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Three University College Tutors: Arthur Blackburne Poynton, E. F. Carritt, and George Hope Stevenson

JOEL D. HECK

When C. S. Lewis returned from serving in France during World War I, anxious to begin his university studies, one of the first people he met at Oxford University was his tutor in the Classics (Greek and Latin language and literature), Arthur Blackburne Poynton. Poynton's combination of scholarship, warmth, and irreligion undoubtedly influenced Lewis in significant ways. Poynton was one of the three most important tutors that instructed him during his undergraduate years, all of them amiable and scholarly. The second was the philosopher E. F. Carritt, and the third was George Hope Stevenson.¹ At this time when Lewis was trying to be a consistent materialist, and the positions of both Poynton and Carritt on religion seemed to undergird this commitment to materialism.

Lewis and Poynton, Lewis and Carritt, Lewis and Stevenson—student and tutors, a student of the Classics, philosophy, and history taught by professional scholars—were people who also formed a bond of friendship. Though they became more distant when Lewis became a Christian, no doubt to the disappointment of both Poynton and Carritt, the original respect that Lewis had for his tutors never waned, even when Carritt weighed in on a minor controversy Lewis had with S. L. Bethel and George

¹ Lewis took another year to earn a First in English language and literature, where his tutors were F. P. Wilson and George Gordon.

Every. If W. T. Kirkpatrick taught Lewis how to think, Poynton, Carritt, and Stevenson fine-tuned that thinking and enabled Lewis to rise to even greater heights that would serve him well as a young teacher of philosophy, aided by his knowledge of the Classics, a lover of history, and eventually the author of such books as *The Abolition of Man* and *Miracles*.

Classics Tutor Arthur Blackburne Poynton



Poynton, 1905
(Balliol College Historic
Collections, PHOT23.01)

Arthur Blackburne Poynton was born on 28 June 1867 in southwestern England at Kelston, Somerset, just four miles north of Bath, the son of the Rev. Francis John Poynton and Frances Mary Billinge. He attended Marlborough College and entered Balliol College, Oxford, in 1885.² Poynton was considered “one of the most distinguished undergraduate scholars of his generation.”³ He earned a First in Honor Moderations, a Craven Scholarship in 1887, a First in *Literae Humaniores* in 1889, and in 1890 he was elected a Fellow of Hertford College.⁴

In 1896, Poynton married Mary Sargent, the oldest daughter of Hertford College Fellow John Young Sargent. Arthur and Mary had two sons, the classical scholar John Blackburne Poynton, who followed in his father’s footsteps, and the civil servant Sir Arthur Hilton Poynton, who served as the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, and they also had three daughters, Winifred, Helen, and Anna.

One author describes Poynton as a man of “medium height, with a fresh complexion and very direct gray eyes. His hair was dark and, despite all his hard work and the passage of time, it was only lightly touched with grey. I may say that he was sometimes a little absent-minded, as a man with

² “Obituary,” in *The Times*, 10 October 1944, 6. Most of the biographical sketch, except where noted, is derived from Wikipedia.

³ Walter Hooper, Biographical Appendix, “Poynton, Arthur Blackburne,” in C. S. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me: The Diary of C. S. Lewis, 1922-1927*, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1991), 468.

⁴ Hooper, “Poynton, Arthur Blackburne,” 468. See also “Obituary,” in *The Times*, 10 October 1944, 6. Honour Moderations was the study of Greek and Latin language and literature, while *Literae Humaniores* was a course of study in ancient history and philosophy.

all his preoccupations might well be.”⁵

Poynton was a Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, until 1894 when he was elected a Fellow and Tutor at University College, where he spent the rest of his career. His teaching field was Greek and Latin language and literature, that is, the Classics, and he was one of two Classics Fellows at University College (usually called Univ. in Oxford), the other being Arthur Farquharson.⁶ Since in Oxford, “Classics dominated university examinations from their foundation,”⁷ Poynton taught at the pinnacle of an Oxonian education. Poynton was considered “not merely as one of the most brilliant of classical teachers, but one of the most able and accurate of scholars.” And one of the most hard-working. He has been described by one who knew him as “a most popular lecturer.”⁸

Poynton’s expertise was in Greek oratory,⁹ especially rhetoric, Isocrates,¹⁰ and Cicero.¹¹ He lectured on Cicero’s speeches, Plato’s *Republic*, Aristotle’s *Poetics*, and Tacitus’s *Annals*, and occasionally on Lucretius, but would occasionally lecture on Attic orators, Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, or the Greek writers.¹² E. R. Dodds writes, “He saw the task of scholarship not as the reinterpretation of ancient masterpieces or the rediscovery of ancient modes of thought, but simply as the transmission of the most exact possible knowledge of two ancient languages. This implies that Poynton took a philological, rather than critical/analytic, approach. Lewis was more analytic in his approach and put value on rediscovering ancient modes of thought. Poynton was an expert teacher, and he treated tutorial teaching as a form of intercollegiate competition into which he entered with zest.”¹³ His nickname was “The Poynt.”

⁵ Fred Bickerton, *Fred of Oxford* (London: Evans Brothers, 1953), 137.

⁶ Farquharson helped produce a major revision of an important Greek lexicon, the *Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*.

⁷ Christopher Stray, “Curriculum and Style in the Collegiate University: Classics in Nineteenth Century-Oxbridge,” in Christopher Stray, *Classics in Britain: Scholarship, Education, and Publishing 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 42.

⁸ Bickerton, *Fred of Oxford*, 137.

⁹ Hooper, “Poynton, Arthur Blackburne,” 468.

¹⁰ A Greek orator and rhetorician who lived in Athens from 436 to 338 B.C.

¹¹ https://thereaderwiki.com/en/Arthur_Blackburne_Poynton.

¹² “Obituary,” in *The Times*, 10 October 1944, 6.

¹³ E. R. Dodds, *Missing Persons: An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 26-7.

Poynton's familiarity with Lucretius would have resonated with Lewis.¹⁴ The death of Lewis's mother in 1908 had convinced him that the world was cruel and meaningless, and Lewis found the words of Lucretius to reflect what he had felt for nearly a decade when he came to study in Oxford with Poynton. Lucretius had written,

Had God designed the world, it would not be
A world so frail and faulty as we see.¹⁵

The prayers that he was taught to say did not result in his mother's return to health, so he began to see the world as frail and faulty.¹⁶

At Univ., Poynton tutored C. S. Lewis from 13 January 1919, until Lewis began exams for Honour Moderations on 4 March 1920. During this period Lewis had adopted the "new look," excluding the supernatural, romanticism, pessimism, and self-pity,¹⁷ and March was the month in which his irreverent cycle of poems, *Spirits in Bondage*, was published. The new look included hearing Cyril Bailey's "very amusing"¹⁸ lecture on Lucretius in that first month. That same month, Warren Lewis wrote to his father, stating that it would have been better if *Spirits in Bondage* had never been published.¹⁹

E. F. Carritt's brief remarks about Poynton in his autobiography recall some of his strengths. "Both as Bursar and Master Poynton was the ideal

¹⁴ Lewis wrote an undated essay on Lucretius, which appears in Adam Barkman, *C. S. Lewis and Philosophy as a Way of Life: A Comprehensive Historical Examination of His Philosophical Thoughts* (Cheshire, CT: Zossima Press, 2009), 533-4, and in C. S. Lewis, *Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews*, ed. by Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 194-7.

¹⁵ C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955), 65. The Lucretius quote is from *De Rerum Natura*, Book 5, 198-99. According to *Surprised by Joy*, 144, he discovered this quotation at least as early as his time with Kirkpatrick (1914-7).

¹⁶ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 20, 21, 65.

¹⁷ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 201.

¹⁸ C. S. Lewis, *They Stand Together: The Letters of C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves, 1914-1963*, ed. by Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 242.

¹⁹ Warren Lewis, MS *The Lewis Papers, Letters and Papers: Memoirs of the Lewis Family, 1850-1930*, vol. 6, 1933, Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton, IL, 84. Cited in Don W. King, "Spirits in Bondage: A Cycle of Lyrics [Clive Hamilton, pseud.]," in *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 385.

College patriot, he would devote all the energies of an acute mind to the intricacies of every financial or legal question, and it was his briefing of counsel that won for us our claim, as against the City, that, on the strength of ancient agreements and usage, Logic Lane was our property. He was a shy but friendly man, greatly valued as Classical Tutor by all serious pupils.”²⁰

Poynton served as Bursar (i.e., Business Manager) of Univ. from 1900 to 1935, as overseer of the Fellows’ Garden (where, as Fellow Edmund Bowen observed, Poynton grew poisonous plants²¹), and as its Master from 1935 to 1937. His two years as Master were marked by two significant remodeling projects. Poynton’s election as Master “was clearly a consolation prize, not least as he would have to retire after only two years.”²²

Poynton retired from Oxford in 1937 and was made an honorary fellow of his college. Although he did not publish much, he wrote *Cicero Pro Milone* (1892),²³ *Flosculi Latini* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922²⁴), *Isocrates* (London: Oxford University Press), *Flosculi Graeci* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), and *Gregory of Nazianzus and the Greek Rhetoricians* (Oxford: Academic Copying Office, 1934).

He was Public Orator at the University of Oxford for seven years, from 1925 to 1932, once delivering a lecture in Greek,²⁵ covering the speaking style of Isocrates.²⁶ He delivered the oration for Albert Einstein at Einstein’s honorary degree ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre on 23 May 1931. On 8 October 1944, at the age of 76, while crossing High Street in front of Univ., Poynton was killed by an automobile. His wife Mary outlived him by nine years.

²⁰ E. F. Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don* [Self-published] (1959), 59.

²¹ Robin Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 416.

²² Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College*, 452.

²³ Hooper, “Poynton, Arthur Blackburne,” 468. The Latin means “Cicero for Milo,” i.e., Cicero’s speech on behalf of his friend Titus Annius Milo.

