Fantastic imagination and the ivory tower

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Fantastic Imagination and the Ivory Tower

by

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Graduate College
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This is to certify that the master's thesis of

Karen M. Bovenmyer

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

____________________________
Major Professor

____________________________
For the Major Program
Dedication

To my mother,

and every teacher after.
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Introduction

This study is concerned with the relationship between creative writing and literary study. Naturally, one flows from the other; there must first be something written before writing can be analyzed. However, is this a one-way flow from the creative spring to the analytic recesses of the mind, or are these two mental operations far more mingled?

Throughout my academic studies in English literature and creative writing, I have noticed a strong divide separating these two faces of English studies. Literature professors enjoy studying the works of the masters and ruminating on varying meanings, but some have, from time to time, confessed possessing a yearning to write, a yearning to produce material similar in quality to what they study. Creative writing professors are similarly passionate about their respective fields, exploring possibilities of variation in their own work, but some have, on occasion, wished to learn through research the histories of others, through analysis of others' works add to their own understanding. However, those who profess themselves students of both divisions within the discipline find themselves asked, as though by squabbling relatives: "Whose side are you on?"

The face of higher education is changing. More students are seeking interdisciplinary solutions to the problems inherent in study in one major or department. New combinations of majors and specialties are created as students take control of their schedules and individually tailor their programs of study. The expectation that students will study beyond their bachelor's degree has risen, and more join the ranks of that nebulous body known as "graduate students." As an aspiring future faculty member, I see a growing need to blend the stark distinctions between departments, programs, and specializations.
As a member of this generation of students, I have experienced frustration trying to reconcile the separation of creative writing from literary study in the English department. Hours of reading to isolate common themes, pinpoint veiled opinions, and dissect the psychology of the text have left me frustrated with my own writing. Like my instructors, I wanted to create, but found it impossible to form complete agendas before I put pen to paper. Conversely, hours of writing creatively, exploring my mind, surprising myself with variety and intrigue, left me unable to think deeply about analytical writing. Like my creative writing instructors, I wanted to research my stories, but found the whole process dreary and unexciting.

Despite this difficulty, I have discovered that after these years of reading, studying, and listening, I have absorbed something after all. My creative writing shows the influences of my analytic and scholarly study, not only now that my MA studies in English are nearly at an end, but also, as I look back down the trail of stories I have written for the last eight years, in every tale I have ever constructed. Every class, article, and idea that I have been introduced to as a learning adult is resident in my mind, a rich storehouse packed with items of interest, the fruit separated from the chaff, waiting for exploration.

Every person who has logged years in academia has a similar storehouse, a similar mine waiting to be explored. Not all choose to explore this place in the same way; many scholars are content to stay where they have been, to continue working in the same capacity they enjoy. For others, satisfaction cannot be found in this stability.

Those who would cross this barrier, who would challenge the division between study and creation, need not go alone. At one time, the writer was inseparable from the scholar; it was impossible to become one without being the other. Dante Alighieri, Geoffrey Chaucer,
and John Milton did not venture toward creation without the study of literature, history, and religious theory. Though women had a somewhat more difficult time procuring an education, Christine de Pizan, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, and Virginia Woolf also ventured into the realm of imagination with extensive foreknowledge and deep thought. The work of this admirable company involved the consideration and recovery of ideas from a storehouse of knowledge, a creative venture not formed in a void. Today, we have the record of these scholar-writers before us, a record that can be reproduced in us.

C. S. Lewis is one example of a scholar-writer somewhat closer to our time. Like the great minds mentioned above, Lewis also was first a scholar and thinker. He studied the history of English literature, wrote several critical works examining medieval and renaissance literature, and lectured at Oxford and Cambridge. He is also famous for his creative fiction, both fantastic, as appearing in the chronicles of Narnia, and science fictional, such as Out of the Silent Planet (1938), Perelandra (1943), and That Hideous Strength (1945). Following an adult conversion to Christianity, Lewis was also a very prolific Christian writer. All three of these distinct aspects of Lewis's intellectual life were expressed simultaneously. Because of this diverse intellectual life, Lewis had every right to be too distracted by the separations between literature and creative writing to forge fantastically creative work. Still, he managed to harness the energy created by this chaotic intellectual life and channel it into his fiction, a fiction that is both wildly creative and, at the same time, deeply rooted in his beliefs and scholarly study.

Lewis exemplifies the successful writer who managed to employ his academic storehouse to the fullest, taking an area of literature—that of allegory—which is highly intellectual, analyzing it to his fullest capacity, and then reproducing it himself years later in
a wonderful and imaginative way. To fully understand the ways in which Lewis employed his scholarly interests, I will compare one of his works of literary analysis with one of his novels. *The Allegory of Love: A Study In Medieval Tradition* (1936), a book based on Lewis’s master’s thesis, examines the intellectual and sometimes difficult-to-understand genre of allegory. *The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”* (1952), one of the Narnia chronicles, is certainly an example of allegory and at the same time a unique expression of Lewis’s beliefs and loves written in the form of children’s literature.

As a young writer beginning my intellectual and writing adventures, I too have sought to access my storehouse of learning in producing the manuscript “Dead Languages.” In it, I explore my interpretation of some things I have found interesting in my scholarly studies. Aspects of my three undergraduate majors, anthropology, history, and English, combine in “Dead Languages” with my creative writing interests. The result presented here is part of a longer work that I will continue to refine after I complete my studies.

Through these two examples, that of the scholar-writer Lewis and my own, one can see that fantastic imagination is alive in “the ivory tower,” and, in fact, one cannot survive without the influence of the other. *The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”* and “Dead Languages” are written for the sake of creative writing. Both works that possess strong characters with whom the reader can identify, well-established fantastic settings, and a plot that involves these characters fully with the setting. As works of fiction, they engage a reader’s imagination. At the same time, both *The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”* and “Dead Languages” seek to ask certain questions about the nature of mankind, our world, and certain definitions of genre. These questions, both for Lewis and for me, were first explored in scholarly study. These creative works show how one might use analytic conclusions to write
creatively and remain true to the form of creative writing without denying the fruits of intellectual labor. They show, when coupled with the scholarly ideas of the authors, that the relationship between creative writing and scholarly study is far more a relationship of open sharing than one of scant negotiations between separate realms of study.

Clive Staples Lewis: A Creative Writer and Scholar

Clive Staples Lewis, known as C. S. or Jack Lewis (1898-1963), is famous for his scholarly works, his fantastic fiction, and his religious non-fiction. He created widely popular, beautiful, and carefully crafted allegorical works which mirrored his exploration of those features in other authors. His religious views are often expressed in his novels through his creative and fantastic use of the beliefs and ideals he studied in medieval allegory. Lewis explored these tropes of allegory while writing his master's thesis, eventually published eight years after he completed graduate study as The Allegory of Love, and expressed these ideas in his allegorically Christian novels twenty years after that publication (Wilson 143). The chronicles of Narnia, an immensely popular series about a group of British schoolchildren's adventures in a land by the same name, is perhaps his most famous work, but also the one most criticized for its "blatant Christianity" (Jones 11). As a young man, Lewis was an atheist, deciding before his entry to college that there was no "omnipotent being" (Wilson 42). However, he experienced an adult conversion in 1929. His conversion was difficult and the work he produced after he converted, such as the parody The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism (1933), was sarcastic and scathing; for several years he searched for a new, and
in some ways more gentle, way to express his newfound faith before he eventually discovered an outlet in the form of the novel, chiefly the Narnia series (Wilson 134).

However, Lewis not only had spiritual obligations to fulfill for himself in writing; he also, as a college lecturer, had scholarly obligations. In 1936 The Allegory of Love was published, a work that is a purely scholarly discussion of a genre that was often Christian (Wilson 133-135); in Lewis’s own words, however, “…my subject is secular and creative allegory, not religious and exegetical allegory” (Allegory 48:2). Though Lewis began The Allegory of Love as he studied toward his master’s thesis in literature, and though his religious views changed before it was published, the fundamental aim of the work remained the same: to discuss, maturely and intellectually, the medieval genre of allegory. This scholarly study examines courtly love, allegory, and the idea that allegory was the dominant form of medieval literature as well as specifically analyzing The Romance of the Rose, the works of Chaucer, Gower, Thomas Usk, and Spenser’s The Faerie Queene. It is evident that the scholarly mind which produced this study was well read and well versed in the traditions of scholarly writing. It is difficult to imagine the serious and learned Oxford don who casually used Latin and Greek phrases such as “multa renascentur quae jam cecidere, cadentque quae nunc sunt in honore” [of all that fell before, much will rise again, and will be restored in honor] as also the creator of fanciful children’s literature (Allegory title page).

As a scholarly work and a treatise on a literary genre, The Allegory of Love was successful and is still considered an important work in exploring British allegory and medieval love poetry. When investigated as a source of inspiration for Narnia, however, The Allegory of Love is even more interesting. Lewis’s biographer, A. N. Wilson, comments on The Allegory of Love: “Moreover, in showing us what he loves about The Faerie Queene, he
shows us in embryo what he hardly knows at this point himself: The sort of books which he himself will excel at. In his descriptions of Spenser’s Christian purpose, his blending of allegory with adventure, his use of homely familiar figures, like St. George, side by side with figures from a much older mythology and figures from his own imagination, Lewis is actually writing a recipe for how to construct the Narnia chronicles” (145). This “recipe” that Lewis presents in The Allegory of Love explores the features of medieval allegory in a devoted and affectionate manner. Lewis seems to enjoy speculating about meaning in The Allegory of Love, though he occasionally “pokes fun” at the creators of allegory: “We hear the bell clang; and the children [authors playing irreverently with allegorical courtly love as a religion], suddenly hushed and grave, and a little frightened, troop back to their master” (43). It is obvious that Lewis is enchanted, inspired, and passionate about his chosen topic of analysis, the shifting and slippery realm of allegory. This enchantment eventually informed his style of creative writing.

