World War I underwent: "A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many. I had not thought death had undone so many. Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled, And each man fixed his eyes before his feet."<sup>7</sup> After this, a survivor of the war shouts "Stetson!"<sup>8</sup> as he recognises a fellow former soldier, however, he is met with no reply. This poem also explores the values and morals of Christianity and the resurrection, as well as the meaning of death. "The spiritual crisis is what has led to the modern wasteland, to a "burial of the dead" (as the first section is titled) among people who are in fact still living."<sup>9</sup>

World War I impacted the new post-war world in many other ways. The Spanish Flu or the Spanish Influenza supposedly killed an estimated number of 50 million people worldwide. Thus, it comes as no surprise that there was a need for escape or for something to hold onto. Perhaps the solution to this was one's imagination and the alternative realities that emerged in the minds of many. The world of Narnia or the Middle-earth serve as great examples of this since they are two worlds of two very distinguishable alternative realities, which might not have existed if it was not for the atrocities of World War I.

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<sup>7</sup> T.S. Eliot. *The Waste Land and other poems* (New York: Signet Classic, 1998), 35.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Jessica Malordy. "The Waste Land" LitCharts LLC.(2020), <https://www.litcharts.com/poetry/t-s-eliot/the-waste-land>, 11.

## 2.2 Detachment from Christianity in Britain after WWI

As I mentioned in my previous subchapter, World War I brought many challenges to British Society, and in this part of my thesis, I will discuss the changed perception of Christianity, how it became a weapon of war, and the issue with justifying the war in the name of God.

One could say that the Christian religion was losing its believers after it failed to deliver them some sort of relief during World War I. Soldiers, who lived through the experiences of the war suffered from emptiness, depression, and new mental health disorders, therefore, they were looking for a cure. One of the attractive ideologies to explain these sufferings was for instance Freudian psychology or scientism. According to Loconte: “Though these ideas may have originated before the war, by the 1920s they were gaining ground rapidly in Europe and the United States.”<sup>10</sup> Christianity just was not enough any longer, it “appeared to lack any explanatory power.”<sup>11</sup>

Not only was the Christian religion losing popularity as people were gradually becoming more doubtful, but it was also blamed for the evil atrocities caused by World War I on top of all else. This was most likely caused due to the Christian beliefs being politicalized and weaponized during the war, since one of the nicknames for World War I was also the “holy war”. Loconte claims that: “The alliance of church and state allowed the secular goals of government to get mixed up with spiritual goals of Christianity.”<sup>12</sup> Hence, the failure of the nation could have also meant the failure of its faith. At the beginning of World War I, soldiers were told that they were going to fight for Britain as the “nation chosen by God.”<sup>13</sup> It is therefore hard to imagine the possibility of British soldiers coming back whilst retaining their Christian beliefs, after living through the cruelty and unfairness of the war and seeing innocent souls die for their chosen nation.

Perhaps the absence of God in the fate of some of these soldiers was the reason why the Christian religion was not an appropriate option to heal these broken souls anymore. John Keegan mentions in his book *The Face of Battle* that some soldiers “crawled into shell holes, wrapped their waterproof sheets around them, taken out their

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<sup>10</sup> Loconte, *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe and a Great War*, 111.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 34

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

Bibles and died like that.”<sup>14</sup> Although, some claim that just a few soldiers would identify as Christians, according to David Cairns: “The religion of ninety percent of men at the front is not distinctively Christian, but a religion of patriotism and of valor.”<sup>15</sup>

There was a tendency to find an alternative faith to Christianity after the end of the war. Many believed that they did not need God at all because they saw the remarkable achievements of humans, as more war equipment was developed, and hence, they believed that the power laid in the hands of humans rather than some higher energy. Loconte mentions the “Myth of Progress”<sup>16</sup> in his book, which was an explanation of the “substitute faith”<sup>17</sup> or else the faith in human progress, as a result of World War I. Furthermore, it was believed that “with the help of the modern technologies, wars could be fought and won with minimal cost in life and treasure.”<sup>18</sup> Overall, science-based technology turned out to be a great asset to the quality of life for many people. As historian Roger Osborne explains, it improved sanitation as well as medicine, and living conditions in general. The productivity of industry was enhanced as well as the treatment of diseases,<sup>19</sup> which was partly caused by the Spanish Flu.

It is thus not surprising to see the fall of Christianity for a while after the end of World War I before faith in certain religions was restored. How could there be a God in a world, where there was so much hatred, injustice, and evil; this is a question that must have been asked frequently amongst the British generation, having lived through World War I. Similar questions must have also been a major motivating factor for the literary works of writers, who were doubting their own faith and beliefs, such as Lewis himself, who went into World War I as an atheist and the experience of war just confirmed the reasoning of his atheism. He is now widely known and remembered, however, as a devoted Christian. Therefore, in the following chapters, I will attempt to explain how Lewis’s position of his faith changed with time and I will also mention

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<sup>14</sup> John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Pimlico, 1991), 296.

<sup>15</sup> David Cairns, *The Army and Religion, an Enquiry and its Bearing Upon the Religious Life of the Nation*. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1919), 10.

<sup>16</sup> Loconte, *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe and a Great War*, 35.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>19</sup> Roger Osborne, *Civilization: A New History of the Western World* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2006), 400, 420..

the influence of others around him, regarding his beliefs, which seemed to impact him a great deal. Moreover, I will analyse the development of his own spiritual journey and the possible causes of his atheism and scepticism in his early years.

### 3 Clive Staples Lewis's biography - his journey from atheism to Christianity

In this part of my bachelor thesis, I will primarily focus on Lewis's life and his religious journey. When mentioning certain events in the life of Lewis, I draw upon the information from the *C.S. Lewis Foundation* website<sup>20</sup> as well as from *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*.<sup>21</sup> Firstly, I would like to reflect on the most important events in the writer's life and how they impacted his atheism, then theism, and finally his Christian faith. Lewis had the opportunity to let himself be guided and shaped by several different people, that he met throughout his life, during World War I and later at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. His closest companions shared very contrasting ideas, for a comparison, Lewis was very close with his atheistic tutor Kirkpatrick as well as with his lifelong friend Owen Barfield, to whom he dedicated his book *Allegory of Love* in 1936. There was one outstanding friend of C. S. Lewis's, without whom, the world of Narnia might have never existed, J. R. R. Tolkien, who happened to play a major role in Lewis's life as well as in his faith.

To understand Lewis's changing faith, it is important to understand that there was not just one thing that drew him away from Christianity, rather, it was a combination of many events, experiences, and other people's influences. Lewis often talked about logic and how his reasoning simply could not allow him to understand Christianity. There were discussions about Christianity being yet another myth, without real meaning or purpose in the current world. As Humphrey Carpenter argues in *The Inklings*: "He found it impossible to make his prayers sincere, partly because he did not think that Christianity had much relation to the largely unhappy world around him, and partly because the Bible did not appeal to him as a story."<sup>22</sup> In order to understand his atheism, it is crucial to take a look at his childhood, the death of his mother, Lewis's

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<sup>20</sup> "The Life of C.S. Lewis Timeline." C.S. Lewis Foundation, February 4, 2020. <https://www.cslewis.org/resource/chronocsl/>

<sup>21</sup> Humphrey Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends* (London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2006),

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

experience with different schools, and finally, his own identity as a soldier in World War I.

In this chapter, I will analyse Lewis's life from the perspective of his changing stand towards faith and Christianity specifically. I will mainly focus on the parts of his life, which had the most profound impact on his faith, since his childhood was quite complicated and nearly everyone around him was religious. Finally, to some, it might come as a surprise that Lewis turned his back on Christianity, but his early life and most importantly his literary work suggest a different story.

### **3.1 Early life and childhood**

Although, it tends to be a tradition of many families to teach their children their religion and the morals surrounding it, many of these children, who are brought up being taught a religion break free from it later in life. It might be a kind of a rebellion whilst growing up and very often, many do not come back to their original beliefs. This was not the case for Lewis, who was brought up in Northern Ireland in a Christian household, a grandchild of a priest of the Church of Ireland, Thomas Hamilton, who influenced him greatly, and a great-grandchild of both, bishop Hugh Hamilton and John Staples. It seems as if Lewis was destined to make such a huge impact as a Christian, even if it did not seem like that from the very beginning of his career as an author.

Clive Staples Lewis was born in Belfast in 1898, on 29 November. As I have already mentioned, he was born into a Christian household with a long history connected to the Church of Ireland. He had a brother, Warren who was three years older than him and they remained good companions for their lifetime, given the circumstances of life and the experiences they both shared. Through Lewis's trauma and the events that took place in his life, I seek to understand his religious journey as well as the causes of his atheism and his overall sceptical approach to the Christian faith.

To be able to understand Lewis and his journey as a Christian from the very beginning, it is important to look at faith the way he did as a child; and to Lewis, it was more of a chore, to do a prayer and go to the church rather than it being a personal relationship of an individual with God and Jesus. What is more, Lewis in his own diary described his faith as "more of a religion of the head than a religion of the heart."<sup>23</sup> Young

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<sup>23</sup> Joel D. Heck, *From Atheism to Christianity: The Story of C. S. Lewis* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 6.

Lewis suffered from a great deal of trauma, partly due to his mother's early death when he was only nine, which also complicated his relationship with his father as he failed to connect with him even before his mother's death. Carpenter described Lewis's experience with his mother's death in *The Inklings*: "She had cancer. Jack prayed that God would make her better, but she went on being ill."<sup>24</sup> First, Jack was a nickname of Lewis's which was originally the name of their pet dog, that got hit by a car when Lewis was just four years old, and ever since then, he had adopted the name as his own. Secondly, it is important to mention Lewis's attachment to his mother and the need for motherly love, which he knew he would not receive from his father.

Carpenter analyses the mental state of Lewis after his mother's death in *The Inklings*: "After that, everything changed. Jack would still have moments of happiness, but the old unshakeable comfort had gone. As he himself said, 'It was sea and islands now. The great continent had sunk like Atlantis'"<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, Lewis's mother died before he had a chance to get to know her properly and now, he was left with his cold-hearted, well-mannered father. Carpenter argues that: "His father, who worked as a solicitor in Belfast, was changeable in mood, and Jack felt more comfortable with his mother, who behaved in the same calm affectionate way all the time."<sup>26</sup> Oftentimes, when going through difficult times, even religious people tend to blame God for their suffering and many times, they question his existence or the existence of any religion at all. It comes as no surprise that young Lewis was traumatized and confused. Joel Heck mentions in *From Atheism to Christianity: The Story of C. S. Lewis*: "That tragic death began a long journey for nine-year-old Lewis, and the primary conclusion he made was that, if such tragic events can happen, God must not exist. God is supposed to be good, and no God would have allowed such tragedy."<sup>27</sup> Perhaps, this only proved to young Lewis that the prayers he learnt as a child and his visits to the Sunday church mass failed to heal his mother and to bring her back to life. Furthermore, Lewis would often get lost in his books as a coping strategy to what was happening around him. He would rather be reading for hours than socializing with his father, as has been mentioned in *The Inklings*. Fortunately, Lewis was very close with his brother Warren, and they remained this way until life circumstances would make them distant from one another, such as boarding school or World War I.