²⁴ <https://openlibrary.org/>. Search “Flosculi Latini.” Accessed 2 January 2023. Literally, “Latin Flowers.”

²⁵ That lecture took place in November 1927. See also “Obituary” in *The Times*, 10 October 1944, 6.

²⁶ Hooper, “Poynton, Arthur Blackburne,” 468.

Lewis and Poynton

Lewis rated Poynton highly as a tutor. Shortly after his return to the university following World War II, Lewis wrote to his father about post-war university life, calling Poynton “quite an exceptionally good tutor” and “an excellent if somewhat unjust raconteur.”²⁷ He repeats that rating and his growing appreciation of Poynton a month later, and again nearly three months after that.²⁸ Clearly, Poynton was effective.

E. R. Dodds writes about special training in the Classics which Poynton was known for:

Besides the weekly compositions, further special training for selected colts in the form of ‘Poynton’s Friday evenings,’ when three or four of us sat round the fire in his rooms, each with a glass of port to sustain him for the daunting task of translating Pindar viva voce without previous preparation.²⁹

Lewis was undoubtedly one of Poynton’s “selected colts” who engaged in some of this special training. Lewis had read Pindar as early as 1916 before coming up to Oxford University, and he later wrote the poem “Arrangement of Pindar,” which was published by *Mandrake*.³⁰

This relationship came during Lewis’s atheistic phase of life, and he probably got no pushback from Poynton over his religious beliefs. Poynton, the son of a clergyman, seems not to have maintained his father’s faith, given some of his opinions. He once remarked about the College Chaplain Rev. A. J. Carlyle, “Carlyle reads as much of the service as he can remember.”³¹ Although he was an atheist at this time, Lewis thought Poynton’s comment only half-justified.³² On another occasion, while in the midst of writing

²⁷ Letter of 4 February 1919, in C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed. by Walter Hooper, 3 vols. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2004-7), 1:429-30.

²⁸ Letter of 5 March 1919, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:444. Lewis made a similar comment that May. See letter of 25 May 1919, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1: 450.

²⁹ Dodds, *Missing Persons*, 27.

³⁰ Later titled “Pindar Sang.” Jocelyn Gibb, ed. *Light on C. S. Lewis* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), 140. C. S. Lewis, *Poems* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1964), 15-17; C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Poems of C. S. Lewis: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Don W. King (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2015), 363-5.

³¹ Letter of 28 February 1919, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:438.

³² Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:438.

exams for Greats (elsewhere called *Literae Humaniores*, i.e., ancient history and philosophy), Lewis wrote in his diary that Poynton “had a vague belief in a future life,”³³ a comment whose accuracy we can probably trust.

Tutor and Bursar

Poynton and Lewis first met because of their tutorial relationship. Soon thereafter, Lewis decided to take the advice of Poynton, i.e., to take Honor Moderations rather than go directly to Greats.³⁴ Honor Moderations included the study of the Classics, Poynton’s field. The advice was sound since it would help Lewis get a fellowship in the future.

Several years later, as the date for exams in Greats approached, Poynton gave Lewis a Latin prose piece to work on as a trial run.³⁵ A couple of months later, as Lewis continued preparing for exams, Poynton advised Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* for “Unseens.”³⁶ Poynton wanted Lewis to succeed.

Poynton had a personality full of life, intelligence, and humor, so engaging that the younger Lewis upon occasion told his older brother Warren some good stories he had heard from Poynton.³⁷ Early in his time at Univ., Lewis had tea with Mr. and Mrs. Poynton, their daughter, two female undergraduates, and another male undergraduate. He describes Poynton as “quite amusing,” calling him “a very humorous old man who says the funniest things in a monotonous, melancholy voice,”³⁸ but, unfortunately, not specifically identifying any of those “funniest things.” Because Poynton also served as the bursar of Univ. during the Lewis years, Lewis spoke to him about financial matters whenever necessary. On the day he received his B.A. degree, Lewis went to College after breakfast to see Poynton about

³³ Entry of 12 June 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 48.

³⁴ The advice of Poynton is recorded in a letter dated 27 January 1919, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:428. Lewis had returned to Oxford precisely two weeks earlier on 13 January.

³⁵ Entry of 15 May 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 35.

³⁶ That is, the translation of a passage the student has not previously seen. Entry of 10 July 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 67.

³⁷ Warren Lewis’s unpublished diary for this date: 20 August 1922. None of the actual stories appear in Warren’s diary. Warren H. Lewis, *MS Warren H. Lewis Diary Collection*, vol. 6, WHL 1-49, 14 August 1922–8 December 1922, Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

³⁸ Entry of 2 February 1919, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 432.

money matters. He learned that he had a balance in his favor.³⁹ Later that year, Poynton suggested that Lewis's scholarship had likely been extended.⁴⁰

Finding Employment

Oxford tutors often helped their students find employment during and after the completion of their education. Poynton was no exception, trying to help Lewis get an Oxford fellowship or at least some private students whom he could tutor and thereby earn some additional income. He offered to write a testimonial (recommendation) for Lewis if one was needed, especially in the time after Lewis earned his degree, and he advised him on a potential job at Reading University.⁴¹

Lewis once met Poynton in the Parks Road, where they talked about the vacancy at Univ. and some tutoring work for Lewis. This is remarkable, given the fact that Lewis had not studied under Poynton in more than three years. Poynton gave Lewis some hope that the Univ. position might belong to Lewis, and he promised to try to get him some tutoring among the women.⁴² That fall during Michaelmas Term, Lewis went into town to visit Poynton. Poynton was once again trying to get Lewis some pupils. "After tea, wh. we had over the drawing room fire, I went into town again and visited Poynton in the Bursary. . . . He . . . told me he was writing to two women to see if they cd. get me any pupils. . . . He said he was not without hopes for me and if they decided to elect a member of their own body, they would prefer no one to me. . . . He said I had many friends in college. Overall, his remarks were fairly encouraging."⁴³ But nothing came of it, at least for the moment.

Wining and Dining

As Poynton became more of a friend and eventually a colleague, this growing relationship demonstrated itself on various social occasions. Lewis had had a goal of attaining an Oxford Fellowship almost from the

³⁹ Letter of 5 August 1922, in Lewis, *They Stand Together*, 81.

⁴⁰ Entry 6 of 12 October 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 117.

⁴¹ Entry of 17 June 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 52.

⁴² Entry of 21 July 1923, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 259.

⁴³ Entry of 12 October 1923, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 271-2.

first day they met in January 1919. The first occasion for sharing wine came in June 1924 when Lewis was preparing to take on Carritt's tutorial duties in philosophy for the next year. Lewis was present because of Carritt, but Poynton was also present. After dinner, Poynton stood and handed out the wine to those who had come together in the Common Room. Lewis writes, "Poynton was in great form."⁴⁴ Poynton stated, "I am for the outward passage. We are thirteen and I got up first. It was just how it happened with poor Emmet. The only thing to do is to drink as much port as possible." After that Poynton provided them with an imitation of his idea of a Greek chorus, which was one of his specialties.⁴⁵

Over the next year, Lewis dined with colleagues, as was his privilege. In spite of the cost, Lewis relished Poynton's companionship (and his cleverness), and that of the other dons, sometimes even after making a special trip into College for that purpose. Lewis once wrote, "Poynton and Farquharson both in and very amusing."⁴⁶ Apparently Lewis dined at Univ. on several occasions, and his frequent notes provide an indication of the high regard with which he held such dining.

One of the last recorded dinners at Univ. took place in 1928. Lewis wrote, "Poynton, the Fark, Carritt and Stevenson, as luck would have it, were all in that evening and it was delightful to revisit the whimsical stateliness of that particular common room." Lewis also wrote, "I did really have a very good evening the night before last when I exercised for the first time my newly acquired right of dining at Univ.—an exercise which must be rare because it is so damned expensive."⁴⁷ Interaction between Lewis and Poynton would be rather uncommon after this.

Philosophy Tutor E. F. Carritt

After Lewis completed Honour Moderations, he turned to *Literae Humaniores*, i.e., philosophy and ancient history. His philosophy tutor at Univ. was E. F. Carritt. Lewis came to rely on Carritt's instruction, advice, letters of recommendation, and friendship. When Lewis became a theist and later a Christian, they parted ways spiritually but remained friends.

⁴⁴ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 329.

⁴⁵ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 329.

⁴⁶ Entry of 19 February 1925, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 354.

⁴⁷ Letter of 23 February 1928, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:747.

Much later, even during a disagreement over the nature and purpose of culture, Lewis remained cordial and respectful toward his former tutor and took the high road in maintaining the friendship rather than distancing himself from his kind and generous tutor.

Edgar Frederick Carritt was born in London to Frederick Blasson Carritt, a London solicitor, and Edith Price on 27 February 1876. After studying at Bradfield College, a prep school in Berkshire County, he earned a scholarship to Hertford College in 1894.⁴⁸ At Hertford, Carritt earned a second in Honour Moderations under Tutor William Ralph Inge⁴⁹ and a first-class degree in Greats under philosophers Harold Prichard and Cook Wilson.⁵⁰



E. F. Carritt, 1904
(Used by permission of the
Master and Fellows of
University College)

Carritt was elected a Fellow of Univ. in October 1898, soon after the completion of his degree, and he was admitted as a Fellow to teach philosophy on 20 April 1899.⁵¹ The delay between his election and beginning to teach enabled Carritt to spend some months in early 1899 in Munich, Germany, where he lived with Professor Furtwängler and learned German (he was even more fluent in French and Italian), learning German mostly from the professor's son Willie Furtwängler, later a famous conductor.⁵² Carritt specialized in aesthetics, moral philosophy (ethics), and political philosophy. A family friend, Cecil Torr, took him to Italy around the turn of the century and enabled him to develop an appreciation for the visual arts that had begun previously during an undergraduate visit to Paris. The cities he especially enjoyed were Florence, Venice, Siena, Palermo, and Rome.⁵³

⁴⁸ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 1.

⁴⁹ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 8.

⁵⁰ He earned the degree in 1898. Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 9, 11.