Allegory, also known as the “language of the other,” is a genre that has to some extent fallen by the wayside of modern literary study. Edward Quinn, author of A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms, defines allegory as “a type of narrative in which the surface story reflects at least one other meaning” and states that “in allegory, the surface story is often an arbitrary excuse for the secondary meaning” (12). Using allegory as a pattern for storytelling is very difficult because the author must carefully chose which symbols represent these other meanings, symbols that may be misinterpreted by the reader. The Oxford English Dictionary states that allegory is “the description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance,” and informs that the word itself is made from the Greek words for “other” (allos) and “to speak,” specifically, “to speak in the marketplace”
Lewis studied the unquestionably allegorical works of the medieval era: parables, morality plays, and, as the OED states, "extended or continued metaphor[s]" are all considered to be traditional allegory. Works written since the Middle Ages that employ this use of metaphor sometimes aren't labeled as allegory because allegory was no longer a trend after that time period. It had become a thing of the past. Lewis states in The Allegory of Love "every metaphor is an allegory in little," and would seem to disagree with the trend of the 19th century to label allegory as an outdated mode of expression (60).

Lewis states that the "other language" of allegory does not enchant modern people—we have "grown away" from it. We must work at "reconstructing that long-lost state of mind" (Allegory 1). After the Middle Ages, allegory as a form of expression was no longer popular and later all but disappeared. The handful of allegorical works written from that time to the time of Lewis include John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress, Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," all works that Lewis, as a scholar studying this genre, also knew, and that reappear along with aspects of medieval allegory in his creative fiction, especially Narnia. Narnia, written as an allegory, is an attempt to renew this form. Lewis, as a writer working with this form of expression, must acknowledge these famous allegorical texts in order to begin to represent this difficult-to-grasp style of "other-speak" writing for modern writers. This was an activity that Lewis would have found both necessary and enjoyable. This passion for the genre, this love of the blending and mingling of mythology and imagination with familiar symbols, adventure, and Christianity, enchanted and inspired Lewis creatively.
“In a very few pages, there is a rich concentration of all that he has most intensely felt and enjoyed as a reader—the talking animals of his own early stories, the fauna of classical mythology, the cold Wagnerian gust of Northern-ness brought by the witch, the drama of religious confrontation, when the children witness ‘deeper magic from before the dawn of time,’” Wilson says of Narnia in his C.S. Lewis: a Biography (220). From the very beginning of the chronicles of Narnia, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (1950), it is obvious that Lewis was inspired by his studies; and includes those ideas he finds most interesting about the genre he studied in The Allegory of Love. Before he ever wrote the chronicles of Narnia, he felt that ideas and the fantasy one could create from those ideas were sometimes more important than reality: “The phantom periods for which the historian searches in vain [...] all these have their place in a history more momentous than that which commonly bears the name” (Allegory 23). He seems to be creating in Narnia a mythical history of sorts, a history of his own search and fulfillment of Christianity and a history of those academic discoveries he finds most significant.

It is certain that Lewis meant to write allegory and had an agenda, “something to say” with Narnia; in his own words “I wrote the books I should have liked to read ... The proper reason for writing a children’s story is because a children’s story is the best art form for something you want to say” (Jones 11). In Lewis we have an author who has studied academically the allegory genre in which he writes, and because of this study, creates a fiction not only from and for himself but also from and of his studies. The willful jumble of tropes which his Narnia books share with other late allegorical works and with Christian allegories of painful transformation reveals an author hard at work within the slippery rules system of allegory; it also reveals the difficulties of writing from scholarly study.
Though working with allegory as a mode of expression can be difficult, Lewis wrote the chronicles of Narnia very quickly. In less than four years all seven books were finished (Wilson 220). The learned scholar, the sarcastic convert, and the scientist all but disappear in the creator of Narnia, an energetic narrator who evokes a sense of wonder, mystery, and adventure in the reader. These books have become a landmark text for the generations of children who were young readers in the decade of their publication and since that time. It is the fact that Lewis wrote the chronicles as the “books I should have liked to read” that makes them so appealing and entertaining. In addition to being enjoyable to write, Narnia appears to have been a serious outpouring and celebration of Lewis’s Christian beliefs bolstered by his studies in allegory and literature.

Book three in the chronicles of Narnia, Lewis’s The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”, is perhaps, of the seven chronicles, the novel with the most obvious parallels to other allegorical works which Lewis knew, Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels and Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” in particular. This novel, then, shows the most direct relationship between Lewis’s academic studies and his creative writing.

In The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader” two of the original Narnia children, Lucy and Edmund, who have visited Narnia in the previous two books, enter the magical land through a painting of a ship, taking their disagreeable cousin, Eustace, with them. They find themselves onboard the ship in the painting which, in Narnia, is the royal ship “Dawn Treader” sailed by the king of Narnia, Caspian. Caspian is on a quest for “a year and a day” to find the seven Telmarine, lost lords of Narnia: Lord Revilian, Lord Bern, Lord Argoz, Lord Mavramorn, Lord Octesian, Lord Restimar, and Lord Rhoop (Lewis Voyage 16, 161).
Rumors that the land of Aslan, Lewis’s Narnian Christ figure, lies beyond the eastern sea provide an additional reason why Reepicheep, one of Lewis’s favorite talking animals, is onboard. “It is always from the east, across the sea, that the great Lion comes to us,” and Reepicheep wishes to join him (16). The crew and passengers travel from island to island following the trail of the lost Telmarines to the end of the eastern sea. They go through many adventures on their way to the end of the world, including abolishing slavery on one of the islands, having one of their number turn into a dragon, finding water that turns things to gold, meeting an island full of invisible people, sailing around an island where dreams, all dreams, come true, and meeting a retired star before finally reaching the end of the world and the barrier to Aslan’s country.

The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader” is an adventure in the literal sense. The characters are continually interacting with their environment and meeting interesting people as they journey from island to island. The relationship between this journey and the adventures of Gulliver is obvious, and Lewis knew Gulliver’s Travels well enough to refer to it casually in The Allegory of Love: “The courtly lover is as embarrassed as Gulliver was among the horses, and can only plead that, if God made the things, at least he did not make the names by which Reason refers to them” (149). The relationship of The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader” to earlier allegory does not end there. Lewis would be the first to say that the names of characters in the medieval allegory he studied are almost always significant and, as with Swift, intend to provoke a deeper kind of thought. The characters in The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader” are no different.

The very names of the characters are allegorical. Lewis, at some level, meant them to illustrate some deeper meaning to the tale. Coleridge’s poem “The Rime of the Ancient
Mariner,” which recounts the adventures of a sailor compelled to tell his story to a passing wedding guest, is certainly related to The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader.” By their name alone the “tell-marines” or talking sailors of Lewis’s story are related to Coleridge’s poem, a fact that, for an Oxford don well versed in literature and philology, could scarcely have been accidental. Lord Rhoop is particularly reminiscent of Coleridge’s loquacious ancient mariner when he cries out in horror, “Fly! Fly! About with your ship and fly! Row, row, row for your lives away from this accursed shore” (Lewis Voyage 156).

Lord Bern is the first missing tellmarine found, and this normal British-sounding name is like his normal British-like fate: he becomes a Duke of the Lone Islands. Lord Octesian, a name that sounds as if it could be from a list of Emperors of Rome, was found on Dragon Island, the place where Eustace is trapped by greed. Lewis’s Lord Restimar, whose name seeming to be a marriage between the English “rest” and the Latin “mare” or sea (Handford “mare”), removed his armor to bathe on a strange island. He is strikingly like Spenser’s Redcross knight from The Faerie Queene (a work that Lewis was particularly devoted to in The Allegory of Love) who removes his armor to rest by a cool stream and almost loses his life to the giant and the evil Duessa. Restimar actually does lose his life when he touches the “Deathwater” that turns him to gold, making his “rest in water” eternal indeed. Lord Revilian, the man who certainly evokes revulsion, commits evil at Aslan’s table by reaching in a fit of pique for the very knife that killed Aslan: Lord Argoz and Lord Mavramorn sleep there with him, one with a name that sounds like a snore, the other waiting for morn. And of course, what better captain to have on a journey across the sea than a man named, like the body of water between Russia and the Middle East, Caspian?
Eustace himself seems named for a saint martyred by the Romans for refusing to sacrifice animals to the Roman gods. Saint Eustace was boiled alive in a golden bull, at least a little like the heat and gold associated with the dragon; and both Eustaces' bodies remain intact through their experiences (Detroit, par. 1). In The Allegory of Love, Lewis speaks about the mingling of Christian and Roman concepts: "Both spring from the whole mental life of the period in question; both reflect the spirit of those centuries of moral and religious experiment from which Christianity finally emerged victorious" (Lewis Allegory 57). In The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader". Lewis purposefully borrows and mingles concepts and names from different languages, periods, books, and religions. The religious significance of Eustace's name would not have gone unnoticed by Lewis. The names of characters are sometimes their very function in allegory, and it is certain that Eustace is meant to indicate a religious transformation.

This transformation is perhaps the most striking of the allegorical situations in The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader". The story of Eustace begins in a way that Lewis admired in The Allegory of Love when he wrote of Andreas's Council of Remiremont: "It begins, as a good story should, with a young man lost in a forest" (Lewis, Allegory 37). Eustace, wanting to escape being put to work, wanders off from the group repairing the "Dawn Treader." He is quickly lost in a wood and misguided by a fog, losing his way completely. He witnesses the death of a dragon, and wanders into the dragon's cave, finding treasure there and planning to take as much as he could stuff in his pockets back with him. There he sleeps, but when he awakens, he finds he has metamorphosed into a dragon. "He had turned into a dragon while he was asleep. Sleeping on a dragon's hoard with greedy, dragonish thoughts in his heart, he had become a dragon himself" (Voyage 75). Because Eustace "deep down inside [...] liked
bossing and bullying" (2), his first thoughts are of conquest in his new dragon form, but they soon pass into a terrible loneliness as he realizes he is no longer part of the human race. "He wanted to be friends. He wanted to get back among humans and talk and laugh and share things. (75-76). This marks the beginning of Eustace's transformation into a good boy, a boy who, by the end of the book, "had improved" so that "you'd never know him for the same boy" (216). Eustace, after crying his dragonish eyes out, decides to join the rest of the voyagers and convince them of his identity.