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<sup>24</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*, 14.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>27</sup> Heck, *From Atheism to Christianity: The Story of C. S. Lewis*, 8.

Luckily, they both shared a love for literature and reading in general: “Warnie liked stories about steamships and trains and India, while Jack liked to write about animals who did heroic deeds.”<sup>28</sup> Therefore, Warren was a huge support system for Lewis, but “even his brother’s companionship could not entirely lighten the oppressiveness of the big house, with its stuffy routine now dictated entirely by his father.”<sup>29</sup>

The relationship between Lewis and his father made him feel rather alienated and misunderstood, which could have been one of the causes of his atheism. The loss of his faith could also be seen as a rebellion against his father’s traditions and manners, since they were never quite close in the first place. Carpenter says about Lewis in *The Inklings*: “He was never at ease at his real home in Belfast; his father lived according to an enervating daily routine and was also perpetually inquisitive into his sons’ lives. This made Warnie and Jack draw apart from their parent.”<sup>30</sup> Lewis and his father became even more isolated in their own worlds as Lewis left his Belfast home and moved to a boarding school in England, and his father, therefore, stayed in the family house alone, continuing his strict daily routines.

All things considered; it appears that Lewis acknowledged his atheism when he was sent to the Cherbourg House as a student in 1911. Hence, he was very young when he abandoned his childhood faith.<sup>31</sup> Fortunately, he was a good student and was very fond of studying, especially anything surrounding literature. However, the environment for his studies was not always friendly and inviting. Lewis was bullied and underwent a series of strange occurrences with homosexuality during his studies at Malvern school, the Cherbourg House (a prep school that Lewis was enrolled in).<sup>32</sup> “For the next two years Jack had to endure grossly incompetent teaching, bad food, stinking sanitation, arbitrarily inflicted beatings, and perpetual fear. It was a terrible introduction to the outer world.”<sup>33</sup> Lewis also claimed that he and his brother Warren had no friends or had very little interest in their studies due to poor education strategies.<sup>34</sup> For instance, in one of his early letters to his father, young Lewis described the Wynyard School in Watford as a “hole” and his brother Warren complained that he was making no progress in Math whatsoever, since

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<sup>28</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

he was given the same four math problems repeatedly, due to the issues with the Headmaster Capron at the Wynyard School.<sup>35</sup> It is said, however, that the discomfort of the Wynyard School brought the two brothers together and helped them to develop a more protective and closer relationship. Lewis enrolled in the Cherbourg House, which was a prep school next to the Malvern College, which Warren was attending, in 1911, and with his enrolment in this school, the decline in his childhood Christian faith started.<sup>36</sup>

The unhappiness that Lewis began to feel at school was due to various reasons. He struggles to make friends as he was bullied, partly because of his inability to participate in certain sports activities due to his medical condition, and there is also a possibility that he was bullied because of his Irish accent, which distinguished him from the other English boys. Michael Nelson argues in “C. S. Lewis and His Critics” that: “his bookishness and unathleticism isolated him from most of the other boys.”<sup>37</sup> This time, it was not the teaching that was making the experience unpleasant, but rather the little sleep, lack of privacy and the on-going commands from older boys.<sup>38</sup> At this point in life, Lewis wished to have more time for reading, writing and studying in general, which was not given to him due to the strict regime and rules at the Cherbourg House. All this combined must have contributed to his alarming unhappiness and discomfort. And on top of all else, there was the unpleasant experience of homosexuality in between the boys at school. Carpenter argues in *The Inklings*: “Two things in particular alarmed him. One was homosexuality, especially the flirtations of the older boys with the younger.”<sup>39</sup> Being bullied and picked on certainly contributed to Lewis’s unhappiness at school and throughout his teenage years, in which he abandoned his faith. He was fortunate enough to have tutors and companions, who truly contributed to his literary individualism and his view of religion.

### **3.2 C.S. Lewis as a sceptic and a soldier in World War I**

In this subchapter, I will not only analyse Lewis’s experience with World War I, but I will also look at the decline of his Christianity, which turned into a complete denial of God. I will examine the possible reasons for his scepticism, considering the

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<sup>35</sup> Heck, *From Atheism to Christianity: The Story of C.S. Lewis*, 13.

<sup>36</sup> C. S. Lewis Foundation: “The Life of C. S. Lewis Timeline”. February 4th, 2020. <https://www.cslewis.org/resource/chronocs/>

<sup>37</sup> Michael Nelson, “C. S. Lewis and His Critics” (*The Virginia Quarterly Review* (vol. 64): pp. 1-19. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1988), 3.

<sup>38</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*, 15.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

people that Lewis was surrounded by and the outcome of his experience with World War I.

Lewis was not particularly thrilled to be turning into a young adult during World War I when an increasing number of soldiers were still being deployed, England saw numerous deaths of soldiers on battlefields, and he hoped to have an academic career as he was already working on some of his atheistic poetry collections before being called to go into World War I. Not only was Lewis trying to avoid going into the war,<sup>40</sup> but he was also extremely anxious about suffering from a serious injury in the war. This was documented in some of Lewis's journal entries during this period.<sup>41</sup> Lewis was hoping that the war would end before he would be old enough to go fight for his nation and he waited, until on his 19th birthday, on the 29th November 1917 he was deployed to the front line in Somme Valley in France. According to Loconte, both Tolkien and Lewis shared the same goals that they went into the war with, they were hoping to "fight honourably, survive the trenches intact, and pick up their academic careers where the war had interrupted them."<sup>42</sup>

It is important to point out that before Lewis became a soldier, he had already begun his studies at Oxford in 1916. Unfortunately, his studies were interrupted by having to leave for France in 1917. Lewis started to abandon his faith much earlier in his life, therefore, he already went into the war as an atheist, and his "letters during this period, when touching on matters of faith were generally sceptical."<sup>43</sup> The war did not change anything for Lewis apart from confirming his strong standing position in atheism. Joel Heck argues that: "Lewis's service in that war, beginning in 1917 cemented him in his atheistic position."<sup>44</sup> Fortunately, his experience with war was quite shortcut due to getting wounded early in 1918 and after recovering, Lewis stayed in England, before being discharged in December 1919. For Lewis, the end of the war meant returning to Oxford and looking after the mother of his late friend Paddy Moore, who died in the trenches. And with that, a lot of rumours surrounding his relationship with Mrs Moore, Paddy's mother began. By 1922, Lewis was working on his atheistic poem called

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<sup>40</sup> C. S. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume 1: Family Letters* (London: HarperCollins e-books, 2009), 89.

<sup>41</sup> Don W. King, *C. S. Lewis: The Legacy of His Poetic Impulse* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2001), 55.

<sup>42</sup> Loconte, *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe and a Great War*, 47.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>44</sup> Heck, *From Atheism to Christianity: The Story of C. S. Lewis*, 19.

“Dymer” and “he had been living with Mrs Moore for three years, and now that she had come into his life, he took no further romantic interest in girls of his own age.”<sup>45</sup> It is said that he kept this relationship very secretive as a lot of his friends had asked him about it privately and he would never share any details. Carpenter claims that: “On the other hand, nobody who knew Jack Lewis supposed seriously that Mrs Moore was his mistress.”<sup>46</sup>

It is not known whether there was something more than just a ‘motherly’ relationship between Lewis and Mrs Moore. In *The Inklings*, it is mentioned that: “By the time that Jack left for France he and Mrs Moore were behaving to each other like mother and son.”<sup>47</sup> Perhaps Lewis was so close to her due to the lack of motherly love in his life and also due to the alienation from his own father, that took place after Lewis’s mother’s death. His cold distance from his father was especially obvious whenever he would get a short break at Oxford because “he stayed for most of it with the Moores at their Bristol home, going home to his father in Belfast only for the final few days.”<sup>48</sup> Consequently, his father would be rather upset and hurt by Lewis’s uninterest in going to visit him for longer periods of time.<sup>49</sup> This does nothing but shows the magnitude of Lewis’s alienation from his father as well as from his own beliefs that were taught to him when he was still living in Belfast.

At Oxford, Lewis enjoyed discussing the topic of faith with his friends and later colleagues whilst he was teaching philosophy during 1924-1925, however, sometimes he would feel like an outsider due to all his friends and favourite writers being Christian.<sup>50</sup> One novel, in particular, inspired him greatly. It was written by George MacDonald and called *Phantastes*. Carpenter argues that during this time “he adopted a benevolent but condescending attitude to Christianity, which he said was a myth conveying as much of the truth as simple minds could grasp.”<sup>51</sup> What bothered him was that among these “simple minds were men whose thinking he profoundly admired in other respects.”<sup>52</sup> This also included his friends at Oxford, “Tolkien was a Catholic, and Greeves and Coghill were Anglicans.”<sup>53</sup> It is possible that Lewis saw this as quite unfortunate, since he did not

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<sup>45</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*, 27.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

share the same stand on faith as his close companions did and was, thus finally determined to discuss the topic more and possibly learn from them.

One of Lewis's major objections against Christianity was preventing him from converting to the belief of his companions. Lewis used to love reading about the mythology of the Norse Gods "it was when reading pagan stories, especially the myths of the Norsemen, that he experienced his most profound sensations of delight."<sup>54</sup> This happened to be one of his explanations for the story of Jesus Christ, which he looked at as yet another mythology and just another story of a "dead legend". Lewis was so fond of the Northern myth that he wrote a tragedy (an epic poem) called "Loki Bound" about it when he was only 14 years old, and in which he expresses both his love for the Norse gods and his neglect of Christianity and its view of the current world.<sup>55</sup> To put it simply, it is almost certain that one of Lewis's main objections, which was preventing him from converting back to Christianity was that Jesus Christ to him, was just another prophet of different mythology, and was therefore long gone. In addition to this, Lewis highly questioned the resurrection of Jesus: "He could not understand how the death and resurrection of Christ were relevant to humanity."<sup>56</sup> However, long discussions with his Christian colleagues at Oxford full of constructive arguments finally made Lewis reconsider his position on the Christian faith, making him less and less doubtful about the Christian story and more hopeful that it was all true and real after all.

### **3.3 His rediscovery of faith and life as a Christian**

From atheism to theism, from Norse Gods to Jesus, Lewis was finally able to admit that he was a Christian by 1931 thanks to his highly influential colleagues and friends at Oxford, who helped him overcome some of his main objections against the Christian faith and who offered him their standpoints through long arguments and discussions. Lewis himself admitted in *Surprised by Joy* that his conversion to Christianity was rather a lengthy process, but the moment he realised that he believed again was quite random: "When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we

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<sup>54</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*, 18.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 55.

reached the zoo I did.”<sup>57</sup> The religious epiphany happened on a bike ride with his brother Warren, driving back home after the meeting with other members at Oxford.<sup>58</sup>

Lewis became very influential and not only through his writing. One of his Christian non-fiction works *Mere Christianity* was originally just a series of BBC talks, which consisted of Lewis’s thoughts on God and the Christian life and was broadcasted during the times of World War II. This was very exceptional, to be sharing religious beliefs during such devastating times. In one of his broadcasts still available to us today Lewis says: “The Christian life is simply a process of having your natural self-changed into Christ self. And that this process goes on very far inside. One’s most private wishes, one’s point of view are the things that have to be changed.”<sup>59</sup> Perhaps, he could only speak from his own experience and his own religious transformation discussed in this subchapter.