⁵¹ For the dates and events of this sentence I am indebted to an email from Robin Darwall-Smith on 13 December 2021. Credit also goes to the Master and Fellows of University College, Oxford, for this and other information in this article. Carritt indicates that the illness of the philosophy tutor Vernon Storr resulted in the unexpected teaching post at Univ. Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 14.

⁵² Carritt seems to have married in 1900, although that event and date are not mentioned in any of the sources I consulted.

⁵³ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 16-7. He also cites Lucca, Orvieto, Pisa, Ravenna,

Carritt was influenced by the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce in the field of aesthetics.⁵⁴ Carritt called Croce “the greatest man” he ever knew in philosophy.⁵⁵ One of Carritt’s former students, Canon Adam Fox, recalls that Croce’s doctrine of art as expression was what impressed Carritt most.⁵⁶ Carritt and Croce met when Croce came to Oxford to lecture on Sidney’s *The Defence of Poesie*.

Soon after he started teaching at Univ., Carritt was elected to “a small club inaugurated by Cook Wilson and known as the Philosophy Tea. We met weekly in term at each other’s rooms or houses for the discussion of short informal notes or questions, and once, at each end of term, for dinner and a more formal paper.” At those teas, Carritt especially enjoyed the interaction between Harold Prichard (whom he had studied under), H. W. B. Joseph, and Lewis’s Magdalen colleague J. A. Smith.⁵⁷

Carritt also attended the Philosophical Society meetings on Sunday evenings, and during one session he met Albert Einstein. He asked Einstein about the proposition that “if two moving bodies seemed to change their relative positions, one of them or the spectator must have really moved. He [Einstein] laughed and said: ‘I don’t talk about reality, only what I can measure.’”⁵⁸

Among the many positions Carritt held during his tenure as Fellow of Univ. were Praelector in Law (1900-1907), Librarian (1906-1916 and 1919-1945), Praelector in Logic (1909-1920), and Praelector in Philosophy (1921-1941). He was a judge for the Newdigate Prize⁵⁹ poem and an

Naples, Taormina, Paestum, Pompeii, and Cefalu as lesser favorites. He and his wife later traveled to Spain on holiday and saw the Cathedral at Terragona, Granada, Avila, and Segovia, a trip that included the Prado pictures, apparently a reference to the Prado Museum in Madrid. Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 19.

⁵⁴ D. D. Raphael, “Edgar Frederick Carritt, 1876-1964,” in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 51 (1965), 441. Croce, an Italian idealist philosopher (1866-1952) wrote, for example, a lecture entitled *The Essence of Aesthetic* (1921).

⁵⁵ Raphael, *Proceedings*, 445.

⁵⁶ Adam Fox, “Edgar Carritt,” in *University College Record*, 4.4 (Oxford, 1964), 240. This remembrance of Carritt’s life comes from an address given by Canon Adam Fox at a memorial service for Edgar Carritt on 26 September 1964.

⁵⁷ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 25.

⁵⁸ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 29.

⁵⁹ The Newdigate Prize was founded by Sir Roger Newdigate in 1805. The award is given annually for the best student poem at the University of Oxford.

examiner for Greats.⁶⁰ Because of the Second World War, his Fellowship was extended beyond 1941. Many likely candidates for faculty positions were actively serving in the war, so Carritt was among those who were asked to continue their university duties until the war was over.⁶¹

In 1924, Carritt spent a year as a visiting professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, replacing Professor Dewitt Parker, who went on leave.⁶² While in Michigan, he stayed at the home of Brand and Frances Blanshard (Brand later became professor of philosophy at Yale University).⁶³ Carritt seems to have been one in a series of visiting professors from England, the two previous being the Poet Laureate Robert Bridges and Ancient History Tutor E. M. Walker.⁶⁴

In Ann Arbor, Carritt taught courses in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and in aesthetics, courses that Parker would ordinarily have taught.⁶⁵ *The Michigan Daily*, which once described Carritt as “the leading philosopher of England,”⁶⁶ reported some of Carritt’s early impressions: “The first impression, though expected, is still overwhelming. It is that of huge numbers, complex organization, sharp contrast of interests and standards.”⁶⁷ During the year he played tennis and handball, and during vacation he visited New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, and Toronto.⁶⁸ At the end of that year in Michigan, Carritt was joined by his wife Winifred. They traveled through the Rocky Mountains, Vancouver, San Francisco, Yosemite, Los Angeles, and the Grand Canyon.⁶⁹ Near the end of the school year, he delivered the annual Phi Beta Kappa address on “An Ideal of a Liberal Education,” when he spoke about the importance of the Classics as the best introduction to philosophy. He also

⁶⁰ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 52.

⁶¹ Email from Robin Darwall-Smith on 13 December 2021.

⁶² Paul Buckley, “March Meeting” (27 March 1924 in *The Proceedings of the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan* (1923-1926). <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/>. Search for “Carritt.” Accessed 14 September 2022.

⁶³ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 44.

⁶⁴ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 44.

⁶⁵ *The Michigan Daily*, “Oxford Professor to Teach Here Next Year,” 4 April 1924, 8.

⁶⁶ *The Michigan Daily*, “Carritt to Take Post of Parker Next Year,” 28 March 1924, 1.

⁶⁷ *The Michigan Daily*, “Carritt, Visiting Professor from England, Astounded with Contrast between Life Here and at Oxford,” 17 December 1924, 1.

⁶⁸ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 49-50.

⁶⁹ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 50.

stated, "I do believe that Plato is the most intellectually stimulating of all writers and his 'Republic' is the most educational book ever written."⁷⁰ He received an honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa.⁷¹

In 1937, Carritt gave the annual Philosophical Lecture at the British Academy, an address called "An Ambiguity of the Word 'Good,'" reflecting on the work of G. E. Moore and H. W. B. Joseph.⁷² His expertise in ethics probably explains why Lewis gave his first lecture at University College on "The Good, Its Position among Values."⁷³ In 1945, Carritt was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. His students remembered him as "clear and incisive, with a dry humour and no patience for rhetoric or verbiage but stimulating in the cogency and economy of his style."⁷⁴

Carritt, a small, slight man, was unusual in other respects. Gilbert Morse, a college servant for Carritt during the 1930s, used to prepare ice cold bath water for Carritt in the morning, and Carritt would come downstairs in a large towel, leap into the bath water, and noisily wash himself. After about five minutes, the door of the bathroom would open, Carritt would emerge with the same towel around him, and he would run back upstairs, dripping water. After he had dried himself, Morse would have his breakfast ready and Carritt's day would begin.⁷⁵ In his autobiography, Carritt describes himself as "an enthusiastic bather" (swimmer), and he writes of swimming on the shores of "Aegina, . . . the Ilyssus, Tegernsee, The Blue Grotto, Dante's Fonte Branda, . . . a pool in Taygetus, besides many better known or nameless."⁷⁶

Carritt read widely and he also loved art and literature. He combined philosophy with art and literature through his specialty in aesthetics. He was once seen by one of his students attending an exhibition of paintings, looking closely at every painting, since for him beauty was not simply a

⁷⁰ *The Michigan Daily*, "Carritt Addresses Honorary Society," 9 May 1925, 1.

⁷¹ Raphael, *Proceedings*, 442.

⁷² Raphael, *Proceedings*, 444. Horace William Brindley Joseph was the Senior Philosophical Tutor at New College. Lewis studied a text on logic that Joseph authored: *An Introduction to Logic* (1901).

⁷³ The date is 14 October 1914.

⁷⁴ Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College Oxford*, 465.

⁷⁵ Transcript of an interview between Norman Dix, college servant, and Peter Bayley, then English Fellow at Univ., provided in an email from Robin Darwall-Smith on 13 December 2021.

⁷⁶ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 20.

branch of aesthetics but something that he lived.⁷⁷

Carritt desired especially to implant his interest in philosophy in his students. In a reminiscence of his former tutor, one student stated that Carritt “regarded every one of his pupils as an individual,” adapting his methods in tutorials to the unique strengths and weaknesses of that student. “His pupils were to him, from the start, persons, and they soon became his friends.”⁷⁸ This explains Lewis’s closeness to Carritt. Like Lewis, Carritt also enjoyed rational opposition: “He rejoiced to find his most cherished positions under attack.”⁷⁹ Carritt combined “great personal friendliness and intellectual rigour,”⁸⁰ two qualities that Lewis both appreciated and exemplified. Adam Fox described his writing as “lucid and often elegant without sacrificing the rigour.”

Carritt enjoyed walking and talking, activities Lewis also enjoyed.⁸¹ While the two men talked together, they never walked together. Carritt often walked with Launcelot Phelps of Oriel College, who later became Provost, in the countryside of Oxford. “It was Phelps’ habit to walk up to twenty miles every Sunday, and for years he took me with him at least once a term.”⁸²

Carritt also knew William Archibald Spooner, the most well-known person in Oxford in his day, “more often quoted for his dry humour than for his genuine or ascribed mislettering (‘You have tasted the worm; take the town drain at once’).”⁸³ Another memorable character of Carritt’s acquaintance was the President of Trinity, Rev. Dr. Herbert Blakiston. Once when Blakiston was preaching in the Trinity chapel by candlelight and having difficulty reading his manuscript, he read, “Some of you are frivolous of course. . . .” He then took another look at his writing, repeated the same phrase, and then stopped. After taking still another look at his

⁷⁷ “Edgar Carritt,” *Record* 1964, 238-9.

⁷⁸ “Edgar Carritt,” *Record* 1964, 238-9.

⁷⁹ “Edgar Carritt,” *Record* 1964, 239.

⁸⁰ “Edgar Carritt,” *Record* 1964, 239.

⁸¹ Fox, “Edgar Carritt,” *Record* 1964, 240. Carritt himself tells of his long walks on Dartmoor, often with Cecil Torr, in the Lake District, and in Skye. Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 22.

⁸² Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 35.