He is seen and recognized as a dangerous dragon long before the others talk with him. The adventurers meet him on the beach with swords drawn, ready to charge. Their readiness to fight is reminiscent of Lewis's comment about allegory in The Allegory of Love: "All our serious imaginative work, when it touches morals, paints a conflict: all practical moralists sing to battle or give hints about the appropriate strategy" (Allegory 58). Throughout The Allegory of Love, Lewis noticed that allegory and military terms seemed inseparable. Even the most gentle and polite of allegorical figures had strategy, and so do feminine Lucy and the others. In this case the strategy is to attack the dragon all together to destroy it, but Eustace acts cowardly and waddles pitifully until Reepicheep bravely speaks with him to discover the problem. They soon realize that the dragon is their "friend" Eustace. Instead of continuing to be "a bother" Eustace in this draconic form becomes helpful and, gradually, is genuinely liked by his companions. He survives for some time as a dragon, and "The pleasure (quite new to him) of being liked and still more, of liking other people, was what kept Eustace from despair" (84). Eventually, the others discover that Eustace shows no signs of turning back into a boy any time soon, and the "Dawn Treader" has to depart. It is then
that Aslan finally intercedes on the behalf of the travelers and helps Eustace regain his human form.

Aslan comes to Eustace one night and leads him to a place where there is a sacred pool. He tells Eustace that he must remove his clothes to step in the pool, but Eustace cannot shed enough of his scaly dragon skin to enter the water. Aslan then says he must undress Eustace; “the very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I’ve felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off. You know—if you’ve ever picked the scab of a sore place. It hurts like billy-oh but it is such fun to see it coming away” (90). When Eustace is ready, Aslan throws him in the stinging water of the pond and Eustace is cured. Aslan dresses him and he returns to the sailors.

Scholars linger on this strange, painful transformation and return of Eustace and Aslan’s part in it. Gwyneth Jones, in her article “C.S. Lewis and Tolkien: Writers for Children?” remarks on this seeming fascination with the painful. “Much later, I would discover the same taint running through the whole of Narnia as one finds in Lewis’s ‘adult’ fantastic fiction: a deliberate investigation of pain and shame, always for moral improvement; but distinctly, childishly orgiastic at the same time. The scab-picking aspect of the Narnian experience is part of the over-fable of redemption; or of conversion as I prefer to put it” (8). Jones noticed the same thing that Gilbert Meilaender discusses in his book The Taste For the Other: The Social and Ethical Thought of C.S. Lewis:

Aslan does what Eustace himself cannot do. He transforms Eustace—makes him over into a person fit for community. And the transformation is a painful one. There is no other way for the bossing and bullying self to be changed. For such a self it must be painful for the Lion to peel off the layers which serve
as barriers against true community. Eustace’s conversion and baptism are the beginning of his cure. The Christian life is for Lewis a pilgrimage—a process of sanctification understood in terms of the Christian story. Throughout this journey pain functions to remind the Christian that the sinful self will have to be killed, completely and totally, before he is fit to share in the community of the regenerate. (110)

Wilson, as Lewis’s biographer, would certainly readily confirm the sadness and death that occurred in Lewis’s life, the public shaming he endured at occasional functions where his radical ideas were dressed down. For Lewis, pain was a tangible thing; and like Eustace, Clive Stapel thought, “he almost deserved it” (Lewis Voyage 2). Allegory, this presentation of a surface story that truly reflects a deeper meaning, proved a ready place for Lewis to work out his thoughts on Christianity and pain, and had the added benefit of being a realm he had thoroughly traveled in his scholarly studies.

In Lewis’s own words, in order to understand allegory, “We must conceive a world emptied of that ideal of ‘happiness’—a happiness grounded on successful romantic love—which still supplies the motive of our popular fiction” (Lewis Allegory 4). Indeed, romantic love is neatly sidestepped in much of Narnia because the main characters are all related to each other. Narnia is far more about an eternal love, Aslan’s love, Christian love, than it is about the love between two people. It is about pain and conversion and having many dark hours and dark thoughts but having someone to turn to for salvation. Like the medieval poets he studied, Lewis managed to write, in Narnia, an allegory not about love and romance, but about love and God, and the combination of symbol and allegory that represents them.

This interpretation of allegory reminds one of The Allegory of Love’s discussion of allegory as the dominant mode of expression in medieval literature. The combination of symbol and allegory present in medieval poetry are what enchanted Lewis. He enjoyed the
variable combinations and endless interpretations possible with allegory. Well-known symbols certainly are blended in The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader", not limited to the lamb of peace and Father Christmas, but including the symbols from the Romantic period like those found in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." According to Lewis in The Allegory of Love, the personification of emotions is allegory, a conscious representation of a man's feeling. Symbol, Lewis says, is the archetype from which emotion came, the perfect, more real emotion than those we actually feel (45). Some would say that allegory was replaced by symbol. In A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms, Quinn states: "By the 19th century, allegorical technique had begun to fall from favor. Symbolism, another method of representing an alternative meaning, became the preferred form. Symbolism and allegory sometimes overlap, but there is an important distinction between the two. A symbol bears a natural relation to the events of the story..." (12). Quinn states that an allegory's intent is to separate the natural, separate recognizable representations of real life from the story. Lewis's sentiment above echoes Coleridge himself: "[symbol] is characterized by a translucence of the Special in the Individual or of the General in the Especial or of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part of that Unity, of which it is the representative" ("Bible" 734). Symbols are distilled emotions, things which evoke response. If allegory evokes a similar response, is it then symbol? Is allegory a weak form of symbol?

Lewis seems to answer Coleridge directly when he says: "It is of the very nature of thought and language to represent what is immaterial in picturable terms" (Allegory 44), responding to Coleridge's "Allegory is but a translation of abstract notions into a picture-language" (734). For Lewis, this picture-language quality is anything but an inferior form.
Lucy looked along the beam and presently saw something in it. At first it looked like a cross, then it looked like an aeroplane, then it looked like a kite, and at last with a whirring of wings it was right overhead and was an albatross. It circled three times round the mast and then perched for an instant on the crest of the gilded dragon at the prow. It called out in a strong sweet voice what seemed to be words though no one understood them. After that it spread its wings, rose, and began to fly slowly ahead, bearing a little to starboard. Drinian steered after it not doubting that it offered good guidance. But no one except Lucy knew that as it circled the mast it had whispered to her, "Courage, dear heart," and the voice she felt sure, was Aslan's, and with the voice a delicious smell breathed in her face. (159-160)

This passage from The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader" certainly shows the strong Christian symbol, the albatross, in close association with Lewis's Christ-figure, Aslan. Compare this with Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1817):

At length did cross an Albatross:  
Through the fog it came;  
As if it had been a Christian soul,  
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,  
And round and round it flew.  
The ice did split and with a thunder-fit;  
The helmsman steer'd us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind;  
The Albatross did follow,  
And every day, for food or play,  
Came to the Mariner's hollo! (736)

Here Coleridge also associates the albatross with Christianity, the most common theme of medieval allegory, though it seems out of place in his poem because of his vehement argument that Romantic poetry is not allegorical. The albatross in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" seems to be far more what we today consider to be allegory than symbol because it clearly represents a Christ-figure. Lewis uses Coleridge's famous albatross symbol in The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader" knowing that readers would recognize the
albatross from Coleridge’s poem and associate it with Christ, thus further associating Aslan with Christ. Lewis’s choice of the albatross shows that he, through The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”, is directly confronting the question of the use of symbol in allegory, and is using this novel as a vehicle to further his scholarly and religious ideas about allegory. Lewis’s albatross, like Coleridge’s, is an allegorical symbol of Christianity and helps the lost ship out of danger. Unlike Coleridge, Lewis is more clear who the albatross is supposed to be, a heavy-handedness that puts some readers off.

According to Gwyneth Jones’s “C.S. Lewis and Tolkien: Writers for Children?” many readers of Narnia give up saying, “Oh, I couldn’t stick the Christian allegory,” or say, “It’s just too preachy” (Jones 11). This scholar even goes so far as to say “Allegory is a feeble form of propaganda” (Jones 9). She is answered by Lewis’s own words echoing from The Allegory of Love: “When the demand is very strong a poor thing in the way of supply will be greedily embraced” (66). Narnia obviously fulfilled a void with its allegorical Christian story, a void which Jones and other children of her generation filled with Lewis’s work. It is the very “propaganda” of Lewis that Jones finds more stimulating than another “children’s story” of the same time, The Lord of the Rings (1954) by J.R.R. Tolkien. It is obvious that Lewis’s scholarly knowledge of allegory strengthened his creative work. Lewis himself embraced the form of allegory in order to satisfy his need for a children’s Christian allegory, despite his comment in The Allegory of Love: “To this day you cannot make poetry of that sort out of the Christian heaven and hell!” (Allegory 83). This expression of Christianity was popular because it was written as fantastic allegory. Lewis’s mixing of reality with fantasy is what drew many readers into Narnia, and into the miracle story of Aslan and the various Christian situations the characters struggle with.
It is not surprising that Lewis wrote about allegory, for as he says of medieval authors, "...when allegory becomes a man's natural mode of expression it is inevitable that he will find more and more allegory in the ancient authors whom he respects" (Lewis Allegory 62). It seems Lewis moved in the opposite direction, from recognizing allegory to writing it. His love of books and study is made material by his own words: "Before us is our own world, the world of the printed or written page, and of the solitary reader who is accustomed to pass hours in the silent society of mental images evoked by written characters" (Allegory 64). Lewis’s poetic statement from The Allegory of Love continues to resonate, though he moved from analyst to creator with Narnia. Lewis’s personal knowledge of the pain involved in a true and full conversion to Christianity may have led him to Narnia, but his contribution to those children who grew up to become today’s young scholars and writers is tangible. The knowledge that he was not only an author playing with allegory, but also a deeply learned scholar on the subject who can create fantastic and wonderful tales from that study, indicates that others can do so as well.

Through Narnia, we are more than happy to listen to Lewis’s "other language," allusions to other works, and transformations. Those who experience The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader," like Reepicheep, experience a wonderful and miraculous journey. Lewis’s Narnia is a triumph. It is not often that a modern scholar "practices what he preaches" and writes in the genre he studies. In Lewis there is proof and hope that a modern successful... allegory, a fantastic story of epic proportions, can spring forth from an ordered scholarly mind.

What follows is my employment of the knowledge I have gained from my scholarly studies. "Dead Languages" is a story influenced by my studies in college, as well as my...
personal life. It is an example of the kinds of stories I produce with my knowledge of the

craft of creative writing, but it is also a product of my scholarly academic work.