As has already been mentioned in this thesis, Tolkien played a major role in Lewis’s religious journey, as he was the one to point him in that direction. These two seemed to have a great deal in common, not only in their faith and general beliefs. Moreover, being a veteran of World War I was a reason for a lot of war symbolism, which very often went hand in hand with the Christian symbolism in Narnia, as well as in the Middle-Earth. Tolkien and Lewis remained close companions for quite some time and helped each other when it came to both their fiction writing and their faith.

After converting back to Christianity, Lewis spent his days mostly teaching at the University of Oxford, and he remained in this profession for nearly 30 years. At Oxford, he was a member of a group called “The Inklings” alongside Owen Barfield, Charles Williams, his brother Warren and others. Furthermore, Lewis carried on writing other several influential works, such as a volume on 16<sup>th</sup> Century English Literature for the *Oxford History of English Literature series*, which was published in 1954. During World War II, he gave talks on the BBC radio known as “Right or Wrong” and The Guardian published 31 of his “Screwtape Letters” and therefore, Lewis was adequately paid.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2012), 194.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> BBC Home Service Basic: Series of talks by C. S. Lewis , Magdalen College, Oxford : 5— ' Lets Pretend ', 'Beyond Personality: The Christian View of God' (1944)  
<https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/e75d2ffcd6a3410180724213c52475f1>

<sup>60</sup> C. S. Lewis Foundation: “The Life of C. S. Lewis Timeline”. February 4th, 2020.  
<https://www.cslewis.org/resource/chronocsl/>

Before Lewis's transition to Cambridge, the first book from *The Chronicles of Narnia* was published and his beloved Mrs. Moore passed away. Consequently, after some time, Lewis married Joy Davidman, and became a stepfather of her two sons, but he never had children of his own. His wife, Joy, died of cancer and perhaps, this could have been the last test of Lewis's Christian faith as he must have been shattered by Joy's death. Unfortunately, Lewis did not live until his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday as he passed on the same day as President Kennedy, due to his assassination in 1963. Thus, not nearly enough people learnt of Lewis's passing but one thing remains certain, Lewis's extraordinary journey with faith and his remarkable works of both fiction and non-fiction will not only prevail in schools, libraries, universities but most importantly, in people's minds, no matter their faith and beliefs.

## 4 Analysis of the selected works

In this chapter, my intention is to analyse two books from *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian*, as well as *The Screwtape Letters* from the viewpoint of Lewis's scepticism and the causes of it, described in previous chapters. I will firstly look at Edmund and his alienation and loneliness, resembling Lewis's relationship with his dad as well as his relocation from Ireland to England. Secondly, I will touch on the position of the dwarfs in Narnia regarding Aslan and his resemblance with Jesus and thus, I will attempt to compare the Norse Mythology, which prevented Lewis from converting back to Christianity, to the mythology of Aslan in Narnia. Lastly, I will analyse Narnia and the war of the Old Narnians against the Telmarines from the Irish perspective of Lewis, as well as his critique of the English through the character of Screwtape.

### 4.1 C. S. Lewis's scepticism reflected in the characters from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia* and *The Screwtape Letters*

Firstly, I have chosen to analyse these three fiction books due to the atheistic and Christian symbolism in all of them. Not only there is a lot of symbolism regarding religion and faith, but most importantly, there are characters, whose behaviour directly reflects Lewis and his journey with atheism and the possible objections he had against the Christian faith. To be specific, the characters most discussed will be Nikabrik, Edmund, and Screwtape as there are many elements in each of their stories that seem to have been written by Lewis from his own experience of being a sceptic. To be an atheist or a sceptic, one must have certain objections against religion, and as I discussed in chapter 3, Lewis alone was influenced by many events and people in his life, and any of those events could have led to the loss of his faith. I focus specifically on the alienation from family and values of family that Lewis went through after the death of his mother, reflected in the character of Edmund, who deals with his form of alienation himself, since after he falls under the control of the White Witch, who symbolizes the Devil in the *Chronicles of Narnia* and alienates himself from his siblings.

I will also focus on the topic of myth and Norse Mythology as one of the objections Lewis had against turning to Christianity, also reflected in some characters from *Prince Caspian* as the doubt towards the story of Jesus and his resurrection. As Prince Caspian

goes on an adventure to seek help from the first queens and kings of Narnia as well as Aslan, the dwarfs of the forest join him and rather question his beliefs and intentions. Therefore, there are characters in this book from the *Chronicles of Narnia*, which directly reflect some of Lewis's views of Christianity and the story of Jesus Christ specifically.

Lastly, I will also focus on Lewis's experience with World War I and with the Irish rebellion and how that has translated into his work, specifically in *Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia*. It is known that the war experience only confirmed Lewis's atheism and the atrocities he saw in the war made him more doubtful about God than ever before. Therefore, his war scepticism could be the reason for the war theme often occurring in his fiction. Additionally, the theme of war also occurs in *The Screwtape Letters*, where World War II is discussed as a breaking point for people as it either makes you an atheist or a strong believer.<sup>61</sup> Despite Lewis being affected by World War I, there was another major conflict happening in the background of his life, regarding his native roots in Northern Ireland. This subject will be discussed in the last subchapter of this section, I will focus on how Lewis's Irish identity could have impacted his fictional writing.

#### **4.1.1 Rebellion against family - alienation**

Rebellion against one's family values can happen in various ways as some prefer to take or use certain substances, while others simply refuse to conform to their family member's traditions and habits. In the case of Lewis, as I mentioned in chapter 3.1, there was an obvious alienation from his family and values, especially after his mother's death. Lewis did not have such a personal and intimate relationship with his father as he did with his mother. It is possible that with his mother's death, he lost his father as well. Due to his father going through several traumatic events when Lewis was only a child, their relationship did not flourish at all, it was in fact, very much the opposite, Terry Lindvall argues that "Lewis's difficulty with his father is well documented. The strain of their relationship brought anger, anguish, and guilt upon the son."<sup>62</sup> Later, Lewis admitted that the strict Christian routine of his father made it very unappealing for him to pray and believe, and therefore, leaving his hometown and studying at a boarding school far away in England could have been both a relief and a curse. It was in sense a relief because

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<sup>61</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (with "Screwtape Proposes a Toast"); (London: HarperCollins e-books, 2009), 22.

<sup>62</sup> Terry Lindvall, *Surprised by Laughter: The Comic World of C.S. Lewis* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 23.

Lewis finally left the “stuffy routine”<sup>63</sup> which was “dictated entirely by his father”<sup>64</sup> but it was all at a cost of the suffering he went through at the all-boys schools in England, where he also first admitted to not being religious anymore.<sup>65</sup> Lewis’s alienation from his father and his hometown could be closely related to his loss of faith and belief in God. In *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis touches on this topic in one of Screwtape’s speeches as Screwtape himself ridicules routine-like prayer and teases about reminding a true believer of the learnt prayer from childhood that would bring back memories, which would increase the believer’s doubt about the existence of God. Screwtape says that: “When the patient is an adult recently re-converted to the Enemy's party, like your man, this is best done by encouraging him to remember, or to think he remembers, the parrot-like nature of his prayers in childhood.”<sup>66</sup> This could be a hidden symbolism of the routine like faith that made young Lewis doubt his beliefs, as he is not hesitant to picture this in his works as a Christian, who has every confidence in the existence of a higher power.

Similarly, to Lewis, who was not only able to make peace with religion, but also was a sceptic for quite some time in his life, there is one specific character in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, worth discussing from this point of view. Edmund, who is the second youngest of the siblings feels rather misunderstood by others and teases and ridicules Lucy, as she is the youngest of them all. He also often gets into useless arguments over things like weather or bedtime, for instance when Susan reminds him to go to sleep, he replies “Trying to talk like Mother,”<sup>67</sup> said Edmund. “And who are you to say when I’m to go to bed? Go to bed yourself.”<sup>68</sup> Edmund’s teasing peaks once Lucy tells her siblings about entering Narnia through the wardrobe. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, his character is described as follows: “Edmund could be spiteful, and on this occasion he was spiteful. He sneered and jeered at Lucy and kept on asking her if she’d found any other new countries in other cupboards all over the house.”<sup>69</sup> Edmund himself gets into the wardrobe just to make a mockery of Lucy’s faun tale: “he wanted to go on teasing her about her imaginary country.”<sup>70</sup> Soon Edmund finds himself in the very

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<sup>63</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*, 54.

<sup>66</sup> Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (with “Screwtape Proposes a Toast”), 18.

<sup>67</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (The Chronicles of Narnia, #1)* ; (London: HarperCollins e-books, 2008), 8.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 21.

country that he assumed was imaginary and just in his younger sister's head. Hence, it would be polite of Edmund to make an apology to Lucy, but this is where he first encounters the White Witch, the symbol of all evil. Unfortunately, Edmund falls under the power of the White Witch, eating all of her enchanted Turkish Delight, and believes all the lies he is told. There is an obvious detachment of Edmund away from his siblings, especially once he falls under the power of the White Witch, who immediately wins over his trust by giving him the enchanted Turkish Delight. He is somewhat tricked into this position by the character symbolizing the Devil. Once Edmund returns from Narnia, it seems as if he is completely changed, he appears as more evil-minded and malicious than before, and on top of that, he becomes a liar, following a plan given to him by the White Witch, the representation of all evil in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

One could say, however, that Edmund is not completely aware of the fact, that the intentions of the Witch might not be as good as he originally assumed. Thus, he is blindly following a plan without knowing the real consequences of it. The White Witch lies to Edmund about him becoming a prince of Narnia: "I think I would like to make you the Prince—some day, when you bring the others to visit me."<sup>71</sup> Edmund assumes that bringing his siblings along will not do much harm. Nevertheless, Edmund carries out his mischievous plan even after he finds out the truth about the White Witch, which indicates just how much she is able to control him and shape him into her blinded follower. This behaviour makes Edmund alienated even more, since he betrays Lucy again by lying about Narnia and gets into an argument with his oldest sibling: "Look here," said Peter, turning on him savagely, "shut up! You've been perfectly beastly to Lu ever since she started this nonsense about the wardrobe, and now you go playing games with her about it and setting her off again. I believe you did it simply out of spite."<sup>72</sup> No wonder, that Edmund feels a need to escape and to prove to his siblings that he can do better than them.