⁸³ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 37. He meant to say, “you have wasted the term; take the down train at once.” Sometimes called malapropisms or Spoonerisms.

manuscript, he stated, "I beg your pardon; some of you are followers of Christ."⁸⁴

Upon his retirement in 1945,⁸⁵ Carritt was elected Emeritus Fellow and continued to write and teach philosophy. He was asked to serve as temporary Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen for the autumn term of 1946 when John Laird, then Professor of Moral Philosophy, died suddenly.⁸⁶

Carritt was beloved by his students, one of whom wrote, "He gave us an example of conscientiousness and kindness that could not fail to leave its mark."⁸⁷ Adam Fox and many other colleagues enjoyed that kindness at his home in Holywell and later on Boars Hill, when the hospitable Mr. and Mrs. Carritt welcomed them to their home.⁸⁸ In their retirement while living on Boars Hill, Carritt and Gilbert Murray often played tennis and took long walks together.⁸⁹ The poet Robert Bridges also became his neighbor on Boars Hill.⁹⁰ Carritt died at the age of 88 on 19 June 1964, in Ascot, England. He and his wife Winifred Etty were married for more than sixty-four years and had several children, none of them mentioned by name in his autobiography.⁹¹

Carritt was one of the first people to defend moral realism against A. J. Ayer, the premier exponent of Logical Positivism in the 1930s and 40s. Ayer wrote the major work on Logical Positivism, i.e., *Language, Truth, and Logic*, holding that moral claims are meaningless because they merely express emotions and therefore have no cognitive value.⁹² Logical Positivism contended that only those statements that were empirically verifiable were meaningful, a position that rejected virtually all statements of faith, aesthetics, or ethics. Carritt's primary expertise was aesthetics and

⁸⁴ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 38. In the poor light, Blakiston misread the phrase "followers of Christ" for "frivolous of course."

⁸⁵ Raphael, *Proceedings*, 440.

⁸⁶ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 65.

⁸⁷ Raphael, *Proceedings*, 451.

⁸⁸ Fox, "Edgar Carritt," *Record* 1964, 238.

⁸⁹ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 69.

⁹⁰ Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 71.

⁹¹ "Edgar Carritt," *Record* 1964, 238. The name of only one child appears in the sources I consulted.

⁹² Anthony Skelton, "E. F. Carritt (1876-1964)," in Hugh LaFollette, ed., *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 1.

ethics, and he held that moral judgments and aesthetic conclusions were factual, even if not in a scientific or mathematical sense.⁹³ Carritt's position on moral realism probably helped Lewis in his defense of objective truth in *The Abolition of Man*, and the fact that Lewis later gave Carritt a copy of the book suggests further Carritt's influence.

Carritt held to what philosophers call ethical intuitionism, a branch of epistemology that describes how we form moral viewpoints, and he advocated aesthetical expressionism, the belief that art sought to convey



Carritt Medallion
by Hungarian sculptor
Andor Meszaros

a particular mood. Carritt authored many books in the fields of aesthetics, ethics, and politics (which he considered a branch of applied ethics⁹⁴), among them *Theory of Beauty* (1914), *The Theory of Morals* (1928), *Philosophies of Beauty from Socrates to Robert Bridges* (1931), *What is Beauty?* (1932, an introduction to aesthetics), *Morals and Politics* (1935), *Ethical and Political Thinking* (1947), *Introduction to Aesthetics* (1949), *My Philosophy: Selected Essays of B. Croce* (1949), and *A Calendar of British Taste, 1600–1800* (1949).

Among his well-known students were Adam Fox, whom Lewis knew as a friend, R. G. Collingwood, E. R. Dodds, Alec Paterson,⁹⁵ and, of course, Lewis himself. Yale Professor of Philosophy Brand Blanshard, who regarded Carritt as his best friend in England and dedicated one of his books to Carritt, once stated, “We never saw quite eye to eye philosophically,” words that D. D. Raphael called “a masterpiece of understatement.”⁹⁶

Lewis and Carritt

Lewis first mentioned E. F. Carritt in a letter to his father on 1 May 1920.⁹⁷ Lewis had just passed Honour Moderations under Poynton's

⁹³ Skelton, “E. F. Carritt (1876-1964),” 1-2.

⁹⁴ Skelton, “E. F. Carritt (1876-1964),” 5.

⁹⁵ Author of *Across the Bridges*, founder of the Oxford and Bermondsey Club, and later a prisons commissioner and reformer. Carritt, *Fifty Years a Don*, 60.

⁹⁶ Raphael, *Proceedings*, 442.

⁹⁷ Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:485. Lewis does not mention Carritt by name. Lewis and Carritt may have met before this date, since there is a possibility that Carritt was seeking students for Univ. who had been turned down by other colleges. See Arend Smilde, “Why C. S. Lewis did not become a philosopher,” *Philosophical Notes* 1924,

tutelage and was beginning Greats, the study of classical history and philosophy. In that letter, Lewis wrote about his two new tutors in history (George Stevenson) and philosophy (Edgar Carritt). He thought Carritt seemed quite nice.⁹⁸ Lewis took tutorials with Carritt for approximately twenty-five months. At this time, neither man claimed Christianity as his creed, although Lewis's conversion to Christianity in 1931 seems to have created disagreements between them.

Lewis interacted with Carritt for three main reasons. First, in their tutorial relationship, Lewis wrote philosophical papers for Carritt. Secondly, Carritt gave advice and endorsements for summer teaching that could earn some additional money and for teaching positions that could end in a full-time teaching position at the university. Thirdly, they dined together, sometimes in a social setting but sometimes to feed into one of the first two options.

Carritt attended some meetings of the Martlets, the undergraduate literary society at Oxford University to which Lewis belonged, and he occasionally presented papers, undoubtedly because of his interest in literature, especially the poetry of Matthew Arnold which Lewis also liked.⁹⁹ As a philosopher he was looking "at" aesthetics, while the literary person in him looked "along" literature.¹⁰⁰ He appears in the minutes of the Martlets as an Honorary Member, the undergraduates being the regular members. We have on record six meetings attended both by Lewis and by Carritt, although there were probably more.¹⁰¹ The first such meeting took place on 9 February 1921. Lewis, then the President of the Martlets, invited student H. L. Hopper to read his paper on Romanticism in Art. Carritt weighed in on the definition of the essence of art as the discussion followed.

Inklings Studies Supplement No. 2, (2021), 49, note 33.

⁹⁸ Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:486.

⁹⁹ Arnold was known for his rejection of the supernatural, including both miracles and the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. See also Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 188.

¹⁰⁰ To look "at" something is to analyze it, while looking "along" something is to experience it. See Lewis's essay, "Meditation in a Toolshed," for an explanation of looking "at" versus looking "along."

¹⁰¹ Besides the two times when he presented a paper, we know that Carritt also attended on 12 February 1919, 21 June 1922, 6 December 1922, and 14 November 1940. Ref. MS. Top. Oxon. d. 95 (1919-1923), Ref. MS. Top. Oxon. d.95/3-5 (1923-1946): 122. This citation refers to the actual minutes of the Martlets, which are kept in the Bodleian Library.

Carritt presented a paper at least twice at Martlets meetings. In 1921,¹⁰² he read a paper on “Minor Symptoms of Taste in the 18th century,” followed by a discussion on Homer, Charles Lamb, William Morris, Jane Austen, and John Masefield. In 1924,¹⁰³ Carritt read a paper on Matthew Arnold, which Lewis enjoyed. Carritt claimed that Lewis gave him the idea for the paper.¹⁰⁴ At one of the meetings attended by both Lewis and Carritt,¹⁰⁵ both took the same side against another member, which is evidence that the two of them thought alike on this matter.

After Lewis completed Greats, the relationship between Lewis and Carritt changed. Their friendship seems to have blossomed, as Lewis relied on Carritt’s support for endorsements to various teaching positions in Oxford. On a personal level, on 24 June 1922, Lewis cycled to Bradfield College¹⁰⁶ to see Sophocles’ *Antigone* performed in Greek, a play for which Carritt had given Lewis a ticket. That Carritt gave Lewis this ticket shows the appreciation Carritt had both for Lewis and for his alma mater. This and occasional invitations to dine at high table suggest that Carritt may have been grooming Lewis to be a fellow realist philosopher at the University.

We learn very little from Lewis about tutorials with Carritt during his first year with him. Lewis only began his diary in 1922, and he does not mention Carritt by name in his letters until 1924 (although he does refer to Carritt occasionally by his role as tutor). Carritt was mentioned much more frequently in Lewis’s diary and especially his letters during his second year of tutorials with Carritt, and even then, not very often until May 1922. From that point on, Lewis was very interested in Carritt’s support for finding him tutorials from which he could earn income and a teaching position in philosophy. As stated above, Carritt’s kindness was well-known, so writing those testimonies on Lewis’s behalf came easily to Carritt.

¹⁰² 5 May 1921. See “Chronologically Lewis” for this date. <http://www.joelheck.com/chronologically-lewis.php>.

¹⁰³ 4 June 1924. See “Chronologically Lewis” for this date. See also Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 328.

¹⁰⁴ They had talked about Matthew Arnold on 30 January 1923. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 188.

¹⁰⁵ The meeting of 21 June 1922. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 53.

¹⁰⁶ Bradfield College was the prep school attended by E. F. Carritt before Carritt matriculated to Hertford College. This school was famous then, and still is today, for its performance of ancient Greek plays.

Tutorials and Lectures with Carritt

None of the papers Lewis wrote for his tutorials have survived, although some may have developed into later published essays. Over the years, Lewis wrote papers for his tutorials with Carritt as well as essays for publication, especially in Carritt's specialty in aesthetics and ethics. Among the topics were logic,¹⁰⁷ the philosophy of Benedetto Croce,¹⁰⁸ philosophical books,¹⁰⁹ Carritt's theory of the beautiful,¹¹⁰ ethics,¹¹¹ the "Promethean Fallacy in Ethics,"¹¹² the theory of potentiality, the "Hegemony of Moral Values,"¹¹³ the work of James Stephens (which he was actually writing for the Martlets¹¹⁴), and many others. Most of the topics were a standard part of the Greats curriculum, but the paper on Croce was a special interest of Carritt's. Since we get few details on these tutorials—and most of the details come from the later period of his work with Carritt—we can only guess what other topics he wrote about, but Lewis must have written about Plato and Aristotle in that first year. In addition, Lewis also heard Carritt present papers on several occasions, particularly at the Martlets.