"Dead Languages" Manuscript

I. PANEM IN DESERTO

The raven hobbled forward through the sand, hopping awkwardly, out of his element. His spindly feet sank into the desert's surface, the slight weight of the bird barely marring the sand that was already shifting as though to erase the tracks he left there. The sun made his feathers more than black, an oil slick rainbow, rotating through an octave of colors. The raven stopped before a small half-loaf of bread and cocked his head, examining it from different angles before pecking at it, tearing off a hunk of brown and white. From the wound in the loaf, bright blood welled forth, and she felt a hunger, and the sand shifted beneath her.

Katherine woke suddenly, a copper taste in her mouth, twilight darkness surrounding her. She was momentarily confused by the glow that seemed to signal dusk before she remembered where she was. The walls of her tent glowed faintly in anticipation of sunrise, their illumination fading as the sun prepared to replace their light. She was lying on the floor in a tangle of blankets and could feel the land beneath their campsite sluggishly shifting. She felt thirsty and dusty, although England's moist morning air made her hair fall across her forehead in damp ringlets. She kicked off her thin blankets, enjoying the sudden rush of cool morning air, and reached for her old-fashioned canteen, an artifact in its own right. Plastic always gave water a strange taste. The ground settled as the energy net that held it in place tightened its control, gripping the reluctant earth.
“Good morning to you too, sister,” she said to the trembling floor as she picked herself up. “Don’t fall on me today.”

The quiet sounds of the waking camp filtered through the flex plastic fiber as Katherine sat down on the edge of her cot, canteen dangling between her knees. She stared at the insulated layers of silver metallic tent floor beneath her socked feet while she tried to recapture the dream that was rapidly turning to mist. Grandmother always said that dreams were portents, things that called attention to what was really important, what we should really be spending our time thinking about. Although what an endangered Corvus corax wandering in an arid waste helping himself to bakery products had to do with here and now, Katherine couldn’t fathom. The chatter of birds was as completely absent here as it was everywhere else on this island; only the low voices of her students rousing themselves penetrated the early morning fog. England without ravens was something that had surprised her in college, but the inevitability of progress had sent them to greener meadows. Katherine stood and cracked her back, stiff from days of crouching and a night spent on the floor. “Sorry, Oma; can’t quite see the point of this one,” she said to her absent mother’s mother. She groaned and pulled on her workpants; weird dreams or not, she wasn’t going to let John beat her to the excavation.

II. BESTIAE ET DRACONES COGNOSCUERUNT

The smell of her fresh breakfast ration almost, but not quite, overpowered the smell of newly turned earth. Mother would not approve. Not only had Katherine managed to avoid sitting at the table to eat, she was having breakfast at the edge of a great hole in the earth, dirt everywhere. Her life-long aversion to being “cooped up” served her well, considering the
lack of amenities. She watched her perfectly balanced and "scientifically tasty" morning drink slowly give its heat away to the brisk morning, wisps of steam rising from her thick plastic cup, and thought about how little it resembled her mother's hand-ground coffee.

When they were on excavation, they ate what the Institute saw fit to afford them. At least this time the Institute was footing the bill for food, unlike the last two major excavations Katherine was part of. Four weeks in Greenland living on nothing but concentrated protein bars, bought in bulk and eaten cold to save on energy costs, was less than fun. Last year's underwater excavation menu was more exciting; they had enough money from the Greenland finds to buy military foodstuffs left over from before the development of FTL rocket drive. She'd never forget the looks of joyful experimentation on her students' faces when they were trying to choose between multicolored tubes of "Banana beef" or "Kiwi chicken," the remnants of bulk food that soldiers flitting back and forth across the solar system would now have no time to eat. They were too young to remember what the military's version of "beef" was supposed to taste like. City folk too young to remember anything unprocessed.

The sun was truly coming up now, sending tendrils across the sky, blurry through the filmy windows just under the roof of the excavation area. Katherine stared at the geometric gridlines that helped her work, a careful network of beams of light that crisscrossed the excavation, dividing it into manageable chunks of digestible data. The overhead ELCs flickered and warmed to illuminate the dig's extra large, semi-permanent enclosure, sending light down into the pit. The unnatural glow often gave Katherine headaches, but without it she couldn't continue mining this landfill. The excavation, after two weeks of digging down past the refuse of ten centuries, was finally about to reveal the artifact they were after. She climbed down into their man-made hole, plexistro ladder creaking as she descended past
person-sized hunks of jagged quickcrete and asphalt, a record of the people who very nearly paved this entire island. She passed layers of earth where they’d found discarded circuit boards, Macintosh, Microsoft, slowly moldering plastics, a graveyard of rubbish from the information age. Deeper layers of pure earth were under this compacted landfill, layers that hid secret cultural treasures, treasures worth a lot to the Institute.

“This looks just like my grandparents’ basement,” John had joked as they had dug through the trash.

Just yesterday they had finally uncovered the remains of some ancient building actually constructed entirely of wood. Though the planks had disintegrated long ago, the earth recorded reddish streaks where the wood nourished it, entombed in clay. She was ready to guess that the building was from sometime within the second millennium of the Christian era, certainly after Anno Domini 900, but before the great European migration to North America. The remains of iron nails they found yesterday confirmed that it was from the historic era. However, the lack of any and all chemical damage from the industrial revolution indicated that John’s A.D. 1,800 guess was incorrect by at least a century. Yesterday he had irritatingly assured her that his geo equipment registered striation patterns of the earth that proved her date was too early and his had to be more accurate, despite the lack of chemical confirmation. This wide range of years would be impossible to narrow down until they found more artifacts from the same age, further indications of which Englishmen had lived here before this great hole was dug for the disposal of London’s trash.

Katherine sighed as she jumped from the last ladder rung to land in the soft earth at the bottom of the pit. Why was it wrong to want to conduct an excavation in the old way? John’s method of sending beams of energy through the ground to record what was there was
no match for actually brushing away layer upon layer of earth, getting grit under your fingernails, slowly uncovering clues about the long-lost people who once lived here. Three machines recording the shape and size of every object under her feet could not come close to the wonder she felt when holding an arrowhead in her hand that had once been shaped, chipped out of rock by an ancestral craftsman. These Northern European people, these English islanders, were responsible for many of the advanced developments that led to modern life as they knew it. This was an archaeologist's chance to uncover their secrets, to see and feel what they had shaped with their hands in a time when religion was as important as breathing. This was her chance to uncover the layers, reveal the way these people of "the dark age" had lived their lives, lives virtually unrecorded in writing. The authors of the few documents that survive didn't discuss demographics or how people really lived. The geometrical size and shape of a thing were as important to the human creature as the smell and look and feel of a thing. 'The flavor of an ancient people, a longing for knowledge of what has passed beyond, was reborn in her with each item they uncovered. Hadn't her slow methods of discovery been proven by a thousand years of archaeology?

Katherine sipped her ration as John's arrival interrupted her thoughts. He looked as hastily dressed as she did, his tan mesh shirt slowly ridding itself of wrinkles as he double-timed it down the ladder. He bent over to catch his breath and his forehead crinkled as he looked up at her, the illumination slowly fading from his eyes as his contacts adjusted to the now bright room: How he could stand self-lighting films of plastic over his eyes, she didn't pretend to guess. She glanced over at him, glad now that her early arrival allowed her this unruffled advantage.

"Damn, Katherine. I can beat the sun, but I can't seem to beat you."
She fought a smile and crouched, folding her long legs under her, unrolling her brush kit between the gridlines in front of her.

“You sleep like the dead,” she said to the pockets filled with brushes before her as she picked out a fat # 20 to accompany her trowel. She noticed her fingertips were stained brown from this long work, fingernails short and snag-free.

“There you go again, morbid, morbid. It’s a wonder you don’t have nightmares, Little Bird.” His nickname for her reminded her of something, something misty that presently escaped her.

“For a man who loves modern advances, you are positively old-fashioned in your sexism,” she said, covering her confusion while she tried to remember.

“Oh, we are grumpy this morning, Katherine. Didn’t sleep well?”

“I’ve rested quite well enough to keep up with you, John. Ready?” she asked him as she walked over to the grid square she had assigned herself.

“Quite,” he said as he opened his ever-present black case, opening the plastic clips with his slender capable hands. He lifted out his black and silver thinkmodules and began connecting the network of sensors around the grid to his devices. His computers would not only record the chemical makeup of her current layer and begin analyzing it, but also precisely record the arrangement of artifacts as she went deeper in search of answers. She had to admit that his instruments were infinitely useful, removing the need for her to draw the contents of each grid for every layer of earth with pen and paper, as the old archaeologists did, but she would never let a machine do the discovering for her. That was one area this archaeologist would never surrender.
The small lights on John’s machines winked as they thought and a barely perceptible humming sound echoed from the walls of dirt. John secured the paper-thin screen that showed an ever-changing bird’s-eye view of the excavation to brackets sunk between the clear plastic ladders.

“There we are,” he said, indicating both the readiness of the equipment and the top of their heads on the screen. She glanced up at the display, her mass of short, dark-brown, slowly graying curls and John’s sparse and utilitarian-short blond hair centered and focused. Though they were the same age, her dark locks held a firmer trace of the passage of time.

“I see that. You still look like a sergeant,” she said, eyes now firmly fixed on the mostly rusted nail she was uncovering.

“And you still look like a rough-cropped farmer’s daughter. In my case, old habits die hard. What’s your excuse?”

“A mixture of laziness and usefulness,” she said, putting her trowel in her front bib pocket as she leaned forward to blow dirt from around the nail, freeing it from the earth’s surface. “I don’t like eating hair, though it would most likely be an improvement over breakfast,” she said, indicating her abandoned mug with her brush.

“At least we’re not in Greenland,” he said, stifling a yawn, “I’d rather eat that nail.” This time it was impossible for her to hide her smirk, so she rose and handed him the artifact.

“There you go. You can play assistant until my students get here. Bag and catalogue, Sergeant.”

“Yes, ma’am,” he said with a crisp mock salute.

She shook her head for his benefit as he loped off to find the cataloguing equipment.

