The concept of time travelling in J. R. R. Tolkien’s Lost Road and C. S. Lewis’ Space Trilogy

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I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is completely my own work and that no other sources were used in the preparation of the thesis than those listed on the works cited page.

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Abstract

The thesis focuses on the understanding of different approaches to time and space travelling as explored in J. R. R. Tolkien's Lost Road and C. S. Lewis' Space Trilogy. The work should introduce the authors' writing skills and imagination by not only comparing the theme of their books and used narrative techniques, but also concerning the life stories of both of them and their inevitable influence on each other. Discussed is also the character of Doctor Elwin Ransom and his resemblance to Tolkien.

Key words

J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, The Lost Road, The Space Trilogy, time travel, Dr Elwin Ransom

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá rozdílným pojetím problematiky cestování časem a porovnává Ztracenou cestu od J. R. R. Tolkiena a Kosmickou triologii od C. S. Lewise. Práce seznamuje s jazykovými a spisovatelskými schopnostmi autorů a jejich představivostí nejen ve vztahu k tématům vybraných děl a použitých vypravěčských postupů, ale i vzhledem k jejich životním osudům a nevyhnutelnému vlivu, který na sebe autoři měli. Část práce je věnována i postavě doktora Elwina Ransoma a jeho rysy shodné s Tolkienovými.

Klíčová slova

J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Ztracená cesta, Kosmická triologie, cestování časem, doktor Elwin Ransom
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1 INTRODUCTION

Ever since I was a little child, I felt attracted towards the great stories full of fantasy elements combined with an excellent narrative technique. Fantasy genre was my favourite one due to its variability, unpredictability and huge potential to always come with something new. Therefore it was only a matter of time when I would meet one of the greatest writers of this genre ever. C. S. Lewis is very famous for his Chronicles of Narnia (1950), which served as a forming element throughout my early years but not so many people know his later works, especially the one I would like to write about, namely The Space Trilogy (firstly published as a one book in 2013). Yet it proves to be one of the most interesting books concerning a mixture of sci-fi and fantasy elements and religious hints. As for J. R. R. Tolkien I met his works a little bit later, which is only connected with the age because you have to be well prepared in order to understand it. I must admit that my admiration for him is even stronger than for Lewis and I try to read everything by him which has been published. These two writers were bound through a friendship that lasted till the end of Lewis’ life and it still lives in the heart of their fans. The genius of both authors could flourish because they found support in each other. The two books I will compare would possibly not exist if it were not for this relationship.

I would like explore the background of both authors which led to the creation of these two books. I will mention the development of the concept of time travel and try to clarify why Lewis and Tolkien invested their time into this field of fiction. One cannot simply skip the most important facts from their lives and the story behind their friendship. It is only natural both authors influenced each other and therefore created characters which somehow resembled their living models, especially Tolkien. Tolkien mentioned in the letter to Christopher Tolkien that the main character of The Space Trilogy, Dr Elwin Ransom, was possibly based on him (The Letters of J. R. Tolkien 89). In this thesis I would like to present arguments which would support this hypothesis.
2 THEORETICAL PART

2.1 FORMATIVE YEARS

To understand the friendship between these two men the readers have to be familiar with the most important facts from their lives.

2.1.1 JOHN RONALD REUEL TOLKIEN

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born on 3 January 1872 in Bloemfontein. His father Arthur was a bank manager, earlier married to Mabel, neé Suffield. Arthur was sent to the South Africa as a result of his promotion which meant better living conditions for the family considering money. The family expanded when the second boy named Hilary was born in 1874. His mother originally came from Evesham, which is a small town in Worcestershire surrounded by beautiful countryside of Cotswolds and Tolkien was later inclined to the rural Midlands.

The African hot weather caused Tolkien serious health problems. When he was four years old the family decided to split and his mother took him with his brother Hilary back to England. Little Tolkien got confused quite a lot, he kind of expected to be back in Africa and although he was a small child at that time, he remembered the first English Christmas tree looking very odd as something was missing (Duriez 5). The change of place helped him to create a special bond with his mother who was well educated and she encouraged his love for languages and folktales.

The separation was considered to be only a temporary. However, Tolkien´s father got ill and eventually passed away. Mabel had to do her best in order to secure the family. It got even worse when she decided to convert to Catholicism and the other relatives refused to support them any longer. Fortunately, they met father Francis Xavier Morgan, who became the guardian of the two boys after Mabel´s death in 1904.