However, this is not to indicate that Lewis had such a bad relationship with his father, but his alienation from him and letting go of his faith afterwards very much resembles the story of Edmund, despite the differences and the obvious imagery in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Edmund's friendship with the White Witch could be explained as a symbolism of the atheism that Lewis admitted to when he left his childhood home. Hence, Edmund appears to be scared of Aslan, as the thought of Aslan makes him feel "a

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<sup>71</sup> Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, 25.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

sensation of mysterious horror,”<sup>73</sup> which indicates certain disbelief in Aslan and on the other hand Edmund might be terrified of his powers, since he becomes scared as soon as he hears his name. In addition to this, Edmund believes that the White Witch would have no issues winning over him, he asks: “She won’t turn him into stone too?”<sup>74</sup> when the Beaver explains to the children just how powerful Aslan is. There is a sense of doubt when it comes to Edmund considering how much power the White Witch and Aslan really hold. And at that moment, his outlook on them both can be considered quite sceptical. There are many elements in the story, where Edmund is the only one of his siblings, who disagrees with certain ideas, making himself more alienated from his family than ever, working undercover for the White Witch. For instance, Edmund tries to make the Beaver look suspicious instead of trusting him: “No one except Edmund felt any difficulty about trusting the beaver now,”<sup>75</sup> since he was given instructions by the White Witch, that he had to follow, and the Beaver was ruining his secret plan.

Although, it is important to mention the regret Edmund feels at some points in the story, which almost makes him go back to his siblings, however, he keeps going because he is blinded by the imagination of himself becoming a prince and having some power over Narnia, “The silence and the loneliness were dreadful. In fact, I really think he might have given up the whole plan and gone back and owned up and made friends with the others.”<sup>76</sup> Edmund is, therefore, not completely aware of what service he is doing to the White Witch by bringing his siblings to her Castle, however, his conscience suggests otherwise as “deep down inside him he really knew that the White Witch was bad and cruel.”<sup>77</sup>

#### **4.1.1.1 Psychological background of Edmund’s alienation - yearning for home**

Despite Edmund’s story ending happily, as he is saved by Aslan and continues the journey alongside his siblings, joining the fight against the White Witch at the end of the story, it is crucial to understand the reasons behind his alienation that got him into the White Witch’s castle in the first place. I have mentioned that Edmund’s story has certain characteristics that resemble Lewis’s childhood and his alienation from his father after

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<sup>73</sup> Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, 43.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

the traumatic death of his mother. Lewis firstly admitted to having no belief in God once he moved to a boarding school in England, as he himself admitted in *Surprised by Joy*: “I ceased to be a Christian,”<sup>78</sup> he mentions this in the chapter regarding his experience at Cherbourg House as he calls the loss of his faith a “disaster.”<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, this was a completely unfamiliar space for Lewis, and to link this to Edmund, his inclination towards the White Witch starts to show after he and his siblings move to the old Professor’s house as a result of London being attacked by air raids. And despite the Professor aims to provide a safe shelter for the children, there is a chance that Edmund felt nostalgic and lonely due to being sent to a stranger’s house, and therefore, as a young boy, he must have missed his parents, since he was far away from home. This reasoning is not to excuse Edmund’s behaviour and betrayal of his siblings in the novel, but it is simply to explain the background of his alienation, which eventually led him to listen to the White Witch. Young Lewis was likely just as lonely at the boarding school, yearning to come back home for the holidays, it is recorded in *Surprised by Joy*, where Lewis called his first boarding school “vile”<sup>80</sup> and compared spending the holidays at home in Belfast to be as hard to realise as it is to realise heaven.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, David Clare argues in “C.S. Lewis: An Irish Writer” that: “Many have also pointed out that the Professor’s house in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* is mirrored on Little Lea, the Lewis family home in Strandtown, even down to the big wardrobe.”<sup>82</sup> Lewis also compared the acknowledgment that his school term would come again to the acknowledgment of a healthy young man realising that he will die one day.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, Lewis does not hesitate to remind the reader of *Surprised by Joy* that “alienation from our father imperceptibly increased.”<sup>84</sup>

The yearning for home and loneliness also appears in a different manner when it comes to both Edmund and Lewis. As I previously mentioned, Lewis’s mother passed away when he was very young, which left a great mark on him and his faith, therefore, there was a sign of longing for motherly love in his early life as well in his love life, as many have pointed out that his relationship with Mrs. Moore was perhaps about such

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<sup>78</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*, 54.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> David Clare, “C.S. Lewis: An Irish Writer” (*Irish Studies Review* 18.1: pp. 17-38. Abingdon-on-Thames: Taylor and Francis Ltd., 2010), 18.

<sup>83</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*, 36.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

longing for a motherly comfort. It would make sense to look for similar traits in the character of Edmund and the magnitude of his relationship with the White Witch. It is possible, that to some extent, Edmund was also looking for motherly comfort, after moving to the Professor's house, having arguments with his siblings, and being left alone in the mysterious world of Narnia. Having been offered the delicious Turkish Delight and the position of a Prince in the White Witch's castle, it is hardly surprising that Edmund would accept such an offer. The White Witch says to him: "I want a nice boy whom I could bring up as a Prince, he would wear a gold crown and eat Turkish Delight all day long.." <sup>85</sup> and in addition to this, the White Witch also compliments Edmund on his looks, saying that he is the "handsomest young man," <sup>86</sup> and she promises Edmund to make him a Prince if he follows her secretly mischievous plan. Not only she makes Edmund feel superior by promising him a wonderful life in her castle, but she also makes him feel special by making him keep their whole meeting a secret. Thus, it is possible that Edmund, after a long time feels a sense of belonging and purpose, meeting the White Witch and being comforted and given such special sweets. This is why it would be unfair of the reader to hold Edmund accountable for his actions, at this point in the story, as he is just a child, longing for some sense of home and love that he has not been given in a long time. Additionally, one must not forget that he is practically tricked into his actions and drugged in a sense, by the Turkish Delight, therefore, his position as a sceptic in this story could be questioned as his actions are not always done because of his own intention.

In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis expresses his appreciation for Miss C., a matron at the school and he praises her for her comforting skills as well as for her selfishness. He says: "We all loved her; I, the orphan, especially." <sup>87</sup> He goes on to call her: "a soul with a touch of angelic quality." <sup>88</sup> Lewis also admits that despite Miss C. being very good to him, she was also perhaps one of the reasons why he lost his faith in this very boarding school, however, that was never her intention. <sup>89</sup> He says: "unconsciously, unintentionally, she loosened the whole framework, blunted all the sharp edges, of my belief." <sup>90</sup> Despite Miss C. being a temporary source of love and comfort for young Lewis, she was also a contributing factor to his scepticism. It is, however, crucial to highlight her intentions

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<sup>85</sup> Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, 25.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of my Early Life*, 54.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 56.

while asking Lewis ground-breaking questions about his faith and leading him somewhere outside of the bubble of what was ever known to him. Miss C.'s intentions were never motivated by trickery or evil, despite the outcome of their relationship, while, on the other hand, the White Witch knew what she was doing all along.

Lastly, there are undeniably visible similarities in the story of Edmund and Lewis regarding their experience of loneliness, yearning for home, and the need for motherly love, but as I have found, there are also major differences that needed to be pointed out above in this chapter. All things considered, one simply cannot be surprised while reading about the character of Edmund and his actions, being reminded of his struggle to belong and to be loved and appreciated.

#### **4.1.2 Christianity - Aslan and his resurrection as a myth**

In this subchapter, I will firstly explain the parallel of Lewis's interest in Norse Mythology as one of the causes of his scepticism with some of Narnia's characters attitude towards Aslan, as they consider his story to be a myth or just another legend story, which ultimately prevents them from believing in Aslan and the Old Kings and Queens of Narnia. Secondly, I will explain how Prince Caspian's epiphany and transition developed because of his uncle's ignorant approach to the world he reigns over. Furthermore, I will closely analyse Nikabrik's approach to the story of Aslan. Finally, I will mention other sceptical characters in *Prince Caspian* and make a clear distinction between Trumpkin and Nikabrik, regarding their sceptical approach to Aslan.

##### **4.1.2.1 Lewis and Norse Mythology**

Despite there being many other objections that young Lewis had against the Christian faith, one of the most major objections happened to be caused by his belief and interest in the Norse Mythology, which led him to doubt the story of Jesus Christ and its true significance. I previously mentioned Lewis's thoughts about Christianity being yet another mythology in chapter 3.2. and therefore, in this subchapter, I will discuss all the possible connections and parallels between Lewis's atheistic thinking and some of the character's behavioural patterns in one of his books from the *Chronicles of Narnia, Prince Caspian*.

##### **4.1.2.2 The cunning Miraz and Caspian's epiphany**

Firstly, it is important to discuss the character of Miraz, the uncle of Prince Caspian as well as the king of Narnia at the beginning of the story. Miraz is very cold towards his

nephew as he denies all possible theories about the old stories of Narnia that Caspian suggests discussing. Caspian is met with an unsympathetic response: “Who has been telling you all this nonsense?” said the King in a voice of thunder.”<sup>91</sup> This response is meant to ridicule Caspian for believing in Aslan, and the old Kings and Queens of Narnia. As it is known, *The Chronicles of Narnia* written by Lewis have a lot of Christian symbolism, which cannot possibly be overlooked. Therefore, it is more than clear that the character of Aslan symbolizes Jesus Christ, and the infamous White Witch symbolizes the Devil. This leads us to connect Prince Caspian’s belief in Aslan with belief in the story of Jesus. Miraz denies Caspian’s faith and tries to detach him from it even further by taunting him: “Who has been telling you this pack of lies?”<sup>92</sup> Then he adds: “Stop it. And never let me catch you talking – or thinking either – about all those silly stories again.” Not only does Miraz prohibit Caspian from even considering such stories to be true, but also denies the existence of Jesus ever before in the past, he says: “And there’s no such person as Aslan. . . And there are no such things as lions.”<sup>93</sup> Only a true sceptic would say such things about Jesus, as well as Lewis, for whom the story of Christ once was also just one of many mythologies.