In the three years they had been working together, they had passed from a profound dislike
for each other’s professional styles of archeology to tentative acceptance, and finally, to a cautious friendship. John was part of the new school of archaeology, students produced in the last twenty years, who firmly believed in the superiority of the computer-enhanced scientific method. John and the others of his breed had little use for the old way of archaeology, the slow removal of layers, the slow recovery of artifacts. As far as John was concerned, the past was safer where it was, under the ground, preserved there for later generations to discover. While Katherine agreed that the earth nicely protected the past in its enfolding layers, it was hard to imagine that future generations, robbed of being able to see and touch the past, wouldn’t lose all interest in history and the point of all this would evaporate. Though she’d been educated in the same university system, her tactile approach and curiosity had been part of her since her beginning.

"Mother, what were the people like who came before us? Why did they make this?" she had asked as a child every time she found some old thing half buried on the reservation. When she was a young woman, worrying about how future generations would feel about the past seemed far, far less interesting than devouring all the knowledge she could about ancient people, places, and things. However, as she progressed through her program of courses she began to realize that young people like her, and the money they brought with them, breathed life into sagging anthropology departments. If it weren’t for the renewal of interest among the young, there would be no archaeology on Earth. Museums like the Institute would spend all their time and money displaying not the artifacts of Earth, but the artifacts the military was bringing back from the far-flung planets that FTL rocket-drive enabled humanity to visit within the human life-span. The hunger for Xenoarchaeology had already taken its toll on the discovery of Earth’s past.
“We do not yet know ourselves. How can we propose to know anything about other species, alien life?” she often asked her students. None of the newest students cared about what was under their feet; the lure of the stars and the new possibilities they held for the improvement of human life were overpowering the search for answers in the past. Students, and their money, were going into space. Anthropologists were forced to “go begging,” unable to support excavations on department revenue garnered from student funds. A handful of museum organizations like the Institute were the only hope for continued explorations into Earth’s past. It seemed sort of sacrilegious to admit it, but Katherine knew the recovery and sale of artifacts was the only way to ensure that archaeologists could continue to solve the great puzzle that was humanity.

Part of the reason Katherine was here was to teach the next generation of archaeologists, to show them both her method and John’s, to give them the option of choosing how they were going to marry the two styles, for if the tradition were to survive, that was what was going to have to be.

She watched John as he returned and made a few adjustments to his equipment. Enigmatic and evasive, he did not make a good instructor, so he left the teaching up to her because “according to the paperwork, you’re the one in charge here.” They had four students because their two universities co-operated. These few were the only anthropology majors who chose to continue their studies in graduate school on Earth instead of on the several distant planets where xeno-digs were taking place. Katherine had to admit that it was exciting to consider non-human intelligent life, but what of her own work? Should she abandon years of study to run off and learn about an entirely new culture? She was the only scholar currently working on the “dark ages,” a time when man had learned enough about farming
that he needed no new and improved mechanical discoveries, a time when religion was so satisfying that people need not question their place on this great ball of dirt. People didn’t need the newest thing that came along to affirm man’s genius, man’s superiority. A time without the terror of the vast unknown universe. A time that lasted for centuries and yet finally collapsed. Today, no one cared about Christianity anymore. Dead religions were only interesting if they involved bloody human sacrifice or weird stone monuments that foretold astronomy. It was taboo to discuss Jesus, he who was believed for two and a half millennia to be the Son of God, virtually forgotten.

“You asleep over there?” John asked.

“What? Uh, no,” Katherine said, realizing that she’d been staring at the ground between her boots for some time. She really needed some coffee. Faint voices intruded on them, echoing weirdly into the pit.

“Here come the kids,” he said, nodding his head toward the door, up out of the pit, beyond their sight. She could now distinguish Matthew’s rarely serious tenor and Beth’s cunning alto as they bantered with each other. Ah, to be in one’s early twenties again. By the time her students started climbing down into the pit, backpacks bulging with their own brush kits and thinkmodules, Katherine, after her restless night, was ready for a break.

She stood and watched the four of them make their way down into the dig. Matthew and Beth took ladders near enough to each other to continue their argument.

“But you have to agree that it’s much more efficient to mechanically record all data,” Beth was saying.
“Yeah, but you have to agree that it’s fun to actually hold something in your hand that’s a thousand years old. Don’t you ever want to touch anything?” he replied, slyly, as he jumped the last few rungs to land on-site.

Beth sighed with exasperation, “I don’t need to fondle things in order to think intelligently,” she said, her eyes full of laughter as she glanced at Kelly and finished her descent.

“Yes, but—” Matthew started to say, but Katherine decided to step in, trying to ignore Kelly’s giggles.

“If you two are quite finished...” She said, raising her eyebrow at them, expressing both her amusement and her desire for them to get to work. She indicated the place where she had just exhumed the nail with her fat #20 brush.

“Discovery awaits,” she said and her students got their tools out of their packs. Matthew pulled out his brush kit, obviously wanting to back up his argument with Beth through practice as she prepared one of John’s chrome machines that analyzed soil contents.

“Matthew, you and Beth work on three through nine, Kelly, Joe, sixteen through twenty-two,” she told them, walking around the grid, indicating their assigned areas.

She wanted them to concentrate on the two places where John’s sensors indicated the stone monolith would soon be uncovered. The enthusiasm of her students when they uncovered artifacts doubled the excitement for everyone else. She hoped they’d uncover it today, but wasn’t sure of that. To preserve the suspense, she’d forbidden John from telling any of them how far they were from it, though from that familiar gleam in his eyes, they were close. Beth and Joe, both graduate students under John’s supervision, concentrated on chemical analysis, while Matthew and Kelly, both graduate students under Katherine,
removed layer after layer of earth. John recorded the placement of everything as they went and Katherine usually advised the two cross-university teams and catalogued what they uncovered. Both teams worked well together, despite the tendency for conversation, and they often made quite a bit of progress.

"I'll be right back," Katherine said, stretching the muscles in her neck. "John can inform you all about the strata we are currently excavating while I get some fresh air." He'd have all kinds of useful differences to point out, especially now that they had at last exhumed the earliest layer of landfill. Both John and her students groaned as one. Their dislike of John's highly technical method of lecture and his equal dislike of trying to translate his knowledge into words was a running joke. "It'll be good for the lot of you," she replied to their inarticulate complaints. She heard John fumbling for words as she climbed the ladder.

"Uh, well," he said, preparing his lecture voice, "this layer is compressed earth from beneath the landfill, like the last 31 layers. Unlike those, this layer contains no trace elements of the solidified carbon we discovered earlier..." John said.

"He means charcoal briquettes," Matthew said under his breath to Kelly.

"...and is without trace of liquid or gaseous fluorcarbon or chlorofluorocarbon products, or other chemicals that ate away the atmosphere later in the information age..."

"He means refrigerants," Beth whispered loudly.

"And, if you note your chemanzers, no trace of flammable hydrocarbons..." John's voice faded as Katherine took herself out into the sunshine.

"He means gasoline," she said to herself as she looked out across the camp, a mismatched collection of multicolored tents perched on top of a crumbling landfill. Small transports buzzed loudly as they swooped through the skyscrapers that ringed the cordoned
off area. New London was awake and busy, ready for the new spaceport. She saw that their resource manager, Ruth, whom they playfully called "camp cook," was taking advantage of the cool morning air and sunshine by sorting rations outside while testing the stoutness of a recycled collapsible chair. The silver packets reflected the sun, its rays bouncing off them, unable to add nourishment to the food inside, a sterile and tasteless assortment of sterile and tasteless food. Ruth had been trying to, as she said, "spice them up" by mixing them with her vast collection of chemical taste enhancers and more traditional, highly valuable, dried herbs of indeterminate age. Though her efforts were heroic, the rations continued to "in no way resemble" edible food, according to Ruth. She did work wonders with what she was given, though they were nothing like Ruth's grand productions back at the university. One of the packets slipped through Ruth's fingers as Katherine watched, falling to the tarp-covered ground. The entire camp was set up on tarps and a network of wires that held the crown of the landfill in place. City people had dumped trash here for four hundred years, effectively raising this corner of the island another thirty feet above sea level before they paved over the fill to build yet another suburb of London. Katherine's team didn't have to crack the shell of that top layer themselves; the clamor for an Eastern Hemisphere Spaceport had driven commercialists to consider this site as a possible construction zone. Now that FTL rocket drive made interstellar travel possible for the common man, demand for a new spaceport to answer this hunger skyrocketed.

One of the whizzing air-cars, its driver curious about this wide area uncharacteristically free of buildings, swooped in low over the excavation site, immune to Ruth's shouted curses as the driver's propulsion jets blew over her chair. The car circled widely around the area and, curiosity satisfied, took itself up and out of sight of the barren
earth. Katherine stared after the retreating motorist. Perhaps it was the nature of man to reach out and away, toward the new; away from the old. Abandoning this slowly dying planet. Abandoning his roots. Katherine closed her eyes and surrendered to the sun, natural warmth soaking into her limbs, the soft light turning her eyelids pink. This was what was truly real, this sun that had shone on every living creature that walked this planet, forever, eternal. She could smell the disturbed earth even over the lingering fuel scents, and the warm sun fended off the cool breeze coming in from the coast. She felt almost as though she were a child again, hundreds of miles from this place, this time, standing in the Midwest of North America, real grass swaying in the wind, brushing her shins, real insects twittering and buzzing and leaping around her, clean air in her lungs, the smell of the last wild rose lingering, dying in the autumn field. Home. How many years had it been? Twenty? Twenty-five? A long time to wander without roots. A long time to foster bitterness. She had been the youngest child of the last family to live on the land. The last family to hold onto land, sheltered by the flimsy and ultimately inadequate protection of religious separatism. The last family to have land taken by the newly converted and improved government, land which the returned King declared a sacred refuge when she was fifteen. The last family to try to find a place in the big cities that now dominated the globe.

At least she possessed her memories of that place, a lasting shelter of memory in her mind. She remembered many quiet times there, times when the tourists her father allowed to visit the last refuge of wild fauna and flora were gone, times when the work was done, times for sitting and listening to what nature was left.

Preservation. Wasn’t that why she had this job? Someone had to remember and recreate what life was like before machines made food, built houses, and improved
transportation. Someone had to preserve the past. People needed to know the secrets locked below. Secrets that translated into survival. Roots for every person.

Her com buzzed, the small bit of plastic strapped to her wrist demanding her attention. “Katherine,” Dr. Mark’s rough, annoyed voice transmitted through the small speaker, “did you forget our meeting?”