They lived in Sarehole, Birmingham; they attended a King Edward School. Tolkien was an enormously gifted student with special favour for languages, which his mother only supported. Tolkien did well at school, but punctuality was not his strongest virtue, therefore he tended to postpone studying and occupied his mind with something else.

He founded a discussion club with literary interest at King Edward’s School; several of
its key members such as Christopher Wiseman or Geoffrey Bach Smith became very well-known.

In 1911 Tolkien left Birmingham for Oxford University where he attended the Exeter College. His studies provided him with great opportunities to learn more languages; he was particularly influenced by Joseph Wright. At Oxford Tolkien studied Philology and English language and literature. He got acquainted with old alliterative poems which later helped him to create his myths.

This peaceful life was destroyed by the war and Tolkien was mobilised. He was sent to Europe, participated in the Battle of the Somme. In 1916 he returned to England suffering from trench fever. In 1921 he took up a senior post at the University of Leeds. Even though he was quite young, his professionalism combined with detailed oriented work earned him a career move and he was appointed the Chair of English Language and Literature when he was only thirty-two. Finally in 1925 he got a job at Oxford University. His main area of teaching was philology. He was aligned with the Pembroke College and named as Chair of Anglo-Saxon; he held this prestigious function from 1925 to 1945 and then served as the language Chair for another 14 years.

2.1.2 Clive Staples Lewis

He was born in Belfast on November 29, 1898 in Belfast in north of Ireland. His father was a senior solicitor, his mother Florence Augusta Lewis, née Hamilton.

A very interesting fact about his parents was that both of them liked writing stories, his mother even published some. His older brother, Warren, was born in 1895 and he had a strong connection with little Jacksie or Jack as young Lewis called himself soon after he became vocative. The whole family attended the Anglican Church. However, this did not influence Lewis much and for a significant part of his life he became a pagan with a special affection for Norse paganism. One can say that his imagination provided him enough inputs for creating a simply personal highly subjective religion but eventually through the help of Tolkien he found God again and became a devoted Christian and a member of the Anglican Church, much to the Tolkien’s displeasure.
Little Lewis also experienced a change of living area. When he was almost seven years old, the family moved to the house called Little Lea on the outskirts of Belfast. It was a big change for the young open mind and Lewis with Warren could start their adventures. Lewis was impressed with it. Lewis recollected the fact that the books were in two rows in one shelf and simply everywhere.

Lewis was quite similar to his father in his stubbornness, quick temper and sensible nature. His mother suffered from cancer and she had to undergo a major surgery, but it failed to stop another attacked of this disease and she passed away in 1908. Lewis always remembered this time when the old security disappeared.

The first years in school were not happy either. Lewis was eager for education; he wanted to study but the system of the Wynyard School where he enrolled cause him much disappointment. The only good thing here was the reinforcement of the relationship between the brothers. Lewis entered the Campbell College later which was very close to his beloved home but soon he had to leave for a health resort Malvern. The adolescent boy produced many stories, pictures and writings which were the most precious treasure for him and he kept them hidden from other people’s eyes.

He met one of his closes friends in April 1914. His name was Arthur Greeves and he was his soul mate. Lewis was lucky enough to be taught by William T. Kirkpatrick who prepared him for entrance to Oxford University.

He started his studies at Oxford during the War but eventually joined the British army voluntarily. After the end of the War Lewis began to publish his writings and continued with studying classical subjects, philosophy and literature with great success. He was elected to fellowship in Magdalen College in 1925 as a tutor in English language and literature making his father incredibly proud and finally showing his emotions.

2.2 THE FIRST MEETING

It happened on Tuesday, May 11, 1926 when Lewis went to the traditional “English Tea” at Merton College. There was a group of writers, friends and academics who met regularly in order to discuss the new approaches towards teaching literature. There, Lewis met Tolkien one of the three professors at Oxford. Lewis described him as “a
smooth, pale, fluent little chap” (Duriez 24). The first impression was thus not very positive. Tolkien spoke a lot, very quickly and it was really hard to understand him. The later small talk seemed to be very discoursing because Tolkien was obsessed with language and literature was only an amusement for him unlike for Lewis. One would never have guessed that these two academics could find something to share.