Testimonials

Carritt was Lewis's primary advisor for potential teaching positions, including fellowships he applied for at Wadham College, Magdalen College, St. John's College, and Trinity College. The first time Lewis received Carritt's help was to find some students he could tutor so he could earn some extra

¹⁰⁷ This took place on 11 May 1922. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 33.

¹⁰⁸ This took place on 17 May 1922. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 36.

¹⁰⁹ The date is 9 June 1922. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 47.

¹¹⁰ This is noted in the unpublished portion of C. S. Lewis's diary in the entry for 25 February 1924.,

¹¹¹ On 6 April 1923, Lewis prepared a prospectus on ethics to show Carritt. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 229.

¹¹² Including an ethical scheme which Lewis discusses with Carritt on 11 October 1923. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 230, 296.

¹¹³ This topic may have been addressed after his time of study with Carritt. Its first mention appears on 6 March 1924 when he read the paper to the Oxford University Philosophical Society. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 298.

¹¹⁴ Walter Hooper, "To the Martlets," in C. S. Lewis: *Speaker and Teacher*, ed. by Carolyn Keefe (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 51.

money during vacation.¹¹⁵ Just a couple of weeks later, he received a note from Carritt, who thought that Farquharson could get Lewis some work for the vacation. The note also mentioned an available Fellowship at Magdalen College, although it was not the Fellowship Lewis eventually won.¹¹⁶ Later that month, Lewis biked over to see Carritt and talked about an opening at Wadham College.¹¹⁷

Then, on 17 June 1922, having just completed Greats a few days earlier, Lewis met Carritt in the library, subsequently also asking Poynton and Stevenson, tutors in the Classics and history, respectively, for testimonials on Lewis's behalf. Also, on 23 September of that year, Lewis went to the Union and wrote to the Master of Univ., to E. F. Carritt, and to George Stevenson once again asking for testimonials.

Early in 1924, Lewis bused into Oxford with Carritt's and Wilson's testimonials, an application, and an essay. He left that packet of materials at St. John's College, where he was applying for another position.¹¹⁸ Apparently for this occasion Carritt wrote the following words about Lewis, words that Lewis cited in a letter to his father: "He has not only real enthusiasm for knowledge, as distinct from its emoluments, but an unusual originality in pursuing it on his own lines. He seems to me the sort of man who is most likely to do something that would justify endowment, though there are some who have directed their studies more immediately to its attainment."¹¹⁹ Those glowing words show the high regard Carritt had for Lewis. That high regard seems to have been reciprocated, since Lewis had written about both Carritt and George Stevenson, "Carritt and Steve . . . I still think to be good fellows in their different ways."¹²⁰

At a dinner the next month, Carritt gave Lewis the notice about the vacancy at Trinity, a Fellowship in Philosophy worth £500 a year.¹²¹ Lewis

¹¹⁵ This took place on 27 May 1922. Entry of, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 41.

¹¹⁶ Entry of 1 June 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 43.

¹¹⁷ Entry of 12 June 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 49. The position would have involved being a junior dean, one who enforced regulations at the college, which Carritt discussed with him.

¹¹⁸ Entry of 21 January 1924, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 284.

¹¹⁹ Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:618. Thanks to Arend Smilde for pointing me to this quotation and the next one.

¹²⁰ Entry of 21 March 1923, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 222.

¹²¹ Entry of 29 February 1924, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 292.

was trying for every available position, especially in philosophy. The very next month Lewis wrote to Carritt for a reference, which he received a few days later.¹²²

The most notable support from Carritt, however, resulted in Lewis's appointment to replace Carritt for one year, while Carritt taught in the United States. In late April, Lewis received a wire from the Master of Univ., Michael Sadler, asking Lewis to come to Sadler's lodgings on Monday evening, 5 May 1924, to meet with Farquharson and Carritt. That evening, undoubtedly at Carritt's initiative, Sadler proposed that Lewis take over part of Carritt's work during the next year, while Carritt spent the year at the University of Michigan. Only Sadler had the authority to make the appointment. Sadler offered Lewis a one-year appointment to teach philosophy, a stipend of £200 for the year, and the responsibility to lecture twice a week. With a full year's experience teaching philosophy, Lewis would be better positioned to impress potential employers.

A month later, on 9 June 1924, Lewis dined with Carritt in hall. They were joined by the Master, Michael Sadler. Lewis went with Carritt into the Common Room. Poynton and Carritt were among those present. In the Common Room afterwards Poynton rose to hand out the wine. Lewis was now in the club. He never left. Later Lewis went to Carritt's rooms where he received more information about his forthcoming duties during Carritt's absence.

Dining and Other Social Occasions

Thirdly, their relationship was strengthened by numerous dining opportunities and other social occasions, some of which helped with advice for a teaching position. For example, in June 1922, Lewis dined in the Senior Common Room with Carritt, Stevenson, and others. Carritt and Lewis got into a long conversation on the subconscious, with Carritt denying its existence.¹²³ Two months later, Lewis went to tea at the Carritt home at Boars Hill, a small community three miles southwest of Oxford. Carritt promised to criticize Lewis's dissertation if he sent it to him.¹²⁴ Again, two

¹²² Entry of 5 April 1924, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 311.

¹²³ Entry of 14 June 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 49-50.

¹²⁴ This dissertation was a paper designed to demonstrate Lewis's qualifications for a teaching position. Entry of 17 August 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 87.

months later, Lewis received a letter from Carritt, inviting Lewis to come and see him (Lewis doesn't mention why or what happened as a result).¹²⁵

Two months after that invitation, Carritt sought out Lewis and invited him to dine at high table early in the next term, an invitation which Carritt followed through on in late January 1923.¹²⁶ When Lewis attended that dinner, the conversation centered on the expressionist theory of art. After the meal, Carritt invited Lewis to his room, where they talked about books, art, Matthew Arnold, and Pearsall Smith. Carritt was surprised to find that Lewis shared his flair for Arnold's poetry. Given Carritt's reserved nature, Lewis was amazed how personal the conversation became.¹²⁷

On 13 June 1923, the day before he began exams for English language and literature, Lewis dined in the Senior Common Room with Carritt, George Stevenson, P. O. Simpson, and the Greats men of this year. The conversation was personal as Lewis talked about a book he had not read, and Carritt kidded Lewis about it.¹²⁸ After tea on 25 February 1924, Lewis walked to College and left a note for Carritt, accepting his dinner invitation for three days later.¹²⁹ The relationship was more than cordial.¹³⁰

On 29 February 1924, Lewis dined with Carritt, Farquharson, and others. After dinner they went to the Common Room. Carritt and Lewis then walked to Allen's home in Holywell for the meeting of the Philosophical Society, where they heard H. D. Ziman read a paper on "Some Heresies." Very likely by this time, Carritt was working out the details for his year in Michigan and sizing up Lewis as his replacement.

Then, on 8 March 1924, Lewis received a card from Carritt asking Lewis to dine on Monday to meet Harold Prichard, Philosophy Fellow at Trinity College.¹³¹ Lewis accepted. Just five days later, Lewis once again

¹²⁵ Entry of 27 October 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 127.

¹²⁶ This occurred after a Martlets meeting on 6 December 1922. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 150.

¹²⁷ Entry of 30 January 1923, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 187-8.

¹²⁸ Entry of 13 June 1923, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 243.

¹²⁹ Entry of 25 February 1924, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 290.

¹³⁰ See also "Chronologically Lewis" for 15, 21, and 22 March 1923; 6, 11, and 26 April 1923; and 13 June 1923. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 83.

¹³¹ Carritt was anxious for Lewis to meet Harold Arthur Prichard (1871-1947), who was the Philosophy Fellow of Trinity College (1898-1924). Prichard was later White's Professor of Moral Philosophy (1928-37), and he was already well known for his *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* (1909) and an influential paper, "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a

attended the Philosophical Society meeting. This time he heard Carritt read a paper on the "Moral Faculty." At this point, Lewis was planning on a career in philosophy.¹³²

But this was short-lived. After his year of teaching philosophy Lewis was appointed to a fellowship in English. Nevertheless, Lewis kept in contact with his old philosophy tutor Carritt. On 30 May 1926, after an early supper and return to College, Colin Hardie took Lewis to Hertford College to hear Samuel Alexander at the Philosophical Society. Carritt was among those present.¹³³ Alexander was the philosopher whose book *Space, Time and Deity* helped Lewis make a distinction between contemplation and enjoyment, what Lewis called looking "at" and looking "along." Alexander read a paper on artistic creation, attacking Croce in the process, which probably didn't sit well with Carritt, who was a fan of Croce. Only one more recorded contact occurred between Carritt and Lewis during Lewis's pre-Christian years. In 1928, Lewis returned to his undergraduate college and dined at Univ. for the first time since leaving there. Poynton, Farquharson, Carritt, and Stevenson were present this evening, and they spent some social time together in the Common Room.¹³⁴

Contacts in 1933 and 1937,¹³⁵ the former a dining occasion that included Warren Lewis at Univ. and the latter one due to an invitation of some sort from Carritt, rounded out the recorded contacts prior to a conflict between Lewis and Carritt in 1940, which will be described later. Lewis tells Carritt, "I should have loved to come," but he had to decline the latter invitation.¹³⁶

Shortly after his retirement, on 19 November 1945, Carritt's last recorded contact with Lewis took place. The Socratic Club met at St. John's College with the topic "The Empirical Basis of Moral Obligation" by Dr. R. Eisler with Carritt as the respondent. Eisler stated that men have died

Mistake?" in *Mind*, 21.81 (1912), 21-37.