She swore under her breath before tapping her wrist and responding, “Be right there, sir.” Ruth, who had just righted the jumble of her collapsible chair, grimaced sympathetically in her direction. Dr. Mark, head of exhibitions at the Institute, was a man of little patience: Like John, Dr. Mark believed in the machines that accomplished modern life, machines that hurried work and lessened expense. She jogged quickly across the lumpy tarp-covered refuse.

“We’ve almost got it, we’ve almost got it, we’ve almost got it…” she chanted, trying to convince herself as she ran.

When she got to her tent, he was waiting, his projection shimmering slightly because of the distance of the signal. As usual, his perfectly tailored suit was impeccable. His black hair, some of it real, some transplanted to repair his rapidly receding hairline, was immaculately combed, his carefully trimmed goatee hiding his increasing age.

“Hard at work, I see,” he said, glancing down at her dirty face. She flinched and imagined what her projection in his white and silver office must look like: A thin middle-aged woman, wild dark curls a mess on her brow, thin wire glasses, an affectation of a long-gone age, smudged and askew on her bony nose. At least her brown skin worked to hide some of the dirt her rumpled khaki button up synthfyber top and cargo shorts did not. She hoped he wouldn’t notice her well-worn boots—they were so thin in the toes that her left
sock would soon be showing. They were real leather, and had belonged to her mother. The
dirt that graced them was honestly gained.

"Hello, sir. Good morning," Katherine said, straightening her usual slouch. Without
further preamble, she reported the wooden remains so far discovered and filled him in on the
current state of the excavation. Though she tried to sound as scientific and progressive as
possible, he looked disappointed. "Of course," she found herself saying, "the object the
Institute first detected is still below the surface, but we are nearly ready to discover its
significance."

He sighed, an expression of displeasure frozen on his face. "My dear Professor
Kiowa, it's been two weeks. The Institute is still waiting for results. Flemming's team in the
Caribbean has already extracted several artifacts for an exhibit, including a mostly intact
Spanish galleon. I need something tangible."

Katherine ground her teeth. Damn that Margie Flemming. She didn't care about the
context from which she ripped artifacts; she just took and sold, and ignored the cultural
record she destroyed in the process. People like her didn't deserve the title "archeologist";
they were simple grave robbers. The last thing Katherine needed was for some unethical
crackpot to make her look even worse in the Institute's eyes. "I know, Dr. Mark. Because my
partner and I are teaching the next generation of archaeologists as we excavate, we are forced
to move at a slightly less breakneck speed than Flemming. Focusing on revealing the objects
John detected has limited my ability to secure smaller exhibits. Just a few more days and
we'll have something for you."
“I’ve been listening to you say ‘just a few more days’ for two weeks, Kiowa. You and your team are running out of time. The Institute will have no choice but to direct its attentions elsewhere if you don’t have something for us by Friday,” he said.

“I’ll talk to you then. Goodbye.”

The carefully groomed overweight man winked out of view as Katherine mumbled farewell to the empty air. She knew that Dr. Mark was eventually going to lose patience, but she had hoped they would have at least another week. How were they supposed to excavate several sections of a large object in three days? If he pulled the Institute’s funding, they would have to abandon this dig. Neither her university nor John’s had enough money to continue the project alone.

The Institute was funding this dig only because of the combination of its commercial value and the government’s requirement that all construction areas be surveyed. The Eastern Hemisphere Starport board, like any project working with government money, had to call in “a team of qualified archaeologists” before construction began to remove any “artifacts of cultural significance.” She and John were the only available archaeologists willing to work on Earth for what the Institute was offering. That amount would have been limited to a minimal scanning fee for John’s equipment if his preliminary scans hadn’t found three large, solid objects deep below the landfill that were too regular to be natural. Objects that were more than a thousand years old, a sufficient age for the Institute to be very interested. The Institute’s museums were filled to the brim with old combustion engines and computers; artifacts this old were novelties and therefore had commercial value.

The Institute, although under pressure and time constraints from the EHS, paid Katherine and her team of archaeology students to carefully record the past that was about to
be eradicated. The Institute was planning a “History of England” exhibit that would require
every bit of information Katherine’s team could find. Though the museum wanted this badly,
Dr. Mark could always shift his weight to enforce the emphasis on one of the other exhibits.
It really was unfair of him to demand both quality and speed. Though her team had been in
England for only three weeks and on-site for only sixteen days, Katherine felt that they had
made enormous progress; the entire footprint where the starport was going to be had been
cleared of surface debris and the chunks of torn permacrete the starport contractors left
behind had been hauled away. They had already scanned, recorded, and parceled out the area
into careful sections for excavation, but had spent the last ten days digging “the pit” to get to
the artifact. Interesting things like old stone and wooden buildings and older trade route roads
could only be briefly noted and recorded because the focus of the dig was the large object.

Katherine was thankful for the opportunity to dig, but she couldn’t help feeling angry
that it wasn’t going to be done right. Countless pieces of the puzzle were being lost despite
the emphasis she was putting on careful documentation. The point of an excavation was to
reconstruct the way of life that had gone before, not to just recover a few pretty things people
would pay to see. How could pulling some large something or other from the earth and
setting it up in a museum fully reveal how the people lived, why the object was there, or what
the significance of that object was? Katherine shook her head. This was just one more
example of how learning has limits, how education has always been slave to economics, and
how the great grinding wheel of progress wipes out all that has passed before, the wisdom
and mistakes lost to time.

As Katherine turned to leave her tent, one hand smoothing her curls as she shook her
head, Matthew almost ran into her. “We’ve found it, Doc,” he gasped, eyes shining.
III. IN PRINCIPIO ERAT VERBUM

She reached the excavation tent and found Beth, Kelly, and Joe hunched over grid eight with John setting something up on a tripod behind them. From above she could see that they had indeed uncovered the tip of the artifact and were all working to further reveal it with their brushes. She quickly climbed down the creaking ladder, Matthew on her heels, and hastily, but carefully, hopped through the grid-squares to reach them. They made room for her to gaze at the tip of the object. It was stone, starkly pale against the dirt as the layers of earth were brushed from its granite shoulders. Everyone had abandoned their assignments in excitement, and their eyes were trained on this thing for which they had been searching and digging for two weeks. Katherine quickly delegated the grid-squares directly around the stone to her students and joined in the frenzy of removing earth while John recorded everything.

"The object is approximately thirty degrees to the plane of incidence, depth of thirty-fourth grid level..." John’s voice described and interpreted the object, an important supplement to his visual recording as his machines began casting beams of light on the find, delegating new horizontal as well as vertical grid coordinates. Katherine thought it was eerie how the machines knew which vertical objects were people and which were artifacts. The jagged tip of rock, now covered with pink stripes of light, became the broken end of a rough rectangle. It didn’t look like it was much more than the lintel stone of a house, until the evidence of some tool work on its surface was revealed. Katherine found the first letter.

"John, get a zoom shot of this," she said, pulling out a compression air bush and blowing dirt out of the figure that looked like a reversed number seven.
“Looks like those runes we found in Greenland,” Matthew said.

“That’s what we’re here for, but don’t jump to conclusions. Let’s see what else we have here…” Katherine said. Her brush was revealing more letters: a letter “F” with a kink in the arms; an “H” with two crisscrossed middle bars; another “T” with the arms slanting down; the line of text ending at the roughly carved edge of what appeared to be a bas-relief picture. Their dusty hands worked to slowly reveal a stone monument with images and what seemed to be words carved into its face. Katherine knew immediately that this artifact was going to be worth a fortune to the Institute; many, many people would be curious enough to pay to see this. Norse artifacts were often found with runes, but rarely with images. These facts just might allow her to convince the Institute to give them the time they needed to properly excavate it.

“John, call Luke, would you? We’re going to want his impression on what these letters spell out. Kelly, get the casting material. Joe, Beth, please get the clean kits from my tent. Matthew, keep brushing,” she said while quickly typing a code on her wrist communications unit to call the Institute, “I think we’ve got Dr. Mark’s pay dirt.”

They slowly brushed away more earth, taking samples, recording any other pieces of wood they discovered as they revealed the three-foot long fragment of carved stone. Katherine found more letters: two long parallel lines; a “P” with the loop slipped half way down the pole; two joined triangles that looked like an angular “B”. These were above the line of text first excavated. Matthew was trying to make sense out of the letters with the runic alphabet he’d memorized on their Greenland excavation. He’d written his semester-end paper on the words they’d found on shields and tombstones there.
"I," "TH," "B," that's this line," Matthew said, scribbling on his green waterproof notepad. "L," "O," "D," "AE," is the first we found, that is, if these can be translated the same way. These don't sound anything like the dialect we found up north... Can you make any sense of that, Doc?" He asked.

Katherine looked at his notes. "You've translated this quite fast. We can't be sure it's the Nordic futhark alphabet... might be German."

"Well, there's a bit of stone missing here. I'm not sure if that first letter is right, but it could be the parallel of "M," that'd be "mithb lodae." What language is that?" He asked.

"Matthew, we're in England. What language do you think it is?" Beth said sarcastically. Beth's quick assessment of the situation startled Katherine. Yes, Old English sounded like that. But why was it carved in runes? The English used the Roman alphabet to write their language.

Katherine could hear John, on his headset behind her, calling Luke, their "secret-weapon" medieval specialist. His renown could give them the boost they needed to keep the Institute's interest.

"Luke, get down here. We've found it and it does have writing on it." He paused. "I don't know," John was saying, failing to keep the excitement out of his voice, plugging one ear against the noise of their chattering students, "but it looks like chicken scratches."

Katherine could hear Luke's voice very faintly. He had to be shouting in John's ear.

"Rues? Oh, sorry, of course, runes. Can't hear you very well. Yes, could be Norse. Come on down here before Katherine beats you to the translation." John said goodbye and terminated the communication. She knew that last statement would spur Luke on like nothing
else; he hated being out-scholared. She was good with dead languages, but no one understood
the nuance of culture and turn of phrase like Luke.

Matthew’s translation, “mithb lodae,” sounded like Old English, but she couldn’t
think of any words in her limited OE vocabulary that matched these. Luke could translate
Old English faster than he could read letters from his wife. She knew that with Matthew’s
help interpreting the runes he’d have its meaning faster than they could uncover it. But what
did it mean? Why mix the two? Could this be some sort of cross cultural key?