2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRIENDSHIP

Nevertheless Lewis and Tolkien gradually learned to like each other and cooperate even though Tolkien always stressed that philology is the more important subject. However, Tolkien started to appreciate old mythology; he was especially focused on the Norse saga. He worked on his career as a professor and was very well accepted by the students who immediately sensed his acting skills. He was very strong in speaking despite his pronunciation difficulties and was able to draw students’ attention. On the other hand, Lewis was more of a philosopher. Philosophy was actually one of his fields of studies and he was more aware of adding an intertextual insight to his lectures. He never wrote them completely, just made a few notes. He always encouraged students to think more about the topics.

Tolkien invited Lewis to join the informal reading club called Coalbiters in 1926. The members devoted themselves to reading Old Icelandic literature. It was during that time that Lewis found his way back to God and when he and Tolkien formed the strong bound which led to the life lasting friendship. Lewis even said that “friendship with […] J. R. R. Tolkien […] marked the breakdown of two old prejudices. At first my coming into the world I had been (implicitly) warned never to trust a Papist, and at my first coming into the English Faculty (explicitly) never to trust a philologist. Tolkien was both” (Lewis, ch. 16).

It may seem that the friendship was more important for Lewis but on the contrary Tolkien mentioned that without Lewis’ support The Lord of the Rings (1937) or his other fantasy works would have never existed. His own words were that “friendship with Lewis compensates for much, and besides giving a constant pleasure and comfort has done to me much good from the contact with a man at once honest, brave, intellectual – a scholar, a poet, and a philosopher – and a lover, at least after a long
pilgrimage, of our Lord” (Duriez 52). Their imagination shared some similar features although it was different, and their Christianity became also a significant element in the foundation of their relationship.

Both men met regularly on Mondays and discussed all possible topics, and even worked on a new syllabus for the English School at Oxford. They called themselves by nicknames which was a common thing at that time. Lewis was known as Jack and Tolkien was called Tollers. They appreciated each other especially for the fact that both read practically all of mythology of the First and Second Ages. They let each other read their works. It was fundamental for Tolkien because he finally got someone who could comment on his mythological fairy tales for adults.

Lewis dedicated the first years of their friendship to the work on philosophical and religious essays; the most significant work was Surprised by the Joy (1955). Eventually, Lewis shifted from being somebody who believed in God but did not want to be a member of any church to being a Christian again. This process was reflected and discussed with Tolkien a lot. His newly discovered devotion accompanied him during the rest of his life. He also constantly longed for the beauty which he mentioned several times in almost all his works. He and Tolkien felt the rivalry between the realism and fantasy. Both of them struggled with it in their later works and one of their key words was “myth” together with its meaning. Their stories were influenced by their belief although for example Tolkien tried not to stress it too obviously.

It was only natural that these two became responsible for new club – the Inklings. They gathered in the famous Oxford Inn the Eagle and Child. It was a circle of friends who formed literary club where they read aloud their writings. The Inklings played a vital part in the lives of Lewis and Tolkien. They slowly became strong traditionalists, refusing the common enthusiasm for the world. They also felt the dangerous tension as the Second World War drew closer. They cherished the old quiet moments full of joy and peace.
2.4 THE STORY BEHIND THE SPACE TRILOGY AND THE LOST ROAD

It all began in 1936. They spent one Tuesday afternoon at Magdalen College talking about works of the quite new genre – science fiction. Both of them could acknowledge the high quality ones but were also able to see that the problem was that the writers of this genre were usually not so skilled. They felt attracted by the topics of space and time, and even planned a lecture about them.

After a long discussion they decided to write their own stories and to contribute to the genre. However they wanted to stay loyal to their original fields of interests so they wanted to incorporate their compositions into the existing mythology. It was also an interesting fact that Tolkien mentioned a similar kind of challenge between Lord Byron, Percy and Mary Shelley at Lake Geneva in 1816 which resulted in many classic books such as *Frankenstein* (1818). They agreed on writing something which would warn people before the enemy they both thought of quite often – the tyranny of the machine. They specified the topics when they tossed the coin and Tolkien was supposed to focus more on time travel whereas Lewis on space travels.