¹³² Entry of 13 March 1924, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 303.

¹³³ Entry of 30 May 1926, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 403-4.

¹³⁴ Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:747.

¹³⁵ The former a dining engagement at Univ. on 23 November 1933, and the latter on 29 October 1937. See Warren Hamilton Lewis, *Brothers and Friends: The Diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis*, ed. by Clyde S. Kilby and Marjorie Lamp Mead (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982), 125; C. S. Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 2:220.

¹³⁶ Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 2:220. The precise date is 29 October 1937.

for incompatible convictions and that the existence of truth is necessary to make thinking possible. The certainty of sanity was only possible in company. *Cogitamus* (“we think”) was the basis of our morals. Lewis, then President of the Socratic Club, agreed that truth was absolute and that truth was the only absolute value. Carritt also agreed with Eisler that the general nature of obligation was discoverable by reason, that we have an obligation to seek truth, and that this search was for the good of humanity. He disagreed that all values are relative, in agreement with *The Abolition of Man*, which he had received from Lewis in the previous year. Carritt apparently believed in G. E. Moore’s argument that good cannot mean “what is liked by me,”¹³⁷ in other words that truth is subjective. While this is the last recorded contact with Carritt, there were undoubtedly other contacts that do not appear in any diaries or letters.

“Christianity and Culture”

Lewis’s relationship with Carritt was to be tested in a public forum within the pages of the journal *Theology*. In January 1940, nearly two decades after he had studied under Carritt, Lewis sent “Christianity and Culture”¹³⁸ to editor Alec Vidler for publication in *Theology*.¹³⁹ The essay reacted to articles published in the journal by British historian and theologian George Every and literary scholar S. L. Bethell. In an article for *Theology*,¹⁴⁰ George Every had implied that “‘sensitivity’ or good taste were among the *notes* of the true Church, or that coarse, unimaginative people were less likely to be saved than refined and poetic people.”¹⁴¹ Bethell’s article, “Poetry and

¹³⁷ Stella Aldwinckle, MS Meeting notes and lectures of the Socratic Club, The Stella Aldwinckle Papers, Box 8, Folder 384, 1945, Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL. These notes are extremely sketchy, and this paragraph provides everything that Stella Aldwinckle had included in her papers.

¹³⁸ Letter of 25 January 1940, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 2:332. The article “Christianity and Culture” was published in *Theology*, 40.237 (March 1940), 166-79.

¹³⁹ The complete story is told in my chapter, “Alec Vidler: C. S. Lewis Was His Permanent Opposition,” in *No Ordinary People: Twenty-One Friendships of C. S. Lewis* (Hamden, CT: Winged Lion Press, 2021), 263-85, especially pages 269-72.

¹⁴⁰ “The Necessity of Scrutiny,” *Theology*, 38.225 (March 1939): 176-86. Every also wrote for *Theology* in September 1940. See C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, ed. by Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 28.

¹⁴¹ Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 13.

Belief,”¹⁴² had started the exchange between Lewis and both Bethell and Every. Lewis then explored various writers to determine their perspective on culture. The New Testament, Aristotle, Plato, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Jerome, the Church Fathers, and Thomas à Kempis all seemed to warn about culture. Others, such as Pope Gregory and John Milton seemed to support a positive appraisal of culture. Some aspects of culture are neutral, and others contain abuses. In addition, however, some aspects of culture bring pleasure, and pleasure is one of God’s gifts.¹⁴³

Lewis describes his own pre-Christian longing as “spilled religion”¹⁴⁴ and aspects of culture both as potential schoolmasters¹⁴⁵ and roads into Jerusalem,¹⁴⁶ so he sees spiritual value in culture. Nevertheless, Lewis calls the view of Bethell and Every an “inordinate esteem of culture by the cultured. . . .”¹⁴⁷ He finds value in spending time in “the suburbs of Jerusalem” because those echoes of Christian truth point to God.¹⁴⁸ Good taste, however, is not one of the notes of the true Church; unimaginative people are *not* less likely to be Christian than refined and poetic people.¹⁴⁹ Lewis here champions the ordinary person.

The May 1940 issue of *Theology* contained a reply from both Carritt and Bethell. The two men—Carritt and Lewis—had had a long talk the previous month, probably about their disagreement in *Theology*. Lewis called it “a long and rather annoying talk.”¹⁵⁰ Bethell, “encouraged by the

¹⁴² *Theology*, 39.229 (July 1939), 24-35.

¹⁴³ Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 21, where Lewis writes, “When I ask what culture has done to me personally, the most obviously true answer is that it has given me quite an enormous amount of pleasure. I have no doubt at all that pleasure is in itself a good and pain in itself an evil; if not, then the whole Christian tradition about heaven and hell and the passion of our Lord seems to have no meaning.”

¹⁴⁴ A phrase he borrowed from T. E. Hulme and also used in his 1943 Preface for *The Pilgrim’s Regress*. C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 23, note 1.

¹⁴⁵ See Gal. 3:24-26 in the King James Version.

¹⁴⁶ Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 22.

¹⁴⁷ Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 12.

¹⁴⁸ Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 24. Or, Lewis concludes, “culture has a distinct part to play in bringing certain souls to Christ. Not all souls—there is a shorter, and safer, way which has always been followed by thousands of simple affectional natures who begin, where we hope to end, with devotion to the person of Christ.” Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 24.

¹⁴⁹ Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, 13.

¹⁵⁰ Letter of 29 April 1940, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 2:410. By this time, Carritt’s

candour and charity of Mr Lewis's exposition,"¹⁵¹ disagreed with Lewis's definition of culture, finding both Aquinas and Augustine supportive of the notion of Christian culture. He also argued, inexplicably, that Lewis's position implied that there was nothing of value in culture. Lewis had stated the opposite. Bethel also disagreed with Lewis's position that salvation was an individual matter, rather than a church matter, and that Lewis needed to consider the unconscious materialism that exists in the church.¹⁵²

Carritt's reply shows his disdain for Lewis's "puritanical tradition" of what he labeled "text-hunting in the Gospels."¹⁵³ The ethicist Carritt claimed that Lewis obscured the main argument, which was a moral one and what Carritt defined as the question of whether a creature who was heading to heaven or hell could afford to spend any time on the study of literature. That was not the issue. Carritt misunderstood and exaggerated. Lewis had merely objected to the suggestion that refined taste was a mark of the Christian.

Carritt stated that Lewis felt the values of European literature could be instructive and helpful in bringing people to Christ. Second, he claimed that Lewis argued that culture could have value in the life of the believer, especially in their leisure hours, but Carritt did not like the idea of spending leisure time with Shakespeare or Dante to move a person from self-centeredness to a God-centered perspective. He also did not like Lewis's two options: on the one hand, the salvation of souls and the glory of God, and, on the other hand, nature, which Carritt called "the crux of the matter."¹⁵⁴ Nor did he like the suggestion from Lewis that when culture conflicts with our service to God, we should set aside those parts of culture. Carritt's inability to understand what Lewis meant by "the salvation of human souls" misses the point, when he writes, "I can best, and indeed only, glorify God by doing my duty, which would include, if that is possible, helping others to do theirs."¹⁵⁵

reply had already been written and was at the editor's, too late to be recalled. My guess is that the two men did not agree but decided to pursue it no further to neither man's satisfaction.

¹⁵¹ S. L. Bethell, "Christianity and Culture: Replies to Mr. Lewis," in *Theology*, 40.239 (May 1940), 356.

¹⁵² Bethell, "Replies to Mr. Lewis," 356-62.

¹⁵³ E. F. Carritt, "Christianity and Culture: Replies to Mr. Lewis," in *Theology*, 40.239 (May 1940), 362.

¹⁵⁴ Carritt, "Replies to Mr. Lewis," 364.

¹⁵⁵ Carritt, "Replies to Mr. Lewis," 366.

In a letter to his brother Warren, Lewis expressed his dismay about Carritt's attack. He was unhappy that the editor would publish a response from Carritt, a non-Christian, in a Christian periodical. Lewis compared his own position to Warren writing an article for a military journal and being attacked by a pacifist.¹⁵⁶

About a week later, Lewis wrote to Vidler about publishing a response to Carritt.¹⁵⁷ He suggested that if articles in *Theology* must be prepared for criticism by unbelievers, then the character of *Theology* would change significantly. He did not complain, and he never responded to Carritt's attack (he apparently thought better of it), but he was unhappy with Vidler. He did not, however, cut off his relationship with Carritt, or with Vidler for that matter. Later that year, Lewis presented to the Martlets "The Kappa Element in Romance,"¹⁵⁸ with Carritt in attendance. A few years later, in January 1944, he gave Carritt an inscribed copy of *The Abolition of Man*, which Carritt read and on whose pages Carritt made comments.¹⁵⁹ Lewis later added his responses to Carritt's comments. Lewis's gift of *The Abolition of Man* was done out of respect and affection, and the two men remained cordial toward one another.

Carritt's comments in his copy of *The Abolition of Man* showed his support with only minor objections. He comments, for example, that aesthetic judgments are "so much less certain than moral ones."¹⁶⁰ Occasionally, Lewis agrees with a mild criticism from Carritt. The two men seem to have read one another's comments, not to highlight their differences but to understand this important book better and, perhaps, to enable Lewis to improve the next printed edition. The conclusion, no doubt, gave Lewis confidence that, having run the gauntlet provided by his revered tutor, the message was sound. Two men, both of whom enjoyed

¹⁵⁶ Letter of 28 April 1940, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:401.

¹⁵⁷ Letter of 8 May 1940, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 2:412. Then, in January 1941, Charles Williams's untitled review of *The Problem of Pain* appeared in Alec Vidler's *Theology*. Lewis's letter was later reprinted as part II of the three-part text reprinted under the single title "Christianity and Culture" in *Christian Reflections*.

¹⁵⁸ On 14 November 1940. Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography*, Rev. Ed. (San Diego: Harvest Book, 1974), 62.