While Kelly, Joe, and Beth uncovered more runes and the figure carving, Katherine
carefully cleaned what they’d uncovered so far, gathering samples of earth for John’s
chemical analysis, as they waited for Luke to catch a taxi from Oxford. As she’d hoped, the
stone appeared roughly carved by some sort of hand tool, lacking the precision of
mechanization, the letters obviously hand-chiseled. That meant it was old, very old. Deep
gouges in the rock formed images, rounded edges that some long dead craftsman shaped with
his own hands.

As her students worked, Katherine stood back and tried to make sense of the
unpainted carving. Two human figures were emerging from the dirt, long-haired and dressed
in robes or draped cloth of some kind, a style that was nearly as ageless as humanity itself.
They were facing each other and held between them a lumpy mass of something that they
were pulling apart. The picture had more words carved under it, traditional Latin alphabet:
“+SCS PAVLVVS ET A.” Some was broken away, “FRE ERVNT PANEM IN DESERTO.”
Her Latin was far more rusty than her Old English; she’d need to wait for Luke. Three
languages? What could this have meant? Was the stone some kind of landmark? The Rosetta
stone that had provided the key to translating Egyptian hieroglyphs several centuries ago had
been discovered with Latin and Greek on two of its faces. If this stone was some sort of key, a translator between Latin, Norse, and English, they were going to be rich.

By the time Luke got there, the first segment of the object, a four-foot long piece of mottled gray stone, had been excavated and cleaned, and Matthew had written down and phonetically transcribed both the runes and the sounds each rune represented. When she heard the sound of an approaching taxi, Katherine climbed out of the pit to watch it land.

Luke stumbled out of the back seat, holding his battered felt fedora to his head and nearly forgetting to pay the driver in his excitement. Katherine put her hand on Luke’s bony shoulder, suddenly afraid that he would blow away as the taxi lifted off, heading back into the sky.

“We’ve really found it this time, Luke. Latin carved in the Latin alphabet, and Old English carved with Norse runes.”

“O-O-OE in runes, did you say?” He stammered. In his astonishment, he put his hand over his chest, forgetting that he was still holding his hat. His wiry gray hair bristled on the top of his head, standing out in all directions.

Katherine giggled. Luke was her favorite colleague. “Yes. You’d like to see it right away?”

“Of course! Of course, my dear. Oh, don’t tease an old man about something like this,” he said, stuffing his hat back over his hair and straightening his waistcoat.

“You’d think you were about to meet the Queen of Greater Europe,” she said, watching him clean his glasses with a kerchief he’d pulled from a pocket somewhere.
“In many ways, dear, I am. You should respect anything older than yourself.” He peered at her over the silver rims of his now-clean spectacles. “You’d do well to learn that one of these days…”

She grinned. “Come now, Professor Goldberg, I was only kidding. Whom do you know who respects you more than I do?” The startled look on his face made her grin. “Shall we? ‘Time waits for no man.’” She indicated the excavation tent.

...“Of course,” he said, surrendering this point and offering Katherine his arm.

Luke was one of those old-fashioned living artifacts who made the world of academia go round. At eighty-nine, he had repeatedly refused retirement, saying that if the scrolls and books he studied didn’t need a rest for all their great age, neither did he. He had been Katherine’s outside-discipline advisor for her doctorate, writer of many letters of recommendation, and was the only scholar still working with Christian artifacts. Only his great age, the inherent unimportance of academic renown to the world at large, and his Jewish heritage saved him from claims of heresy.

“So, what do you think?” Katherine asked, helping Luke into the excavation pit.

“Viking descendants recording one of their long Nordic ballads? Irish monks carving Latin history?”

“Hmmm, let me see here, let me see…” He bent over to examine the artifact as she steadied him. “Hmmm, yes, Latin here. PANEM IN DESERTO. It means bread in the desert.” Luke mistook her shocked look. “It’s an old story, my dear. Hmmm, ancient, yes, these two fellows, if I have the legend right, are named Paul and Anthony, recorded here as ‘+SCS PAVLVS ET A.’ A bit of something missing there.” He indicated where the text was broken away under the two men in robes. “Paul supposedly lived in a desert and was fed by a
raven that brought him half a loaf each day. When Anthony visited him, the raven brought a whole loaf. Though how the old bird knew, I don’t know. Looks like that’s what’s depicted. Are you all right? You look ill.”

Katherine felt the blood draining from her face and sat down abruptly. The dream. The raven. It was her turn to stutter, “What does the OE say?”

“Your young friend almost had it right. Runic writing in OE does not recognize punctuation, word boundaries, or even sentence endings.” Luke was nearly hopping in excitement. “‘Mithb lodaë’ is ‘mith blodae’ or ‘with blood,’” and it’s part of a sentence.”

“Here, lad, let me see your notes for the rest.” Luke took Matthew’s green notepad and they concentrated on making sense of the alphabet he had recorded. Katherine used the moment to gather her thoughts. Kelly and Beth were still trying to make a cast of the find while Joe was cleaning the portions of what was excavated that they’d not cast yet. John was not looking at her; he was busy trying to analyze the chemicals in the soil that had touched the stone’s surface, chemicals that would tell them when the stone had last been in the open air.

Impossible. I am not dreaming of what we find before we find it. It must just be some weird coincidence. At the same time, her inner self countered her voice of intellectual reason. How many details did you know? Raven, desert, bread, blood? How can you, as a scientist, deny that? How can you, a child mixed from the blood of the last Christians and the last mystics, deny your ancestral nature? She roughly smothered that thought. And share their fate? I refuse to throw my years of training to the winds for the sake of a dream. I’m sorry, Oma.
“Katherine?” John was saying. “Are you all right?” He was kneeling next to her, his hand on her shoulder, concern wrinkling his brow. She’d been covering her mouth with her hand, but now she brushed his hand from her arm.

“I’m fine. Just startled at how quickly Luke can translate these things.” His expression didn’t change, but he didn’t push her. With one last backward glance, he returned to his work. She was relieved. Good old John, easy to get rid of, always ready to listen to her words, not her meaning. One little dream coincidence and I totally fly off the handle: Get a hold of yourself, Katherine.

“Any progress?” She heard her voice break as she asked Luke and Matthew. She cleared her throat. “Who’s this Paul fellow supposed to be?”

Luke looked at her piercingly. “I think we need to talk alone for a moment.”

Katherine’s students looked up at her from their various crouches, each face waiting for her to say they could stay, each face burning with innocent curiosity. She closed her eyes for a moment and unclenched her fists. “You heard the professor. Everybody out.” She waved them up the ladders, ignoring their groans and complaints. “Take this opportunity to clean your tools,” she said, turning their protests into something more mundane.

“Am I invited into the dead languages club?” John said, straightening from behind his equipment. Katherine looked at Luke. He nodded.

“Neither of you is going to like what I have to say. Paul was one of the apostles,” Luke said.

“Gesundheit,” John said, smiling.

Katherine said something that sounded equally German, but far from a blessing. Luke told her what she already knew, but didn’t want to admit. She could hear Father’s voice now.
Saint Paul. Died A. D. 67. Missionary to the gentiles. Author of several Epistles. The man who had singlehandedly ended any hope of selling this object to the Institute.

“What? Is that bad?” John asked.

“John, it’s Christian. We’re through,” she said. She rubbed her forehead with one hand. “Damn! I so wanted to continue our work in Germany next year.” If there were so much as a hint of Christianity hovering about this artifact, the Institute wouldn’t touch it. Katherine was alarmed to find herself so frustrated.

John stood very still, turning a thinkmodule over and over in his hands. “Katherine,” he said. “How are they going to know? It’s a picture of two men holding a blob.”

“But...but it’s our job to show the truth. To explain history,” she stammered.

“If they’re not going to play fair, we don’t have to either.”

“Now, hold on there, youngsters,” Luke said. “That’s all going to depend on what you find on the next few pieces. You did say there were two more? If this thing has any pictures of Christ, that will be difficult indeed to cover up.”

“What have we got so far?” John asked.

“Aside from the picture? Your student’s transcription, if he’s correct, is “with blood besmeared,” on one side, and, “They mocked us two men both together,” on the other. It sounds familiar to me, part of an Old English poem.”

“You see?” John said. “No Jesus there...”

“Let’s not let our desperation carry us away, John,” Katherine said. “We’ll need to look at the rest of it to see if your plan will work.”
IV. EPILOGUS

"Dead Languages" is a work in progress; the fragment presented here represents the beginning of a longer work. Though this work is unfinished, all of the basic elements for a longer tale are present, and many of those elements are forged directly from ideas generated by my academic training. The semi-autobiographical explication of "Dead Languages" that follows shows the connection between this work of creative fiction and what I have learned in "the ivory tower." By showing this connection, I show how, like Lewis, a scholar may utilize academia in order to write with "fantastic imagination."

Exposition of "Dead Languages": Meditations on Imagination and Academia

"Dead Languages" was written in the summer of 2001 as part of a course entitled Creative Writing 553x: The Long Project. When I began my work for that course, I wrote:

[This work will be] similar to Lewis [...] and yet uniquely speaks from my scholarly background. In English 512, history of the English language, I wrote a paper examining the Ruthwell Cross, a monolithic stone with parts of the dream vision "The Dream of the Rood" inscribed on it in the ancient runic alphabet. I find this particular piece intriguing, and would like to incorporate it in my story. I'd also like to include my knowledge of archaeology in the story, a profession that might be the inspiration for my main character. Because I'd like this story to be fantastic, it might either take place far in the future or in our time in a way that transcends our experience (similar to Borges's "The Circular Ruins"). My plans for this work are still very nebulous, but I wanted to incorporate what I find fascinating about our past, imagining daily life in times not my own, but from the perspective of someone like me who is "looking back."

From the very beginning the eventual aim of "Dead Languages" was to be a part of this study of creative writing and scholarly learning. Though "Dead Languages" has evolved
over seven different drafts, sometimes changing radically, it has always retained my personal scholarly and creative stamp. Not surprisingly, that stamp includes several aspects of anthropology, history, and English, as well as personal background.

The influence of my undergraduate anthropology degree is perhaps, at first glance, most prominent in “Dead Languages” primarily because it is the vocation of the main character and is also a concern or interest of all the supporting characters. My choice to highlight this particular profession is closely related to the Ruthwell Cross itself. I find it interesting to imagine finding such a unique relic, one that is so steeped in history.