It was a great opportunity for Tolkien not only to write a new story but also to create a bridge between his beloved myths of *The Silmarillion* (1977) and modern world which could attract more adult readers. Thus he created his version of the Atlantis myth – a star-shaped island called Númenor, the land of West. The story was called *The Lost Road* (1993). The core of the story is a relationship between a father and son which is repeated several times. The book includes several legends from different parts of Western and Northern Europe. The main characters are contemporary, they live by the Atlantics. The sons are chased by the dream of green wave and clouds. Their dreams take them to Númenor which they see destroyed by the green wave.

Unfortunately, Tolkien abandoned the topic after writing only four chapters. He even made some notes, suggested, a possible development, but never finished this story properly. However, the motif of the road remained integrated in his work about the Middle-earth.

Tolkien possibly read *The Lost Road* to the Inklings because it is probable that Lewis later used some of the namings in *The Space Trilogy*, although misspelled. Lewis also
got inspired by Tolkien’s older stories from Silmarillion and he brought several characters to the story which would be later described in detail.

Tolkien’s story, though never truly finished, influenced Lewis so much that he used its elements in several other narratives as well, for example in The Dark Story. It was meant as a sequel to Out of the Silent Planet (1938) but he never finished it.

The Lost Road represents one of the most autobiographical pieces Tolkien ever wrote. The readers could grasp the power of Tolkien as a storyteller combined with the almost perfect ability of his writing techniques. His interests into ancient Europe and its history is highlighted. Tolkien grew up in the area of Worcestershire and Warwickshire, an area where the folktales hold a strong position. He originally sent the first four chapters to his publisher but later started to work on a new story about hobbits. Tolkien created a world which became so familiar that one could think of its history as relevant.

Lewis was consumed by his work on the first book of his trilogy – Out of the Silent Planet. He read it chapter by chapter to the Inklings. He paid a tribute to Tolkien by creating the main character of the philologist Elwin Ransom, a person who shares many of Tolkien’s qualities and who is kidnapped and transported to Malacandra. Later he escapes and avoids the contact with the aliens before he meets an intelligent race. Ransom represents a traditionalist, Lewis as much as Tolkien was quite opposed to the quick development of the world. They were afraid of modernism and its success to shake the old traditions. Ransom is therefore oriented more on the old times. Both Lewis and Tolkien loved the Renaissance and hoped that the values of Humanism could be cherished even in the modern world. The opposite of Ransom is the physicist Edward Weston. On his run Ransom meets various forms of inhabitants, which serve as a comparison to the behaviour of humankind.

Lewis sent the first part to Stanley Unwin who wanted to publish it. Tolkien immediately wrote a letter to Unwin encouraging him to do so and mentioning that all the Inklings approved of the book. Tolkien was impressed and liked the high quality of the language in it. Unfortunately Unwin was not interested in the end and passed it over to John Lane. The book was published in 1938 and became an immediate success. Lewis added two more sequels. In 1943 Perelandra was published, followed by That
Hideous Strength in 1945. Tolkien appreciated Perelandra but was not equally pleased with That Hideous Strength.

2.5 THE CONCEPT OF TIME TRAVEL USED BY OTHER AUTHORS WHO INFLUENCED TOLKIEN AND LEWIS

Tolkien was interested in this issue for a longer time. He and Lewis discussed various authors during their meetings and concerning this topic Lewis remembered Herbert George Wells. Both men acknowledged his stories which shared the same spirit they were looking for. They felt that these stories could bring new and significant values into the world.

Herbert George Wells published The Time Machine in 1895 and thus started a new genre in the British literature which later resulted in science – fiction. The readers could experience the time travels usually to distant yet horrifying future where different kinds of societies struggle to survive. Wells’ original interest lied in politics because he was a socialist. He wanted to draw the attention to the bad situation in the society.