¹⁵⁹ The Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, owns this copy of C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943) and has a transcription of the notes by Carritt and those by Lewis. (LB41, L49).

¹⁶⁰ From my transcription of notes in *The Abolition of Man*, 10, The Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

rational opposition, would have appreciated the perspectives, even the disagreements, of the other.

In the December 1940 issue of *Theology*, Lewis presented “Peace Proposals for Brother Every and Mr. Bethell,” claiming that there was very little disagreement among the three men. He did not respond to Carritt, and he stated that he regarded Carritt “with all the respect and affection I feel for my old tutor and friend.”¹⁶¹ The position Lewis had adopted in the March 1940 issue of *Theology*, he stated, was that “culture, though not in itself meritorious, was innocent and pleasant, might be a vocation for some, was helpful in bringing certain souls to Christ and could be pursued to the glory of God.”¹⁶² He agreed with Bethel and Every that the beliefs of the writer were often implicit in their writings, but Lewis still maintained that he did not want excellence in reading and writing to be considered a spiritual value. The three men had not been very far apart, so this conclusion settled the matter. Every and Bethel offered one more installment, which appeared in *Theology* in February 1941.¹⁶³ After this letter, Lewis, Bethell, and Every no longer exchanged comments.

History Tutor George Hope Stevenson

George Hope Stevenson was the ancient history tutor¹⁶⁴ at University College.¹⁶⁵ He was born in Glasgow on 25 July 1880,¹⁶⁶ the son of Hugh F. Stevenson, an East India merchant. He was educated at Glasgow Academy, Glasgow University, and Balliol College.¹⁶⁷ At Glasgow University he

¹⁶¹ Hooper, ed., *Christian Reflections*, 27.

¹⁶² Hooper, ed., *Christian Reflections*, 28.

¹⁶³ George Every and S. L. Bethell, “Mr Lewis’s Peace Proposals,” in *Theology*, 42.248 (February 1941), 112-15.

¹⁶⁴ Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College Oxford*, 465.

¹⁶⁵ The photo, seen below, is Color Plate 15, by F. H. S. Shepherd in 1934. It appears in Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College Oxford*, between pages 278 and 279. The Oxford Fellows of Univ. are shown in this painting in the following order: Back row: David Lindsay Keir, Ernest Ainley Walker, A. D. ‘Duncs’ Gardner, G. D. H. Cole, John Maud, Arthur Goodhart, and John Wild. Front row: Edmund Bowen, Arthur Poynton, Sir Michael Sadler, A. S. L. Farquharson, Edgar Carritt, George Stevenson, and Kenneth Leys.

¹⁶⁶ <https://universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH22106&type=P>. Accessed 3 January 2023.

¹⁶⁷ Peter Bayley, “Obituary for G. H. Stevenson,” 2. Peter Bayley’s authorship of the

earned the Master of Arts in 1900,¹⁶⁸ graduating with First Class Honours in Classics. Stevenson earned numerous honors at Glasgow University, including the Jeffrey Gold Medal for the distinguished student of Greek, the Cowan Gold Medal (twice; earned while “seated upon the Black Stone”¹⁶⁹), the Coulter Prize, the Muirhead Prize, and prizes for Greek prose, Mathematics, Latin prose composition, Logic and Metaphysics, and English literature.



University College Fellows
George Stevenson, front row, second from right.
Second from left is Poynton, and Carritt is next to Stevenson fifth from left
Used by permission of the Master and Fellows of University College

Stevenson then matriculated at Balliol in 1900, where he earned a First in Honour Moderations (the Classics, i.e., Greek and Latin language and literature) in 1902,¹⁷⁰ a First in *Litterae Humaniores* (classical philosophy and

obituary is likely, but not certain.

¹⁶⁸ Email from Katy Mackin, Archives and Special Collections Assistant, University of Glasgow, Scotland on 10 August 2022.

¹⁶⁹ The Black Stone is a slab of dolerite, now embedded in a chair, known as the Blackstone Chair, fashioned of oak in the eighteenth century with inscriptions of the names of the founders, the arms of the University and of the constituent college, the Royal Arms of Scotland, and the Royal Arms of England. Students were examined while seated upon the Blackstone Chair as sand flowed through a time-glass for twenty minutes. Email from Katy Mackin on 13 September 2022.

¹⁷⁰ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 470.

ancient history, also known as Greats), the B.A. in 1904, and the Master of Arts in 1907. He was a member of the Arnold Society and the Brackenbury Society (a comedy debating society). His Balliol education focused on the broad liberal arts, including Latin and Greek grammar and rhetoric, logic, ethics, and geometry.¹⁷¹ Stevenson studied in Munich from 1904 to 1905, lectured in Ancient History at Edinburgh University from 1905 to 1906, and, in 1906, he was elected to a Fellowship as Praelector in Ancient History at University College,¹⁷² to teach Greek and Roman history.

During World War I Stevenson worked in Intelligence, first as a Signals officer (i.e., communication) from 1915 to 1917, then at the War Office in 1917, and in 1918 at G.H.Q. (General Headquarters), Le Touquet, France, about 44 miles south of Calais on the shore of the English Channel.¹⁷³ His service dealt with the interpretation, or deciphering, of coded messages.¹⁷⁴ During a lunch invitation to which Stevenson had invited Lewis, Stevenson spoke of the code interpreting experts, who, after some were weeded out as ineffective, were entirely classical scholars.¹⁷⁵ The study of foreign languages apparently prepared these scholars to translate, or decipher, messages written in code. He returned to Univ. in 1919. During his tenure as a Fellow, he was an Examiner in *Litterae Humaniores* at various times and a member of the Hebdomadal Council¹⁷⁶ from 1941 to 1949.¹⁷⁷

After forty-three years as a Fellow, Stevenson retired in 1949. He served as Estates Bursar from 1939 until his retirement.¹⁷⁸ Stevenson was a Fellow at Univ. from 1906 until 1949,¹⁷⁹ and he was named Emeritus Fellow upon his retirement. Stevenson was Lewis's tutor in ancient history for most of

¹⁷¹ Email from Nigel Buckley on 28 July 2022, Balliol College, Oxford.

¹⁷² Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 470.

¹⁷³ Ivo Elliott, *Balliol College Register, Third Edition, 1900-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 71.

¹⁷⁴ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 31.

¹⁷⁵ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 31.

¹⁷⁶ The chief executive body for the University of Oxford.

¹⁷⁷ For much of the first two paragraphs, I am indebted to the *Balliol College Register*, courtesy of Nigel Buckley.

¹⁷⁸ Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College*, 498. The story is told by those who remember Stevenson that G. D. H. Cole begged Stevenson to take on the job as Bursar to prevent Lady Janet Beveridge from getting the position. This is according to Frederick Yarnold and George Cawkwell.

¹⁷⁹ Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College Oxford*, 535.

the time between May 1920 and June 1922 when Lewis sat for exams in Greats. Lewis wrote about his positive first impressions of Stevenson.¹⁸⁰ In early 1921, Lewis wrote to his father that his “history tutor has handed me over” to Benecke,¹⁸¹ so it appears that Lewis studied with Benecke for a short time, since he continued to learn from Stevenson until he took exams in Greats in 1922.

Stevenson wrote articles for *Companion to Latin Studies* and *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. In his obituary, the *Oxford Times* stated, “He wrote several chapters for Volumes IX and X of the *Cambridge Ancient History* on Provincial Administration, the Roman Army, and the Civil Wars of the years 68 and 69.”¹⁸² In 1922, he wrote an article on Roman transport for a book called *The Heritage of Rome*.¹⁸³ He authored two books, *The Roman Empire* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1930) and *Roman Provincial Administration Till the Age of the Antonines* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939), which was well regarded.¹⁸⁴ As Peter Bayley wrote, “The virtues of his scholarship and writing characterized his life.”¹⁸⁵

Stevenson was known to his friends as Hope rather than George. In appearance, he was “tweed-clad, pipe-smoking,” and the *Oxford Magazine* described the “excellence of his sermons in Chapel, and the delight of his company, conversation, and of his random comment.” His teaching was characterized by “sympathy, honesty, verve, patience, fascination with

¹⁸⁰ Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:485.

¹⁸¹ Letter of 21 January 1921, in Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:516-17. This seems to have been unusual, however, because Benecke was a tutor at Magdalen College while Lewis was a student at Univ. Furthermore, we find very few references to Benecke during Lewis's student days, so it seems that this was temporary. Perhaps Benecke's expertise was in a field not well known by Stevenson. Robin Darwall-Smith indicates that Stevenson was especially good at Roman history, as his published writings indicate, so he may have handed Lewis to Benecke for aspects of Greek history.

¹⁸² *Oxford Magazine*, cited in Peter Bayley, “Obituary for G. H. Stevenson,” in *University College Record*, (Oxford, 1951/2), 2.

¹⁸³ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 28. The title probably changed, since a book by this title does not appear in any searches.

¹⁸⁴ Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College Oxford*, 465. R. Currie also praises Stevenson's book. R. Currie, “The Arts and Social Studies, 1914-39,” in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 8: *The Twentieth Century*, ed. by Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 135.

¹⁸⁵ *Oxford Magazine*, cited in Peter Bayley, “Obituary for G. H. Stevenson,” in *University College Record* (Oxford, 1951/2), 2.

his subject, modesty,”¹⁸⁶ all of it in his refined Scottish accent that was remembered for decades thereafter.¹⁸⁷ Sir Peter Strawson described him as “a dull tutor” with “a sharp wit.” Others described him as “a bit old-fashioned,” but “not a bad tutor.”¹⁸⁸

At the age of 71, George Stevenson died in his sleep on 5 February 1952, the same day that Queen Elizabeth II’s predecessor George VI died. Stevenson was a man of integrity, a generous man, active in his local Anglican church, St. Margaret’s, Oxford, and serving for many years as Church Warden.¹⁸⁹ He gave many of his books to the Univ. library and when the organ of the chapel at Univ. was rebuilt in 1955, that work was partly funded by a bequest from Stevenson.¹⁹⁰ He was married to Phoebe Maurice Wadsworth, the only daughter of barrister-at-law Samuel Wadsworth, on 4 July 1912.¹⁹¹ Stevenson and his wife had one daughter named Helen.¹⁹²

Tutorials, Homework, and Exams

The most common references to Stevenson by Lewis are those occasions when Lewis was attending Stevenson’s tutorials or doing homework or “Collections” for those same tutorials. Collections were a set of papers which students wrote at the beginning of term, usually three hours in length, to determine how much they recalled from previous terms. This would enable each tutor to craft the term’s assignments to that student’s knowledge and ability. They also served as practice runs for the public examinations students would take at the end of their studies.

