

## Research Week – Proposal/Abstract

The debate over whether an author is present within his work, the subject examined extensively in C.S. Lewis and E.M.W. Tillyard's essay collection, *The Personal Heresy*, remains a prominent and controversial subject throughout the literary community today. Though Lewis argues that a literary work does not provide a window into a writer's personality, this paper seeks to advance the theory that an author holds some degree of presence throughout his works. For Lewis specifically, his conversion to Christianity in 1931 greatly impacted all aspects of his life, and thus bled over into his writing, at times consciously and at other times subconsciously. Malcolm Guite, in discussing the intermingling of C.S. Lewis' Christian beliefs with his writing, connects the "heart of both his [Lewis'] Christian belief and his poetic theory and practice" (308). Such a reflection of issues as were significant to Lewis, namely those related to his faith, can be seen throughout his works, whether knowingly written about or not. For example, in chapter ten of Lewis' *Perelandra*, the second novel of his Ransom Trilogy, the narrator recounts Ransom's experience of fighting a type of spiritual battle. *Perelandra* was not written as an allegory, yet still conveys deeply religious undertones, thus revealing what captivates and motivates Lewis. Additionally, Lewis' poem "The Naked Seed" portrays theological themes through the daily struggle of the Christian life. Its resounding personal subject matter and passionate tone allow the presence of Lewis the man to be displayed. Chapter ten of *Perelandra* and "The Naked Seed" exhibit an established literary presence of Lewis the man, specifically through the faith-based subject matter and desperate tones that both works employ.