Another important author was David Lindsay and his book A Voyage to Arcturnus (1929) where they experienced spirituality which was something absolutely new for them. It seemed that Lindsay was not influenced by anyone but further readings revealed his knowledge of other Scottish fantasists such as those by George MacDonald for example Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women (1858). The book was not very successful but it was praised for its morality, religion and philosophy. Its originality rested in Lindsay’s metaphysical ideas. He wanted to reject the real world and it illusions. However, the second edition became more available and gradually gained the attention of the readers. It was turned into a short film in 1971.
3 Practical Part

3.1 Form

Lewis and Tolkien intended to write a real story, according to all attributes that stories should possess, which would fulfil the expectations of future readers. Lewis worked systematically writing chapter by chapter. He always presented them at the meetings of the Inklings and was interested in their comments and remarks. He put together a book, entitled Out of the Silent Planet (1938), but he probably did not expect to succeed due to the difficulties with publishing. He followed the typical features of literary works concerning the genre of science fiction. The positive acceptance of the book encouraged him to return to the main protagonist, Dr Elwin Ransom, and produce two more books. The trilogy was complete although the main attention is usually paid to the first book. Out of the Silent Planet is the shortest of the here volumes, but also the most important because the whole conception of Lewis’ universe is introduced there.

The novel is written in the third person narration but sometimes the readers can see the insights and thoughts of the main hero. The story is mostly descriptive even though the narrator steps into the story in order to tell the events which do not occur in the main story. In the end the narrator explains his personal connection with the main character and the first book is ended by the letter from the Dr Ransom to the narrator which provides an interesting shift of the points of the view. Ransom is suddenly an active participant and he explains many events which occurred in the story and gives the general background.

On the other hand Tolkien got distracted very often. His first idea was to produce a lecture on the topic of fairy tales. Instead of that he again focused on the idea of his own world – The Middle-earth. He was already working on his masterpiece and the major book of his life as writer, The Silmarillion. He wanted to use this challenge only as a connection between the 20th century modern readers and myths which were not so popular. Tolkien believed that myths are the heart of the world and he intended to uplift their prestige again. Unfortunately, the form of The Lost Road was hugely influenced by this intention and as a result of which the work is fragmental. His youngest son Christopher worked very hard to collect all the material concerning manuscripts of The
Lost Road. He found four completed chapters and some notes about the future plot development. Tolkien let the Inkling read the first version and they expressed their doubts whether readers would be able to understand it. Nevertheless, Tolkien did not pay much attention to it.

The Lost Road became a part of The History of Middle-earth, Volume 5 (1987) edited by Christopher Tolkien who divided the work into three parts. All three parts are provided with commentaries and notes put together from Tolkien’s letters and extra notes. Luckily enough, Christopher Tolkien was able to present a complex overview of his father’s work. The story is written in the third person narration. The language is more complicated, Tolkien was focused on the form, he wanted to evoke a sense that the story is very old, almost ancient and therefore he did not use modern English. The third part, The Unwritten Chapters, is completely different. It does not follow the style of the two preceding ones. Christopher Tolkien organised his father’s notes and extracts that Tolkien had prepared. He also tried to search for the missing parts in order to make the story more united.

3.2 Plot

It is important to know at least a basic summary of the already mentioned books. Out of The Space Trilogy, the first book, Out of the Silent Planet, is the most significant because it shaped the form of the two sequels.

3.2.1 Out of the Silent Planet

Lewis introduces the main character, Dr Elwin Ransom, in the first chapter. Ransom is on a trip and he wants to sleep somewhere. Unfortunately, he meets another scientist, Dr Weston, who drugs and kidnaps him. Ransom wakes up in a spacecraft and he is taken to another planet called Malacandra, which is actually Mars. Luckily Ransom escapes and wanders around the planet. He meets its inhabitants, special creatures of different shapes and forms. He finds out that he was sold as an object of sacrifice.

Ransom points out the similarities between the Earth and Malacandra. He is not sure where exactly he is, but importantly that there is light gravitation, and also water and air
to breathe. He meets a race called the Hrossa. Unlike people who are shown as cruel creatures that want to control other races, this population treats him with respect and curiosity although there is a language barrier. The Hrossa race serves as a tool for a comparison between humans and the so called aliens.

Later on Ransom encounters an eldil, a very special form of existence. It is not easy to see it and Ransom gets the feeling that these creatures are more like saints or angels coming from Oyarsa, the highest entity, which is the centre of some higher power. The eldil speaks to Ransom but he does not follow his advice. Ransom’s friend Hyoi is killed during their journey to Oyarsa by the two men who kidnapped Ransom. Ransom meets two more species and finally reaches Oyarsa, who tells him that there is an eldil on every planet and the one living on the Earth, Thulcandra, is bad and forces people to commit evil. Ransom is given a special task: he should prevent Weston from committing any mischiefs which could affect the humankind.