In the case of Miraz, his disbelief in the old beasts of Narnia is more of a conscious denial rather than pure ignorance and scepticism, since it is quite obvious that Miraz wants to stay in power and by admitting the existence of Aslan and the Old Kings and Queens, he would not have as much power over his kingdom any longer. Furthermore, Miraz is willing to sacrifice anything to keep himself on the throne, which explains the murder of Caspian’s father, who was the original heir to the throne and his existence was a threat to Miraz. This is because Caspian’s father believed in the old beasts and wanted them to live in peace in the world of Narnia. Hence, now that Miraz sees the same potential in his nephew Prince Caspian, he quickly realizes that he might have to sacrifice him as well since Caspian has awakened to the idea of the old creatures of Narnia, as well as his father did in the past. And now, that Miraz has a son, there is no need for Caspian after all. As a result of all the tension, the situation between Miraz and Caspian escalates into war, and therefore, Miraz is made to believe in the old speaking beasts and the Old Narnia in general as he goes out to fight it to save himself from losing his crown, “At any rate

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<sup>91</sup> C.S.Lewis, *Prince Caspian (The Chronicles of Narnia, #2)*; (London: HarperCollins Children’s Books, 2014), 54.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 55.

something has warned Miraz that Old Narnia is not so dead as he had hoped, and he is on the move.”<sup>94</sup>

#### 4.1.2.3 Christian symbolism

After his escape from the castle, Caspian finds himself in a company of dwarfs and there are two specific dwarfs that are worth discussing from the atheistic point of view. Trumpkin questions Caspian himself as well as the Badger on their beliefs about the old Narnia: “Do you believe all those old stories?”<sup>95</sup> He continues to doubt the truthfulness of the history of Aslan: “But who believes in Aslan nowadays?”<sup>96</sup> Caspian defends himself as he is shocked because he has just met the old speaking beasts, which he was made to believe did not exist. Trumpkin goes as far as he refers to the story of Aslan and the Old Kings and Queens of Narnia as: “eggs in a moonshine.”<sup>97</sup> Thankfully, towards the end of the story, Trumpkin is introduced to Aslan and defends prince Caspian, therefore, he overcomes his scepticism and remains loyal to Aslan and Prince Caspian throughout the Chronicles: “Through this obedience, he is obeying Aslan through Caspian. It is this readiness to act in obedience to the orders of the one he has once decided to follow even in face of occasional doubt about the virtue of the orders, that is characteristic of him and that eventually leads him to the faith in Aslan.”<sup>98</sup>

The other sceptical dwarf is called Nikabrik and he is a lot more prominent in the story. Nikabrik’s scepticism is first shown when he and Trumpkin find Prince Caspian and decide to help him, however, Nikabrik has little trust in him and wants to get rid of him: “I am certainly not going to let it go alive – to go back to its own kind and betray us all.”<sup>99</sup> The breaking point of Nikabrik’s scepticism, however, comes when the magical Horn is blown to call for help to fight Miraz, and Aslan and the old Kings and Queens take their time to find Prince Caspian to offer their help. Perhaps, Nikabrik goes sour as he tries hard to find a spark of hope in the magical Horn and in the outcome of the battle that is about to happen but fails to do so due to his own impatience. He says: “Tell that tale your own way for all I care,”<sup>100</sup> answered Nikabrik. “But whether it was that the Horn

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<sup>94</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 100.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Mineko Honda, “On C.S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*: a study of its characters relation to the Creator” (International Politics and Economics [No. 3], pp. 55-93. Chiba: The Faculty of International Economics and Politics of Nishogakusha University, 1997), 75.

<sup>99</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 78.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

was blown too late, or whether there was no magic in it, no help has come.”<sup>101</sup> This not only shows Lewis’s impatience with God to end his suffering but also the loss of faith completely due to perhaps giving up on it too early, as a nine-year-old Lewis would say: “if such tragic events can happen, God must not exist. God is supposed to be good, and no God would have allowed such tragedy.”<sup>102</sup> Waiting for help to come when the magical Horn is blown could be interpreted as God answering a prayer or a simple calling, which does not always happen, and it certainly does not happen immediately, therefore a non-sceptic is made to be patient and know that all that is his will come to him in due time. And perhaps, this parallels with Aslan and the Old Kings and Queens of Narnia being patient with him, as he takes his time to make himself visible to all of them, since one must truly believe in Aslan in order to see him. Unfortunately, this was not the case for Nikabrik as he immediately starts to doubt the power of the magical Horn, which ultimately symbolizes calling for help: “Are you still asking us to hang our hopes on Aslan and King Peter and all the rest of it?”<sup>103</sup> He says.

#### **4.1.2.4 Unanswered callings**

To further deepen the religious symbolism of the magical Horn, there are other talking beasts trying to convince Nikabrik about the significance and the power of the Horn, indicating that it has real power, and it will indeed work: “The help will come,”<sup>104</sup> said Trufflehunter, “I stand by Aslan. Have patience, like us beasts. The help will come. It may be even now at the door.”<sup>105</sup> The truth is, one can be as patient and hopeful and yet still doubt their faith from time to time because of the suffering they have gone through and also due to the unanswered prayers and wishes. Prayer and the magical Horn, therefore, go hand in hand for Lewis as in this part of *Prince Caspian*, he might be referencing back to the times when he would pray for his mother’s recovery whilst she was very ill and thought it would heal her, that however, did not turn out the way he expected. Lewis’s mother “had cancer. . . Jack prayed that God would make her better, but she went on being ill.”<sup>106</sup> This broke Lewis’s heart and faith as much as the unanswered call for help did to Nikabrik, who was very sceptical about the magical Horn from the very beginning. Regardless of the outcome of blowing the magical Horn,

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<sup>101</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 174.

<sup>102</sup> Heck, *From Atheism to Christianity*, 8.

<sup>103</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 174.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*, 14.

Nikabrik comes up with different excuses to why even blowing the magical Horn served no purpose, which includes trivializing the story of Aslan, he says: “we have tried one link in the chain of old legends, and it has done us no good.”<sup>107</sup> A chain of old legends or as Lewis called it in his atheistic years “one mythology among many.”<sup>108</sup> Nikabrik goes as far as he questions the resurrection of Aslan, which indicates just how sceptical he is about the story of Old Narnia and its Old Kings and Queens. When the Badger suggests that Aslan came to life after being killed by the White Witch, Nikabrik ridicules him and says: “you’ll notice that we hear precious little about anything he did afterwards. He just fades out of the story. How do you explain that, if he really came to life? Isn’t it much more likely that he didn’t, and that the stories say nothing more about him because there was nothing more to say?”<sup>109</sup> Nikabrik is looking for proof of Aslan’s resurrection and his impact on Narnia afterwards, which also directly links back to Jesus and his resurrection, which is still celebrated today on the Sunday of Easter, after his crucifixion, which is expressed in Narnia by Aslan dying on the stone in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. A long time has passed since that happened in Narnia, thus with the kingdom falling under the power of Miraz and his denial of the speaking beasts, Nikabrik’s faith has gone sour and his theories remain unexplained.

The scepticism of Nikabrik shows its true colours once he admits his admiration for the White Witch, with her satanic powers and the way she rules over Narnia for a hundred years. Nikabrik’s praise of the White Witch goes so far that he decides on calling on her by preparing a blue fire. Furthermore, in the story, it is expressed why Nikabrik has lost faith in Aslan and leaned towards the White Witch. Firstly, Nikabrik argues that the White Witch is and was indeed more powerful than Aslan, since she was able to reign Narnia for such a long time, he says: “They say she ruled for a hundred years: a hundred years of winter. There’s power, if you like. There’s something practical.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, it is no wonder that Nikabrik is so doubtful of Aslan when he states that he is in fact not scared of the Satanic power of Narnia: “We’re not afraid of the Witch.”<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, Nikabrik never gets a chance to change his views on Aslan and the Kings and Queens of Narnia, as he is killed by another dwarf Trumpkin in a brutal battle between hags, wolfs,

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<sup>107</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 178.

<sup>108</sup> Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*, 17.

<sup>109</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 179.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

and badgers, when he himself attempts to kill Lucy, the Queen of Narnia. Just as prince Caspian described him: “He had gone sour inside from long suffering and hating.”<sup>112</sup>

#### **4.1.2.5 Believers and non-believers - other characters and their lack of belief**

There is much more to discuss regarding the slight scepticism of even some of the Old Kings and Queens of Narnia, just as in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, when Lucy catches a glimpse of Aslan on the hill, she hurries to tell everyone else that she has seen him, however, she is met with a disappointing response of her companions as no one else saw Aslan on the hill and Trumpkin, the less sceptical of the dwarfs, starts to doubt her knowledge about Aslan: “Her Majesty may well have seen a lion. . . There are lions in these woods, I’ve been told. But it needn’t have been a friendly and talking lion any more than the bear was a friendly and talking bear.”<sup>113</sup> Lucy quickly dismisses this sceptical chatter of his and after unexpected support from Edmund and collective voting, her siblings and the dwarf decide to believe her and follow her advice to go after Aslan. It is rather helpful of Edmund to admit his previous scepticism towards Lucy’s beliefs as he acknowledges that last time he made a mistake by not following her advice and sees this as an opportunity for atonement, he says: “I was the worst of the lot, I know. Yet she was right after all. Wouldn’t it be fair to believe her this time? I vote for going up.”<sup>114</sup>

It is safe to say, that when it comes to the scepticism of Narnia’s characters in *Prince Caspian*, Lewis did not hesitate to put some of his own character into them. Not only is there a new villain Miraz, who directly doubts the existence of old Narnians and is determined to do anything in his power to keep his nephew, Prince Caspian, in his ignorant view of the world he reigns over. In addition to Miraz, the two most prominent sceptics of this book from *The Chronicles of Narnia* are the two dwarfs, Trumpkin and Nikabrik, since their theories about Aslan are closely related to the theories of Jesus that Lewis stood by during his atheistic years. Nikabrik, as well as Trumpkin, are sceptics, but there is a major difference in the way they approach Aslan. Trumpkin is somewhat opened to the theories of the Old Kings and Queens, but decides to not believe in them. Mineko Honda argues in his essay that “Trumpkin is a type who is already on the way to faith

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<sup>112</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 184.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

even while he is still doubting Aslan's existence."<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, Nikabrik is completely ignorant towards these theories and doubts every little thing that has a connection to Aslan. It comes as no surprise, that his story ends with him calling onto the White Witch, which eventually leads to his death. Just as Honda says: "Those who reject Aslan cannot recognize any blessing Aslan is offering to them. . . Dwarfs, therefore, have really made themselves blind to any light from Aslan when they have closed their spiritual eyes to him."<sup>116</sup> The scepticism differs in-between the dwarfs as Trumpkin's scepticism can be called "opened scepticism"<sup>117</sup>, whilst Nikabrik's scepticism can be described as "closed".<sup>118</sup>

Finally, there are characters that oppose this disbelief in *Prince Caspian* and reason with the non-believers about the truth of Narnia, such as Prince Caspian, Trufflehunter and the old Kings and Queens of Narnia. They prove these legend theories about Aslan wrong, as they appear in front of the eyes of the sceptics themselves. By doing this, Lewis achieves the unthinkable, making the reader think about the underlying message of Christianity and the sincerity of the story of Jesus.

#### **4.1.3 Separation over assimilation - the fate of the Dwarfs in *Prince Caspian* in relation to the Irish struggle**

In this subchapter, I will describe the relationship between the Old Narnians in *Prince Caspian* and Lewis himself regarding the experience of major division and separation. As it is known, Lewis grew up in Belfast at the beginning of the 20th century and it would come as no surprise to find out that the conflict between the Irish and the British had affected him greatly whilst growing up, as his childhood home was right in the middle of the conflict. There is certain evidence of Lewis's negative attitude towards the English and their land described in *Surprised by Joy* and therefore, as the case may be, this could have been one of the many motivating factors for some of Lewis's characters scepticism in *Prince Caspian*. There is an obvious resemblance between Narnia and Ulster, where Lewis grew up, which I would like to point out later as another reason for the dwarfs in Narnia representing the Irish struggle. In this subchapter, I will firstly touch on some of the Lewis's influences in his life regarding his position in the British and Irish conflict,

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<sup>115</sup> Honda, "On C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*: a study of its characters relation to the Creator", 75.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

his criticism towards the English through the character of Screwtape and then, I will move onto the story of the Old Narnians in *Prince Caspian* and their oppression leading to a war with the Telmarines.