I first learned of this artifact in a medieval literature English class. Readings beginning with “Caedmon’s Hymn,” “The Ruin,” “The Wanderer,” and ending with “The Pearl” invoked a discussion about medieval allegorical dream vision poetry. One such poem is “The Dream of the Rood,” a dream vision told partly from the point of view of the cross on which Jesus was crucified. I was struck by this anonymous medieval author’s creative use of narrative to tell a story from the point of view of an inanimate object. When I later learned that the earliest version of “The Dream of the Rood” we possess today was from inscriptions on an artifact, a stone cross that now sits in a church in Scotland, I was enchanted.

The Ruthwell Cross embodies several aspects of my scholarly study. Firstly, it is related to my studies in anthropology because it is an artifact. Secondly, it is related to my study of history because it is a product of my favorite time period, the Middle Ages, and because I have written papers about the runic language for history seminars. Thirdly, the Ruthwell Cross is tied in several ways to my studies in English; I’ve studied it while studying historical linguistics, translated the poem it bears for an Old English class, and studied the “dream vision” genre of medieval writing of which the poem is an example.
The Ruthwell Cross served as inspiration for “Dead Languages” much as Christian allegory inspired Lewis’s *The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”*. Like Lewis, I had an agenda, something to say, with “Dead Languages” and the Cross, allegory, and science fiction seemed the best way to transmit my ideas about and garnered from anthropology, English, and history while mixing in, like Lewis, a “rich concentration of all […] most intensely felt and enjoyed as a reader” (Wilson 220).

My studies in anthropology seem the most distant to me; my graduate study has focused on English and occasionally wandered into the realm of history, but I have had virtually no contact with my anthropological roots for several years. It’s not surprising that “Dead Languages” returns to anthropology, and Katherine’s vocation is not where that influence ends. The very description of the dig: grids of data being recorded, the use of hand trowels and brushes to carefully remove the artifacts, and the designation of tasks from a professor to a cadre of graduate students are all things I’ve learned about excavations. The building the characters have erected over “the pit” is based on one from a site I studied in the Mediterranean, as is the reference to underwater archaeology there. The mention of tools being made from stone is a nod to the flint-knapping I studied in the archaeology of prehistory. Also, the fact that the excavation is taking place in a landfill is significant. Trash is often the most important thing that anthropologists find from a people long gone, and much of an anthropologist’s time is spent learning how to properly sort the discards of a past civilization. Even Katherine’s hunger to discover and her excitement for the next project, the concept of the ever-new find, are from the anthropologist’s perspective.

In addition to the facts about the science of anthropology that I applied to “Dead Languages,” I also included some of my interpretations and responses to anthropology as a
discipline. I do believe, like Katherine, that the few times I handled actual artifacts from excavations were those most filled with learning potential. "Dead Languages" illustrates a difference between the modern archaeologist and the archaeologists of the past; like the unethical removal of items by the character Margie Flemming, many of the treasures housed in museums were taken from their contexts with little study and sold to the highest bidder. It's obvious to us today that this is not the way to discover how the people lived who came before us. But how do we balance that with the need of students to see and handle artifacts, to be enchanted by the past? The modernization of archaeology and the desire to preserve artifacts without disturbing them is threatening the ongoing study of artifacts in museum settings. The contradiction of protection versus hands-on study and the education of students is one that faces anthropologists, and the future of anthropology is uncertain. It is on this future precipice that Katherine perches, a crisis over her very definition: the nature of preservation.

Anthropology as a scholarly tradition is present on the surface of "Dead Languages," but the relationship of this fragment with my scholarly studies in history is at least equal to that tradition. The references in "Dead Languages" to my studies in history start with the runes on the Cross. Like the character Matthew, I too wrote a paper about the runes of Greenland and Iceland, drawing on a childhood fascination with these strange letters. My fascination flowed from creativity to study and back again. I was intrigued by the life of the Viking women that these Icelandic sagas told.

The fact that the Cross is buried in a landfill is also borrowed from my studies in history. In a course about the history of the ancient near east, we studied the city of Troy. One possible site for this city took years to excavate because it was buried beneath a trash
midden. Centuries of subsequent people living in the same place buried Homer's famous city and sorting out the jumble of anachronistic objects is part of the challenge both historians and anthropologists face. This close relationship of history and anthropology made being a triple major easier, since many times my courses referred to each other. For example, the Rosetta Stone, the stone that provided the key for translating Egyptian hieroglyphs, was mentioned as a landmark find in both history and anthropology classes. It has always intrigued me; I wondered what it would be like to discover something so momentous.

Placing the Cross under the landfill in "Dead Languages," like the ancient city of Troy, gave me the opportunity to add intrigue to my tale through the confusion of information and jumble of times. A thousand years of rubbish on top of the Ruthwell Cross encourages the reader to question why and how the Cross was so deeply buried. This mystery, this question about how an object may have found its way to this resting place is, to me, one of the more exciting aspects of the study of artifacts. Further, I've always believed that the less exciting dry facts from history and anthropology could be made more accessible through creative writing. Through the study of the past we learn the mistakes of our predecessors and how to prevent making the same mistakes in the future.

The study of creative writing has been something I've pursued throughout my education. Before ever attending college, I became interested in the genre of science fiction and fantasy as allegory, though I did not call it by that name at that time. As I gained familiarity with that genre in college, I realized that it could transmit scholarly knowledge as well as offer a "good read." My studies in the English department have centered on this goal, the aim of writing creative narrative in order to transmit scholarly knowledge. "Dead
Languages," though certainly influenced by anthropology and history, is most deeply related to these studies, both as a piece of creative fiction and as mode of transmitting knowledge.

As mentioned above, the Ruthwell Cross is a cornerstone that represents many aspects of my college studies. The English side of these explorations began with the poem "The Dream of the Rood," and my fascination with the author's innovation. After reading the poem for a class discussion and translating it for another course, I felt comfortable discussing the poem while analyzing linguistic change in a graduate level course in the history of the English language. Therein I studied the poem inscribed on the Ruthwell Cross in detailed comparison with a later manuscript, revealing to me the usefulness of the Cross as an allegorical symbol in "Dead Languages." It was simply not possible for me to discuss everything about the Cross that intrigued me in that course. The poem's connections to my studies in allegory, medieval literature, and linguistics inspired me to begin "Dead Languages" with a kind of "dream vision" of my own. "Dead Languages," like "The Dream of the Rood" and The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader," is an allegory, but one that seeks to entertain as well as ask questions.

This inquisitive quality of writing was most thoroughly taught to me in my science fiction courses. Science fiction also often requires subtle ways to introduce the scientific nature of the setting, diametric characters that represent opposing belief systems, and the war between nature and technology. Like most science fiction, "Dead Languages" presents another form of the most often pursued question in science fiction: what if? Though I am not of the ranks of social commentators who make up early science fiction, I am part of the second or third generation, a group interested in melding the early methods of imagination with the particular social nature and problems of mankind. Through science fiction, I write
about how people interact, how society works, and what it leaves for others to discover. The future setting allows me to indicate that times have changed, but I’m not explicit about illuminating those changes.

Does this lack of explicit definition make “Dead Languages” an allegory? My story does seem to be presenting something on the surface, an unknown future, but is the limit of “Dead Languages” to tell a story about a hypothetical future archaeologist’s struggle? Much of the science fiction that “Dead Languages” is modeled after has a didactic quality, a “teaching of a moral lesson” that is similar to allegory. As I was trained to see in my science fiction courses, the message of the story overshadows the surface story, the characters and plot. The central theme of “Dead Languages” is whether the pursuit of “truth” is more important than money and comfort. Katherine will have to make a choice about the artifact. Should she display the cross in a museum as a Christian artifact although something has happened to change the worldview toward Christianity? Should she disguise its Christian iconography in order to sell it? Or should she rebury it to be found by later generations? Each of these choices embodies certain tradeoffs that are central to the character’s morality. Each embodies an allegorical comparison to the choices that scholars must make. It is this contradiction, this conflict, that makes this fiction, and by association my academic study, interesting.

There is virtually no phrase in “Dead Languages” that was formed in a void. Every idea expressed therein is a result of my interests given life and form. When I read the work of others, I can’t help but notice that the ideas expressed seem to come from a similar source. People write from the world they find most interesting; people observe before they create. The connection between scholar and writer is obvious and indelible.
C. S. Lewis was one man who intuitively understood this connection. He created novels which are still beloved, still considered spectacular and fun. The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader” shows Lewis’s love of adventure, narrative, and the creative exploration of self. We have seen how this work contains many elements related to Lewis’s study in allegory and its relationship to The Allegory of Love. Lewis did not suffer the separation between genres of creative writing and literary study. Like the writers he read, his mind worked with all that was in it; every idea that had gone before was free, accessible, and ready for interpretation and thought.

“Dead Languages” incorporates a wide variety of ideas, ideas that I personally and purposefully mined from my scholarly experience. Anthropology, history, and all the complex aspects of my study in English make up this work. All scholars have a similar database at their disposal, if only the artificial division between creative writing and literary study can be surmounted.

Respect and “turf” are complex issues in the academic world. It has always been a struggle for professors of both literature and creative writing to achieve and maintain positions against the ever-increasing cacophony of new voices. At the same time, locking oneself into a specific profession need not also shackle the mind. The well known example of Lewis and my own example of “Dead Languages” demonstrate that this division, while real in the physical world, need not be real in the land of imagination.

The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader” and “Dead Languages” are both examples of fantastic imagination in the ivory tower. Scholars, like Katherine, have an immense landfill of scholarly thought that has been buried and yet sustains some kernel of truth that they wish to explore. When scholars allow themselves to journey toward this exploration, they, like
Eustace, may struggle with the pain of transformation, but eventually find themselves fulfilled by the process. The scholar and the creative writer need not be divided; they are one.

The ability to access this fertile collection of knowledge to create fiction is not unique to Lewis, or to me. Scholars need only look to the writers they admire to see the influence of scholarly study on writing, this crossing of boundaries that has persevered for centuries. The coming generations of scholar-writers working their ways through the university system won’t know that there is a division between creation and study if we, the older generation, do not inform them. The coming scholarly edge will be determined not by the question, “Whose side are you on?” but rather, “Why aren’t you on every side?”
Works Consulted


    <http://cslewis.drzeus.net/>.