All three men are permitted to return to the Earth even though Dr Weston and Devine kill several inhabitants of Malacandra, but they are forgiven. Forgiveness is another difference from the humankind. The last chapter is a letter from Dr Ransom to the author where he explains what he experienced. He mentions the vivid smell, colours. He compares Lewis’ understanding of angels to the eldils. He believes that the life on Malacandra is better than the life on the Earth.

### 3.2.2 Perelandra

The volume is also entitled *Voyage to Venus*, which indicates that the story takes place on the planet Venus. The form of narration changes to the first person narration when Lewis himself comes to visit Dr Ransom and is drawn in the story as an occasional commentator. Ransom summons him and tells him that he, Ransom, has to travel to Perelandra on the order of the Oyarsa. He is naked and blindfolded because of too strong light which could damage his eyesight while he travels.

The planet is covered by the sea and with many floating rafts with vegetation and Ransom lives on one of them, so he is in constant motion. The only solid piece of land is a mountain called the Fixed Land. Ransom meets the Queen of the planet, Tinidril; she befriends him and explains to him that there is also a King on the planet although
unseen till the very end. The King and the Queen resemble human beings with the exception of their skin colour. The floating rafts remind of the Paradise because the life there is peaceful and pleasant. Ransom spends weeks on them living in quiet and peace.

It is all spoilt by Dr Weston who represents the demonic powers and tries to seduce the Queen to repeat the original sin of the humankind. Ransom tries to stop it and he and Weston debate passionately. Ransom hears a divine force in himself which orders him to attack Weston. He reluctantly agrees. There is a huge pursuit and fight between Ransom and Weston. Weston regains the power over himself sometimes but eventually is consumed by the demonic powers and tries to drown Ransom. In the end, Ransom kills Weston but is seriously injured. He feels compassion for Weston and makes a memorial inscription for him.

Ransom joins the celebration of the prevention of the second possible fall and about a year later he returns to the Earth where he meets Lewis again.

3.2.3 THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH

It is the third volume, subtitled A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups. In this case, the story takes place on the Earth. Unlike the two previous books this one is much influenced by Lewis´ friend Charles Williams. The events happen in an undetermined year after a war.

The content of this book is rather complicated. For the first time Dr Ransom is not the main character. The main protagonist is a young academic, Mark Studdock, who is given a position in the National Institute for Co–ordinated Experiments. The Institute wants to buy a portion of a college land including ancient woodland which is a possible resting place of Merlin.

Lord Feverstone, the deputy of the Institute is actually Devine, the companion of Dr Weston from the previous volumes. He manipulates Mark and even accuses him of murder of another scientist. Mark´s wife Jane has special physic abilities and the Institute wants to use them, so they arrest and torture her but they have to release her in the end. Jane meets Ransom who is appointed a legitimate king of the nation of Logres and he is in communication with the Oyéresu, the angelic powers of the solar system.
The true intention of Lord Feverstone is to seize control over Merlin and to use him as a weapon in order to secure his government over the whole world. Ransom reveals the demonic powers behind the Institute and explains that there was a general understanding that the angelic powers will not interfere into other planet’s business. The demonic powers from the Earth broke the lunar barriers and therefore it is possible for the other Oyarsa to possess the true Merlin and save the Earth. Merlin curses the Institute and many of its members are killed during an earthquake, and Ransom is sent back to Perelandra.

3.2.4 THE LOST ROAD

The summary of *The Lost Road* is even more complicated because Tolkien finished only four chapters which do not offer much action. Tolkien wanted to write a story which would connect his tales with the present. The story takes place in contemporary England and Númenor, a kingdom in Middle-earth that Tolkien created. Tolkien intended to repeat certain pattern of narration several times during the history but he did not manage to cover all centuries. The main characters mention Anglo Saxon’s folktales, the Lombard stories, Old Norse myths, Ireland’s legends and also events which are later included in *The Silmarillion*. It all moves slowly to the main topic, which is the story of the Downfall of Númenor but, unfortunately Tolkien abandoned the work and never completed it in this book but he returned to the theme once more and it was published later in *The Silmarillion*.