#### 4.1.3.1 Narnia's Irish landscape

When Lucy, Peter, Susan and Edmund step foot in Narnia, they come to find out how divided the land is, however, this time it is the Telmarines against the Old Narnians. War, division and separation is a major theme in this book of Narnia and my aim is to explain the connection between Lewis's experience with the Irish and the British conflict leading to his own scepticism and the scepticism of the dwarfs of Narnia who have long forgotten about Aslan and the old Kings and Queens of Narnia as their land was stolen, leading to their lack of belief and the bitterness about their fate. Some of the signs that Lewis was inspired by Ireland whilst writing the *Chronicles of Narnia* is the land and the places described in the books. As David Clare said: "the landscape of Narnia was also affected by Lewis's Irish background. It has been pointed out by many that Narnia strongly resembles Ulster, with the Bight of Calormen resembling Belfast Lough and Cair Paravel mirroring Belfast Castle."<sup>119</sup> In addition to this, Lewis's beloved hills of Down, near Belfast also happen to have a parallel in the world of Narnia, which are the hills south of Cair Paravel.<sup>120</sup> There are many other noteworthy similarities, such as the one between the mountains of Archenland and the Mourne Mountains.<sup>121</sup> Not to mention the description of the castle of Cair Paravel in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* which ultimately brings the land of Ireland to mind when read "before them were the sands, with rocks and little pools of salt water, and seaweed, and the smell of the sea and long miles of bluish-green waves breaking for ever and ever on the beach. And oh, the cry of the seagulls!"<sup>122</sup> One cannot simply deny the feeling of the Irish land when reading this passage. However, "one wonders if Lewis, in creating Narnia, was consciously or subconsciously recreating the Eden he lost by being sent to school in England as a boy."<sup>123</sup> Let us look at the impact that England had on Lewis and how it could have shaped his religious journey in his early years.

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<sup>119</sup> Clare, "C.S. Lewis: An Irish Writer", 15.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, 105.

<sup>123</sup> Clare, "C.S. Lewis: An Irish Writer", 15.

#### 4.1.3.2 The outsider status of Lewis - the Irish perspective on the English

It is rather complicated to find out what the root of Lewis's early distaste of the English could have been, however, it was perhaps one of the contributing factors to his early scepticism. It is important to remember that young Lewis moved to a boarding school in England while speaking with a strong Irish accent, which did nothing but make it worse for him to adapt to the new conditions of the English boarding school. What is more, however, in *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis through Screwtape himself criticizes the humour of the English, their education system as well as their clergymen. According to Screwtape, the English "take their 'sense of humour' so seriously that a deficiency in this sense is almost the only deficiency at which they feel shame."<sup>124</sup> In this case, Screwtape is trying to prove a point that the English can get away with anything as long as it is presented as a joke, by which they earn "admiration,"<sup>125</sup> and it is entirely "without the disapproval"<sup>126</sup> of others. Through Screwtape, Lewis indirectly expresses his feelings towards the English from the look of an outsider,<sup>127</sup> and he goes as far as to describe them as "English humans".<sup>128</sup> Lewis's criticism of the English education system in this book of fiction could be linked to his own studies in England, he condemns the way how smart pupils are treated in comparison to ill-equipped individuals, since the teachers do not want to make a big distinction between these two groups to not cause any traumatic response. He claims otherwise: "These differences between the pupils—for they are obviously and nakedly individual differences—must be disguised."<sup>129</sup> Screwtape also attacks the entrance exam for universities as well as the inability of the "bright pupils,"<sup>130</sup> to advance to a higher level of education and being forced to "spell out A CAT SAT ON THE MAT,"<sup>131</sup> instead of "tackling Aeschylus or Dante."<sup>132</sup> Thus, it is safe to say that there are many aspects of an 'outsider' point of view at the English society when it comes to Lewis writing through the character of Screwtape himself. Some even claim that the "comically critical view of the English in *The Screwtape Letters* is one of the book's

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<sup>124</sup> Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (with "Screwtape Proposes a Toast"), 42.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>127</sup> David Clare, "C.S. Lewis: An Irish Writer", 20.

<sup>128</sup> Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (with "Screwtape Proposes a Toast"), 64.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

strengths.”<sup>133</sup> One cannot simply fail to notice how many of Lewis’s fiction storylines mirror his own experience, just as Andrew Wilson suggested in *A Biography*: “Lewis was in fact an obsessive auto biographer,”<sup>134</sup> and “he had a capacity to project images of himself into prose; sometimes, one feels, without quite realizing what he was doing. It is these images which have such posthumous staying power.”<sup>135</sup> *The Screwtape Letters* were perhaps the ideal source of writing for Lewis to express his own thinking from when he was an atheist, since, in the book he looks at the English religious people from a perspective of the opposite party, the demon. As Michael Nelson said, Lewis “in drawing the temptations he described from his own life, he had tapped into a vein of universal experience.”<sup>136</sup> Thus, it would be sensible to say that Lewis was using the memory of his sceptical years as a writing source for this fictional story of Screwtape, the demon.

It is safe to say, that Lewis was trying to implement his own experience into his characters, and on top of that, he was also mirroring the experiences of his family members by whom he was heavily influenced. For instance, his grandfather Thomas Hamilton was one of the most prominent figures in Lewis’s religious journey, as he was known to be a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and with that came a great amount of criticism of the Anglican church as well as the Roman church. It is without doubt, that Lewis’s grandfather’s religious standing played a role in Lewis’s own beliefs. For instance “Hamilton advanced the interesting view that, in effect, only the saved survive,”<sup>137</sup> and Wilson was of an opinion that “precisely similar preoccupations were to haunt the mind of Thomas’s grandson, Clive Staples Lewis when he came to write his theological reflections.”<sup>138</sup> Considering the influence Lewis’s grandfather had on him, it is nearly impossible to fail to connect the world of both a religious as well as political conflict in which Lewis grew up and the unthinkable trauma that it might have left on Lewis as religion in his land was no easy subject and to add to Lewis’s confusion on the matter, his grandfather seemed to have a rather specific opinion on this religious division. Specifically, he would refer to the Roman church as being “composed of the Devil’s children,”<sup>139</sup> and on top of that, Hamilton was a firm believer that Roman Catholics could

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<sup>133</sup> David Clare, “C.S. Lewis: An Irish Writer”, 21.

<sup>134</sup> A. N. Wilson, *C.S. Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Harper Perennial), 14.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Nelson, “C. S. Lewis and His Critics”, 12.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Nelson, “C. S. Lewis and His Critics”, 16.

not be saved.<sup>140</sup> It does not come as a surprise, that young Lewis was confused and moving to a boarding school in England in his early years did nothing but contribute to the matter of religious confusion and the increasing hatred that he felt towards the neighbouring nation. Lewis himself claimed that he was surrounded by “the voices of demons,”<sup>141</sup> whilst in England and he went as far as to describe the English landscape as a “featureless land,”<sup>142</sup> as well as “imprisoning, suffocating”<sup>143</sup>. Lewis’s scepticism towards the English could not have been more apparent while approaching the English land with such attitude as he himself described in *Surprised by Joy*: “I have made up the quarrel since; but at that moment I conceived a hatred for England which took many years to heal.”<sup>144</sup>

#### 4.1.3.3 The Old Narnian rebellion

It is safe to say that the ongoing conflict of the Catholics versus Protestants seemed to travel everywhere with Lewis, no matter where he lived or what type of fiction or non-fiction he was writing. As Wilson said about Lewis in the biography: “throughout his adult life he remained constantly preoccupied with his own childhood.”<sup>145</sup> It is however the standard which is well known, the fact that one carries his childhood experience throughout his entire life, no matter the circumstance. Many people stay in denial, as opposed to Lewis who decided to put his experiences into action as he soaked his fictional characters with his own mind and trauma, as well as his scepticism which could have been caused by both the religious and the political issues surrounding him in his early years. The connection between the dwarfs in Narnia and Ireland could be described as both being the oppressed side of each conflict. When it comes to the world of Narnia, in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the children come into a world divided by the White Witch and manage to win the battle against the villain as they restore peace in Narnia, whilst in *Prince Caspian*, the children end up in a very different world of Narnia, divided by both the power of Miraz and the myth of the old supernatural creatures. Lewis creates yet another division in *Prince Caspian* which leads to the oppression of the old world of Narnia full of the supernatural creatures, such as dwarfs and badgers as opposed to the kingdom of Miraz where such beings are described as just a part of the old myth as most of the population does not even believe in such tall-tales after the long period of

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*, 27.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Wilson, *C.S.Lewis: A Biography*, 16.

time, that has passed since the Old Narnians were forced to migrate into the forests. During *Prince Caspian*, the rightful heir to the throne, Caspian is introduced to the Old Narnians through his half-dwarf teacher Cornelius, and he finds himself in disbelief, yearning to take revenge on his uncle after finding out about his intentions with Narnia and the throne. The theme of war takes most of the storyline in *Prince Caspian* since Lucy, Edmund, Peter, and Susan try to look for Aslan to help them overthrow the throne and to bring back the old creatures of Narnia to the public knowledge and back to power. In this subchapter I try to relate the experience of two dwarfs, Nikabrik and Trumpkin and other Old Narnians to the experience of the Irish during their own uprising and their battles resembling those of the talking beasts.

Nikabrik and Trumpkin are two prominent dwarfs in *Prince Caspian*, and their scepticism went as far to doubt the very existence of Aslan in Narnia, which I described earlier in subchapter 4.1.2. In this subchapter I will focus on their feelings regarding their identity, belonging, and separation from the other world of Narnia. In *Prince Caspian*, the dwarfs seem to be rather aware of their position in Narnia, when Lucy asks a dwarf, who is a messenger of Prince Caspian, about the meaning of Old Narnians, he clearly replies: “We’re a kind of rebellion, I suppose.”<sup>146</sup> The word rebellion in this context could mean several things but perhaps Lewis could be referring to the Irish uprising, sometimes also called the Irish rebellion of 1916. Considering the strong identity of the Irish as well as the one of the Old Narnians and given that Lewis himself grew up in the middle of the conflict, in Northern Ireland. The resemblance of the Old Narnians to the Irish in this context could therefore be considered possible and quite realistic. The separation of Narnia into the Telmarines and the dwarfs and other beasts carries rather negative connotations as the division hurts the whole population of Narnia, on both sides. On one side, there are the beasts that lost their homes and had to migrate far deep into the forests and therefore alienated themselves from the rest of the society and on the other hand, there are many Telmarines, of which the majority remains ignorant to the fact that the beasts even exist, whilst some of them wish that they could meet the Old Narnians and perhaps understand them better.