Lewis demonstrated great potential, not only through his First Class Honours but also in the quality and speed of his work. Lewis’s diary is

¹⁸⁶ Bayley, “Obituary for G. H. Stevenson,” 2.

¹⁸⁷ Email from Robin Darwall-Smith on 30 August 2022. He mentions Gwynne Ovenstone and Sir Peter Strawson as being able to recall fondly and imitate that accent.

¹⁸⁸ This memory is one of several collected by Robin Darwall-Smith and shared with the author in a document entitled “Informal Memories of George Hope Stevenson (F. 1906-49).” This is a remembrance of Sir Peter Strawson. In the same document, Prof. David Raphael described Stevenson as “a little uninspiring.” The last two comments in this paragraph come from Frederick Yarnold’s memory.

¹⁸⁹ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 470.

¹⁹⁰ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 477.

¹⁹¹ *The Law Times*, 133 (20 July 1912), 298.

¹⁹² Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 31.

littered with references to studying history for Stevenson. More than fifty times Lewis mentions assignments in Greek or Roman history, studying for history Collections, writing those same Collections, and the like, all of them referring to his work under George Stevenson. One imagines that the setting for Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*, a fictional story set in lands near ancient Greece, was inspired by the teaching of Stevenson. Most of the actual references appear in the last month before Lewis took exams in Greats.¹⁹³

While Lewis was studying Greats, Stevenson often distributed and monitored exams. On back-to-back days in 1922, Stevenson handed out Collections, one a paper in philosophy and the other a paper in ancient history. After writing for three hours on 28 April (term had begun on 27 April), Lewis went home and prepared for Greek and Roman history Collections the next day. After the second set of Collections, Stevenson interviewed Lewis, which was the custom. The excellence with which Lewis wrote must have been the reason why Stevenson told Lewis after Collections that he must not work too hard and that he need not attend any lectures.¹⁹⁴

At the end of Greats, Lewis sat for six days of exams, from 8 June to 14 June 1922. Students wrote two three-hour exams each day unless they were so proficient in translation that they could complete that task more quickly. On three of the days that Lewis did translation, he completed the work in about two hours. In the morning of that first day, he wrote a paper on Roman history (these essays included translation and essay writing on that translation¹⁹⁵) and in the afternoon he did Greek and Latin translation. On the second day, he wrote on philosophy in the morning and Roman history in the afternoon. On June 10, he wrote on Roman history in the morning and translated Plato and Aristotle in the afternoon. Two days later, after having Sunday off from exams, he wrote a philosophical paper on logic in the morning and did more translation in the afternoon. On Tuesday he wrote a general history paper in the morning and translated Latin prose in the afternoon. On the last day of exams, he wrote a paper on moral

¹⁹³ Entries of 2, 4, 11, and 18 May 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 28, 29, 33, 36, and 41.

¹⁹⁴ Entries of 28 and 29 April 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 26.

¹⁹⁵ Email from Robin Darwall-Smith on 30 August 2022.

and political philosophy in the morning and translated Greek prose in the afternoon.¹⁹⁶ On 4 August, he learned that he had earned a First.¹⁹⁷

The Martlets and Social Occasions

Like E. F. Carritt, Lewis's other tutor for Greats, George Stevenson was involved in the Martlets.¹⁹⁸ We know of three recorded instances when Stevenson attended the meetings of the Martlets, one of them as the speaker. In that meeting, Stevenson spoke on "Goethe's Werther and Iphigenia."

The next month, Stevenson attended the joint meeting of the Univ. Martlets of Oxford and the Pembroke College Martlets of Cambridge, and a few years later he attended again.¹⁹⁹ This demonstrates not only an interest in literature, but also an interest in the students he and other Fellows were mentoring. He undoubtedly attended many other meetings. His interest in literature and related arts can perhaps also be seen in his attendance at productions of the Oxford University Dramatic Society.²⁰⁰

When we think of a student's relationship with a college instructor, we usually think only of the classroom or tutorial experience. At Oxford and Cambridge universities, however, the relationship was far more than a purely academic one. Tutors occasionally invited students to tea or a meal, as was the case with Stevenson and Lewis.

Most of the social occasions involving Stevenson and Lewis occurred at the end of their tutorial relationship and in the years thereafter. In fact, we know of only one such occasion before Lewis took Greats to complete his bachelor's degree, a lunch invitation about a month before those exams.²⁰¹

Lewis enjoyed other meals with Stevenson as well, four times in the

¹⁹⁶ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 46-9.

¹⁹⁷ That is, First Class Honours. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 81.

¹⁹⁸ For more on the Martlets, see my article, "C. S. Lewis and the Martlets," *CSL: The Bulletin of The New York C. S. Lewis Society*. 45.2 (March/April 2014), 5-10. Also published at the HarperCollins weblog at <https://www.cslewis.com/blog/category/joel-heck/>. See also Minutes of the Martlets. Ref. MS. Top. Oxon. d. 95 (1919-1923).

¹⁹⁹ The dates are 9 March 1920, and 4 June 1924.

²⁰⁰ On 11 February 1925, Lewis wrote that George Stevenson had attended and thought the O.U.D.S. production of *Peer Gynt* excellent. Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 351.

²⁰¹ Entry of 7 May 1922, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 31. Lewis sat for exams in Greats beginning on 8 June 1922.

Senior Common Room, the last time as a Fellow of Magdalen College, and one more lunch at the Stevenson home as well as a tea.²⁰² One final piece of social interaction occurred when Lewis gave a copy of *The Abolition of Man* not only to E. F. Carritt, but also to George Stevenson and Owen Barfield.²⁰³

Employment

One of the most important activities of a tutor is to assist students in finding employment upon graduation. In Lewis's case, they also talked about finding some tutoring that Lewis could do prior to graduation simply to make ends meet in the Lewis household. Stevenson was one of the dons who wrote recommendations for Lewis. E. F. Carritt, Michael Sadler, Carlyle, and others did the same.

Stevenson seems to have been responsible to some extent for the initial contact between Lewis and Sadler, which, in the end, won Lewis a one-year teaching position in philosophy for the school year 1924-25. This initial meeting was different. A note from Stevenson informed Lewis that the Master, Michael Sadler, wanted to see him. The conversation with Sadler dealt with a possible career in journalism, doing a trial book review of Garrod's *Wordsworth*, and Sadler's desire to find a teaching or writing position for Lewis. Thanks to Stevenson, Sadler now knew about Lewis's talent and was prepared for the suggestion that probably came from Carritt to fill in for Carritt during the 1924-25 year when Carritt would be at the University of Michigan. When Lewis went to see Stevenson to thank him for arranging the meeting, Stevenson said, "I don't mind telling you that it will be a scandal if this College or some College doesn't give you a fellowship soon."²⁰⁴ Stevenson was confident in Lewis's abilities, having seen some of Lewis's written work and having discussed the various readings Lewis had done for history tutorials.

²⁰² On 15 October 1922, he went to the Stevenson home. He had tea there on 8 August 1922. See Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 82, 119. For the Senior Common Room, the dates are 14 June 1922, 8 August 1922, 30 January 1923, and 23 February 1928. See Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 49, 82, 187, and Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 1:747, for the dinners in the Senior Common Room.

²⁰³ This took place in January 1944. See Lewis's copy of *The Abolition of Man*, kept at the Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton, Illinois. Call Number LB41.L49 1943, Copy 1.

²⁰⁴ Entry of 16 October 1923, in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 273,

Lewis contacted Stevenson six times over a ten-month period between May 1922 and March 1923²⁰⁵—and probably more times that he didn't record in his diary—for a written testimonial or some advice about employment opportunities. For family reasons, Lewis had seemingly limited his options to Oxford or the Oxford area, since Lewis wrote of Stevenson, "He thought a job at Reading for a year would help me to one at Oxford and approved of my idea of taking a season ticket and continuing to live at Oxford if I got it."²⁰⁶

In Conclusion

Poynton, Carritt, and Stevenson tutored Lewis in the Classics, philosophy, and ancient history, preparing Lewis for a lifetime of teaching, speaking, and writing. While Lewis rated W. T. Kirkpatrick as his finest tutor, these three Oxford dons carried on a similar role, filling nearly every rift in Lewis's mind with gold²⁰⁷ and enabling one of the most gifted minds of the twentieth century to have a greater impact than he could imagine. They did not hesitate to correct him or disagree with him, but such rational opposition did not lessen Lewis's respect for them and his appreciation for their excellent instruction and their friendship.

²⁰⁵ Entries of 2 and 27 May, 17 June, and 23 September 1922; 22 January, and 22 March 1923 in Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 28, 41, 51, 107-8, 183, and 223.

²⁰⁶ Lewis, *All My Road Before Me*, 51.

²⁰⁷ When Lewis once wrote on a student's paper, "Load every rift with ore," he was encouraging the use of examples and quotations, inviting the student to read widely and incorporate concepts from that reading into his writing. Personal correspondence dated 31 January 2003, from F. L. Hunt, who took tutorials from Lewis in Oxford during the early 1950s. This quotation comes from Keats's letter to Shelley on 16 August 1820, evidently alluding to the Mammon episode in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book II, Canto VII, stanza xxviii, "Emboist with massy gold of glorious gift, And with rich metall loaded every rift," with the idea that Keats wanted to encourage Shelley toward a richly textured verse. Thanks to J. O. Reed for this insight.