One of these Telmarines is Prince Caspian himself, since he is so invested in the world of the beasts that he almost gets himself into trouble with his cruel uncle Miraz. Prince Caspian almost achieves this by tempting his tutors to tell him stories about the

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<sup>146</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 50.

old Narnia. Doctor Cornelius says to Caspian that Narnia “is the country of Aslan, the country of the Walking Trees and Visible Naiads, of Fauns and Satyrs, of Dwarfs and Giants, of the gods and the Centaurs, of Talking Beasts.”<sup>147</sup> And he goes as far as to point out that the reason behind the myth of the Old Narnians are Prince Caspian’s own predecessors, he says: “It is you Telmarines who silenced the beasts and the trees and the fountains, and who killed and drove away the Dwarfs and Fauns, and are now trying to cover up even the memory of them. The King does not allow them to be spoken of.”<sup>148</sup> To connect this to Lewis’s thinking about land, its residents, and the relations of it in general, Michael W. Taylor says in *The Lions, the Switch, and the War: Deciphering Pieces of Northern Ireland’s Peace Mystery* that Lewis “often wrote about the mystical importance of the land and its offering of peace and resiliency to its inhabitants. He felt strongly that political initiatives such as the partition of Ireland only resulted in a negative impact on the people and spaces.”<sup>149</sup> It is therefore obvious from the story that the Telmarines were the ones behind this massive immigration of the Old Narnians and that they were indeed the oppressor of the talking beasts and only a few of them truly believed that the Old Narnians were still alive. To connect this to Lewis, it is well known that “the British became the longest occupiers of Ireland by military force,”<sup>150</sup> and there were “laws that stripped Irish of their indigenous religion, language,”<sup>151</sup> and forced them to relocate to a different part of the land.<sup>152</sup>

All things considered, before there was war in the world of Narnia during Miraz’s reign, between the Telmarines and the talking beasts, sparked by the Old Queens and Kings of Narnia alongside Aslan and Prince Caspian, one would even dare to say that there was peace of some sort since the Old Narnians lived in hiding for decades. This peace was not, however, meant to last forever because of the constant oppression and years of the Old Narnians growing more bitter day by day. The temporary period of peace was possible only because oppression had become the standard for the talking beasts as they have nearly forgotten what life was like before. In Ireland itself, “oppression by foreign invaders, revolution, civil war, and partition had been the norm,”<sup>153</sup> even despite

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<sup>147</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 62.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Michael W. Taylor, “The Lions, the Switch, and the War: Deciphering Pieces of Northern Ireland’s Peace Mystery” (*360 Review Magazine*. Bismarck: University of Mary press, 2018/2019), 7.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Taylor, “The Lions, the Switch, and the War: Deciphering Pieces of Northern Ireland’s Peace Mystery”, 3.

the fact that “relative peace has been in existence in Northern Ireland for nearly 20 years.”<sup>154</sup>

This bitterness is somewhat most obvious with the two dwarfs Nikabrik and Trumpkin whom I have mentioned in chapter 4.1.2 about Jesus and his resurrection as Aslan and his rebirth. In this chapter, however, I argue that the scepticism in these characters was partly caused by the growing alienation from the other part of Narnia as well as the oppression that these talking beasts were facing. One could consider Nikabrik to be the darker dwarf and a much more sceptical being as he would do anything just to get rid of the Telmarines to take back his native land. His choices, however, also include the White Witch, which comes as quite shocking since she is known to symbolise the Devil himself in both *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as well as in *Prince Caspian*, since her reputation is well known all across Narnia. Prince Caspian asks Nikabrik whether he believes in Aslan and he replies: “I’ll believe in anyone or anything,”<sup>155</sup> and continues to say: “that’ll batter these cursed Telmarine barbarians to pieces or drive them out of Narnia. Anyone or anything, Aslan or the White Witch, do you understand?”<sup>156</sup> There is a sense of both deep hatred and desperation as Nikabrik tries to find a solution to the fate that he himself as well as the rest of the Old Narnians have been destined to. There is also a sign of certain division between the dwarfs and other talking beasts seeing that Trufflehunter for instance, a badger strongly stands behind the Old Kings and Queens of Narnia together with Aslan, “I tell you, we don’t change, we beasts,” said Trufflehunter. “We don’t forget. I believe in the High King Peter and the rest that reigned at Cair Paravel, as firmly as I believe in Aslan himself.”<sup>157</sup> Whilst Nikabrik, the dwarf, on the other hand, complains that his kind has been exploited in the Old Narnian community. He says to the others: “Who is sent on all the dangerous raids? The Dwarfs. Who goes short when the rations fail? The Dwarfs. Who—?”<sup>158</sup>

Nikabrik also shows signs of nationalism when he says: “I’m a dwarf and I stand by my own people,”<sup>159</sup> and “if you can’t help my people, I’ll go to someone who can.”<sup>160</sup> The Irish were quite vocal about their struggles as well when it came to their uprising in 1916. Perhaps, one could not possibly resolve their struggles without being vocal about

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 88.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>159</sup> Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, 180.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

them. Lewis could have, therefore, used his knowledge of the Irish struggle and nationalism and applied it to the Old Narnians in *Prince Caspian*. Despite the personal journey of Nikabrik being quite sour and ending in an unhappy manner, Trumpkin on the other hand joins the children with Aslan as well as Prince Caspian and turns his own world around whilst fighting for a good cause. I have pointed out the difference between Nikabrik and Trumpkin in the previous chapters. Although, I do believe that it is crucial to touch on the fact that both of these dwarfs with the rest of Old Narnians have been locked away for decades and pushed away from their native lands, which has resolved into growing nationalism and a war against the Telmarines. The War of Deliverance was described as “most horrible and most magnificent,”<sup>161</sup> in the midst of the battle as Miraz fell and “A great shout arose from the Old Narnians.”<sup>162</sup> The most crucial moments of the war in Ireland in the 1910s and 1920s were in between the years of 1919 and 1922 during the Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War. Despite the Irish War being mostly about religion and the Narnian story being pure fantasy, there are elements of religion such as Aslan, who is initially on the side of the Old Narnians but ends up making peace between the Telmarines and the Old Narnians. He does this by allowing some of the Telmarines to join the Old Narnians and opening a “magic door” for the rest, who do not wish to join the newly reclaimed land by the talking beasts. Aslan says to the Telmarines: “you men and women of Telmar, will you go back to that island in the world of men from which your fathers first came?”<sup>163</sup> This coexistence between the Old and the New Narnians could be interpreted in a way that does not try to make divisions between the Catholics and the Protestants but rather to unite them and to allow them to live side by side. It is possible that Lewis not only tried to make Narnia resemble Ireland in its nature and its destinations, its inhabitants, and traditions but perhaps this could have been an attempt to make peace between the two religious parties of his own native land. Not to mention the symbolism of Aslan as Jesus himself, making peace between both parties.

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 230.

## 5 Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to draw parallels between C. S Lewis's scepticism and the sceptical character of some of the fictional characters in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Prince Caspian* and *The Screwtape Letters*. In order to support the claim that some of these characters resemble Lewis's own spiritual and religious journey, research describing Lewis's life and the causes of his atheism were introduced in this thesis. In the first two chapters, the thesis presents background information about the change in writing and religion in Great Britain during Lewis's youth, since at the time, he considered himself to be a sceptic towards religion and wrote atheistic poetry. Some of the causes of Lewis atheism are analysed in these chapters, along with his religious journey, which proves to be crucial in studying the sceptical fictional characters in Lewis's novels.

Secondly, the literary analysis revolves around the themes of rebellion against one's family traditions and habits, loneliness, as well as the Norse Mythology, the Irish resemblance of Narnia, Lewis's own Irish identity, and his attitude towards the English, described in his writing through other characters. There are two books from the *Chronicles of Narnia* studied from this perspective in this thesis, however, *Prince Caspian* proves to be a lot more relevant to the topic of the thesis, as the most prominent sceptical character, Nikabrik, is described in two main subchapters and from two different viewpoints. One of them is the parallel of Nikabrik's theory about Aslan to Lewis's theory of Jesus, as both perceive the stories of these two beings to be solely mythologies and nothing that should matter in the present times. I relate the viewpoint of Nikabrik to the one of Lewis and his Norse Mythology. The second subchapter, where the sceptical Nikabrik is frequently mentioned is the one about the Irish struggle. I analyse Lewis's experience with the Irish rebellion as a parallel to the rebellion of the Old Narnians in *Prince Caspian*, the dwarfs specifically.

One subchapter is wholly dedicated to Edmund and his alienation as well as his relationship with the White Witch. The storyline of Edmund in this thesis is described as having a resemblance to Lewis's experience at boarding schools and the alienation that he felt towards his father. On the other hand, longing for home is a common theme of both Edmund and Lewis himself throughout the subchapter. Speaking of boarding schools, the character of Screwtape is analysed through Lewis's attitude towards the English, which changed with time, but there is some evidence in this thesis, suggesting

that Lewis felt like an outsider and stranger to the English, at some point during his stay at the English boarding school.

There are, however, other characters which show certain sceptic behaviour at some point in the narrative. My goal was to find some of Lewis's own objections against the Christian faith, which ultimately turned him into a sceptic and apply them to these fictional characters. As I previously mentioned, in this thesis, I made certain findings regarding these objections that Lewis had and stood by at some point in his religious journey, but I am ultimately aware, that more research would have to be done and more of his works would have to be read to know his story in full capacity. Although, my aim was not to have the ability to identify every single objection that Lewis had against Christianity, it was rather to discover the links to his atheistic past that he made in his best-selling fiction.

In this thesis, I found out that despite the fact that most of the sceptical characters took certain measures which could be considered wrong, I could not help but sympathize with them. One of the findings of this thesis is that Lewis, noticeably, makes his characters appear interesting and makes their storyline not only one of resemblance to his own life, but he almost makes the reader feel compassion at times, where we least expect it. This proves that these characters have a certain depth to them, their own backstory which cannot be denied, and which is, ultimately, the cause of their scepticism.

The conclusion of this thesis is that one should not see things solely in a matter of right and wrong, for the reason that not everything is as clear-cut and apparent as it might seem. Contrastingly, there is so much more behind one's actions and even the best-selling author of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a devoted Christian, knows how to show compassion to any character, no matter their faith, beliefs, and backstory. The truth is, for Lewis, writing about these sceptical characters could have been an escape, as well as a means to forgive his young self. These narratives prove that there is so much more behind the hidden Christian symbolism in all of them and that they were never meant to solely promote Christianity, rather, perhaps, there were written for the reader to have the chance to live through the characters in these stories, to which they can relate to. One could, however, never know for certain what Lewis intended by creating a whole new fantastic universe filled with complicated and lovable characters, but it is without doubt, that many readers have and will find purpose and belonging while reading these stories.

## 6 Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo analyzovat život autora *Letopisů Narnie*, Clive Staplese Lewise z hlediska jeho víry a rovněž i popsat možné příčiny jeho ateismu v mládí spolu s procesem jeho konverze zpět ke křesťanské víře. Práce dále zkoumá spojitosti ze života samotného skeptického Lewise s fiktivními postavami v jeho dílech. Konkrétně se jedná o postavy z následujících děl – *Lev, čarodějnice a skříň*, *Prince Kaspian* a *Rady zkušeného ďábla*. Práce analyzuje nejčastější témata, která se objevují v souvislosti jak se životem Lewise, tak i s osudem těchto fiktivních postav. Jde především o téma vzpoury, osamělosti, irské identity a severské mytologie. Hlavním zaměřením této bakalářské práce bylo tedy hledat nejenom paralely mezi skeptiky v dílech Lewise a jeho vlastním životem, ale zvláště důležité bylo zkoumání příčin skeptického chování postav Edmunda, Nikabrika a Zmarchroba a taktéž tyto příčiny aplikovat na život Lewise a jeho skepticismus.

První část bakalářské práce se zaměřuje na popis společenského a historického kontextu období, ve kterém byl Lewis vojákem a jeho literární tvorbu tvořila převážně ateistická poezie. Je zde popsána změna v přístupu britské společnosti ke křesťanské víře a také vliv první světové války na literaturu. Dále jsou v této části zmíněny různé literární směry a témata, kterými se soudobí spisovatelé zabývali. Lewis poznal první světovou válku z první ruky a je známo, že tato zkušenost ho utvrdila v jeho přístupu ke křesťanské víře, jelikož si tím, co ve válce zažil a zpozoroval, potvrdil svou nevíru v boha.

V další části práce analyzuji život Lewise a možné příčiny jeho ateismu, od dětství až po rok 1931. Nejprve se text práce zaměřuje na traumatické události z dětství Lewise, mezi které patří smrt jeho matky anebo šikana na internátní škole v Anglii. K hlavním prodiskutovaným tématům patří také vztah s bratrem Warrenem a jejich společné odcizení s otcem. Dále je zde vyobrazena přísná rutina modliteb Lewisova otce a Lewisova postupná proměna z křesťana v ateistu. V této části bakalářské práce jsou zmíněny také určité osoby, které značně ovlivnily Lewisův přístup ke křesťanství, ať už je řeč o jeho učiteli z Irska, Williamovi Kirkpatrickovi, či o velmi známém autorovi *Pánů Prstenů* a *Hobita*, J. R. R. Tolkienovi. Na závěr této části je detailně popsána Lewisova opětovná konverze ke křesťanství a je zde zmíněna i jeho kariéra na Oxfordu či na Cambridge.

Hlavní část bakalářské práce tvoří analýza fiktivních postav vzhledem k jejich skepticizmu, a to převážně Edmunda z díla *Lev, čarodějnice a skříň* a Nikabrika z *Prince Kaspiana*, zmíněný je zde i Zmarchrob z *Rad zkušeného ďábla*. V první řadě se zabývám osudem Edmunda v rukou bílé čarodějnice. Edmund se po příjezdu do domu profesora dostává do samých hádek se svými sourozenci a popírá teorie Lucinky o magické skříni, která má propojovat jeho zemi a Narnii. Nejprve tedy popisuji, jaké skeptické vlastnosti se objevují v příběhu Edmunda, poté co se seznámí s bílou čarodějnici a jakou roli v jeho osudu hraje zlá bílá čarodějnice. Souběžně i popisuji křesťanské symboly, kterými je Narnie doslova propletena. Jedná se obzvláště o postavy Aslana a bílé čarodějnice, které symbolizují dva kontrastující protiklady, Ježíše Krista a Ďábla. Součástí této podkapitoly o Edmundovi je i část, ve které zkoumám důvody jeho chování ve chvíli, kdy se oddělil od svých sourozenců a rozhodl se věřit bílé čarodějnici. Beru v potaz i to, že Edmund byl závislý na tureckém medu, který mu s chutí podávala bílá čarodějnice, s cílem ho, do jisté míry, omámit. Dále vyhledávám spojitosti mezi chováním Edmunda a Lewise, zmiňuji primárně Lewisův vztah k jeho otci a jeho první zkušenosti na internátní škole, jelikož tam mnohdy pociťoval smutek a stýskalo se mu po rodinném domově v Belfastu, i když jeho vztah k domovu byl v tuto dobu velmi komplikovaný. Lewis se v této době poprvé přiznal k nevěře v boha, a tím pádem mohl být v tomto období považován za skeptika. Zatímco Edmund prochází svojí fází skepticizmu, která začíná v momentě, kdy se seznámí s bílou čarodějnici, čímž se vzdálí od svých sourozenců a prožívá chvíle stesku, pýchy a lítosti. Edmundovo chování je vysvětleno na konci této podkapitoly, kde se zmiňuji o jeho nedostatku lásky od rodičů, o stesku po domově v Londýně, a tím přirovnávám jeho stěhování do domu profesora Kirka ke stěhování Lewise na internátní školu. Edmundův nedostatek mateřské lásky může být taky vysvětlen v porovnání s rodinným životem Lewise, vzhledem k brzké smrti jeho matky a ke chladnému přístupu jeho otce k oběma synům.

Co se týče další podkapitoly, zaměřuji se na hledání paralel v příběhu trpaslíků, konkrétně v osudu Nikabrika a jeho zjevného skepticizmu. Nikabrik odmítá jakoukoliv víru v Aslana a jeho vyjadřování v díle *Princ Kaspián* mluví samo za sebe. Je zde krátce zmíněný i Trumpkin, což je skřítek, který je skeptický, ale neodmítá alternativní teorie o Narnii. Hlavním tématem této části jsou severské mytologie, o které se Lewis ve svém životě velmi zajímal a jako skeptik si vysvětloval příběh Ježíše Krista jako jeden z mnoha mýtů a povídek. Trpaslík Nikabik zastává podobné teorie o Aslanovi a o pravdivosti jeho

znovuvzkříšení, tudíž v tomto úseku může být nalezena spousta dalších velmi známých křesťanských symbolů. Jako v předchozí podkapitole, také zde se zabývám důvody Nikabrikova skeptického myšlení. Jako jedna z možných příčin jeho skepticismu se ukazuje právě jeho identita trpaslíka, který byl násilně zahrán do lesů před mnoha lety a tím pádem postupně ztratil víru v jeho zemi, která původně patřila Aslanovi, Lucince, Edmundovi, Petrovi a Zuzaně.

Poslední podkapitola hlavní části textu se zabývá Lewisovou Irskou identitou a do jaké míry se tato identita odráží v jeho dílech. Jsou zde zmíněny i *Rady Zkušeného Ďábla*, ve kterých Lewis promlouvá ke čtenáři skrz Zmarchroba, přičemž ironicky kritizuje Angličany, jejich školství a smysl pro humor. V této části převážně zkoumám opět trpaslíky z *Prince Kaspiana*, tentokrát v kontextu jejich identity, hrdosti a nacionalismu. Hlavní je téma války a vzpoury trpaslíků, které přirovnávám k irskému Velikonočnímu povstání. Sílu Lewisovi irské identity zkoumám i v díle *Lev, čarodějnice s skříň*, ve kterém se velký počet míst podobá právě těm, které byli samotnému Lewisovi dobře známé z okolí Belfastu, v Severním Irsku. Jednu část podkapitoly věnuji i Thomasovi Hamiltonovi, jelikož to byl Lewisův dědeček, působil jako ministr Irské presbyteriánské církve a zároveň měl na Lewise a jeho víru velký vliv. Dále je zmíněna role Aslana v konfliktu, který se odehrává v Narnii, mezi Telmaríny a mluvícími zvířaty. Aslan se nepřidává ani na jednu stranu konfliktu, ba naopak, na konci příběhu se snaží strany usmířit tím, že nabídne Telmarům cestu zpět do jejich domorodné země, ale k odchodu z Narnie je nenutí. Telmaríni mají tedy na výběr zůstat v zemi mluvících zvířat, a tím pádem dojde k usmíření původních rivalů, jejichž konflikt je hlavním tématem v knize *Princ Kaspián*. Aslan a jeho akceptace obou stran konfliktu je v této podkapitole přirovnána k Lewisovi a jeho přístupu k odlišným odvětvím křesťanství.

Po detailním popisu a zkoumání těchto výše zmíněných skeptických postav v dílech Lewise zjišťujeme, že každá z nich má něco společného se samotným autorem díla. Z výzkumu lze vyčíst, že tyto postavy mají osobité rysy, které často připomínají svou charakteristikou život Lewise a jeho vlastní zkušenosti s vírou a skepticismem. Je tedy zřejmé, že i přes to, že Lewis je dodnes známý převážně jako křesťanský spisovatel, jeho postoj k náboženství se v průběhu jeho života postupně měnil a velkou roli v jeho víře hrály právě vzpomínky z dětství, vztah s rodinou, válka, irská identita, studium na internátní škole i záliba v severských mytologiích.

K zakončení práce bych tedy dodala ten nejdůležitější poznatek z mého výzkumu, čímž je Lewisova schopnost tvořit komplikované postavy s autobiografickými prvky, které je lehké si oblíbit a zároveň je ještě jednodušší vinit je za jejich činy. Čtenář si po přečtení celého díla a pochopení kontextu může uvědomit, že s danou postavou sympatizuje a zajímá ho její osud. Tento pocit je silný zejména u postavy Edmunda v díle *Lev, čarodějnice a skříň*, jelikož Edmund se může ze začátku díla zdát jako antagonista, sám ale chvílemi pocítuje lítost a potřebu vrátit se ke svým sourozencům. Na jeho záchranu do hradu bílé čarodějnice dorazí Aslan a Edmund drasticky změní svůj postoj, jakmile si uvědomí své vlastní chyby a přešlapy. Tudíž čtenář v tuto chvíli může projevit odpuštění a tím se mění jeho přístup k postavě Edmunda. Lewis je schopný docílit takového efektu na čtenáři díky své vlastní spletité zkušenosti s vírou, která mu umožňuje chápání mimo jeho obzory. Tvoří fiktivní postavy, které jsou pro nás svými osudy zajímavé a zůstávají dlouho v paměti, jelikož je snadné se do nich vcítit a v jejich příbězích lze najít jistý únik a soucit.

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## 8 Abstract

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This bachelor thesis focuses on Clive Staples Lewis, the author of *Chronicles of Narnia*, and his journey from atheism to Christianity. The aim of this thesis is to analyse certain fictional characters from the works of the author, which are either sceptical regarding their faith or are going through a phase of scepticism, which resembles the one of C.S. Lewis himself. The first part of the thesis describes the historical as well as the social background and mainly focuses on World War I and its consequences, since C.S. Lewis fought in the war himself and wrote atheistic poetry at the time. The second part of the thesis is concerned with the author's life, the possible causes of his atheism, and his main objections against the Christian belief which prevented his religious conversion. The main part is focused on analysing similarities and parallels between C.S. Lewis's life and the sceptical characters in his works regarding the causes of their scepticism. The most common themes discussed in this thesis are rebellion, loneliness, Irish identity and the Norse mythology.

## 9 Anotace

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Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na autora *Letopisů Narnie* Clive Staples Lewise a na jeho cestu od ateismu k víře. Jejím záměrem je zkoumat fiktivní postavy z děl autora, které jsou buď skeptické vůči víře, nebo si prochází fází skepticismu, která se určitým způsobem podobá právě té C.S. Lewise. První část bakalářské práce se zabývá společenským a historickým kontextem doby, v níž C.S. Lewis působil jako voják v první světové válce. Zároveň v tomto období psal převážně ateistickou poezii. Druhá část je zaměřená na popis života autora, konkrétně na jeho postupnou ztrátu křesťanské víry v mládí a taktéž na případné výhrady ke křesťanství, které autorovi znemožňovaly opětovnou náboženskou konverzi. Hlavní částí bakalářské práce je analýza daných fiktivních postav a příčin jejich skepticismu, zabývá se rovněž i hledáním paralel mezi těmito postavami a životem samotného C.S. Lewise. Mezi klíčová témata patří vzpoura, osamělost, irská identita a severská mytologie.