The strongest motif is the preoccupation of certain visions. There are series of occurrences throughout time shared by father and son couples. The time travel is usually only mental, the characters dream and share the same visions in which they move back in time.

*The Lost Road* is formally divided into three parts. The “Opening Chapters” are focused on its relation to the Fall of Númenor and on events in contemporary England. Fathers and sons usually spend their time discussing meanings of their names, mentioning old myths and the possibility of going back in time. The “Númenórean chapters” introduce a new couple – father Elendil and his son Herendil. Their story takes place before the Fall of Númenor and they discuss the influence of Sauron on the
society and again the possibility of going back, not in time but back to the blessed lands the Númenóreans once left. Whereas Elendil is more concerned with the present situation in Númenor and tries to protect Herendil from the bad influence of Sauron, Herendil is young, ambitious and eager to listen to Sauron’s words which caused the destruction of Númenor. The “Unwritten chapters” bring an interesting insight into Tolkien’s mind. Christopher Tolkien collected all possible materials, but as he said, it was impossible to decide when Tolkien decided to postpone the story (The Lost Road 77). Tolkien mentioned many names and characters but never wrote enough to make the story complete.

Unfortunately the story is not adventurous and quite slow. Tolkien spent time on explaining the meanings of names and thinking of his Elven languages. It is clear that the first four chapters serve as a long introduction and they are full of details which prevent a further development of the story. Tolkien tried to include the myth of the storm and green wave coming to the Númenor but he was already interested in the sequel of The Hobbit so he postponed the work on the legends of Númenor.

3.3 THE CHARACTERS IN THE SPACE TRILOGY

Lewis’s main character is Doctor Elwin Ransom, a person directly influenced by Tolkien. Inspired by Tolkien Lewis paid more attention to the languages and names in his stories. Lewis created a Cambridge philologist interested like Tolkien in Early and Middle English. There are several similar features between Ransom and Tolkien. Ransom has a war wound and is also a scholar. His personality is strong but he has no problem to put himself down. Ransom and Tolkien share even some physical features. “He was tall, but a little round-shouldered, about thirty-five to forty years of age, and dressed with that particular kind of shabbiness which marks a member of the intelligentsia on a holiday (Out of the Silent Planet 5).”

Ransom is interested in all kinds of languages and when he meets the inhabitants of Malacandra and hears them talk he immediately starts to think of composing the grammar and dictionary. (Out of the Silent Planet 51). In other words he does precisely the same thing as Tolkien would probably do.
Ransom is presented as a person living according to the values common to humanity. He is kind, patient and cherishes history. Lewis and Tolkien shared their antipathy to the modern world although they were no fanatics they did not refuse the advantages such as a dentist but they feared the ignorance of people and their ability to forget very quickly. They both experienced the war and were afraid of the cult of science and its attempts to monopolize knowledge. However they accepted the positive products such as draft beer or buses. (Duriez 103)

Ransom is a positive figure who tries to take only the best out of every situation and even though he finds himself in a difficult situation in the beginning he looks for a way to regain his humanity. His profession helps him to pick up the rules of the Old Solar language and he is able to communicate quickly.

The main antagonists are Dr Weston and Mr Devine, two human beings who represent all negative aspects of modern scientist focused only on power and money. They feel superior and in position that they could decide about other people’s destinies. They are driven by the biological need to replicate humans at any cost. They do not see other races as equal. They mock history and traditions because they cannot understand their values. They believe that people are destined to rule over the universe.

On the contrary, the aliens Ransom meets are shown as very civilised and clever. They have high moral standards and are able to forgive. With this description Lewis fought against the tendency of science fiction at that time. The aliens were usually presented as the terrifying creatures with no mercy. In Lewis’s world they were peaceful, intelligent and even spiritual. Lewis contributed to the change of perception of the aliens among the readers. He was aware of his impact stating even that people are easily to be influenced by anything hidden in the literary works. (Duriez 105).

**3.4 THE CHARACTERS IN THE LOST ROAD**

Tolkien presented three pairs of father and son. Two of them live in contemporary England and one pair dwells in Númenor. Readers can immediately spot similarities with Tolkien’s life. The families are not complete. The boys are motherless and one
could sense that the figure of the father is always idealised. Tolkien could have expressed his feelings concerning the loss of his parents.

The most significant person is the figure of Alboin. Firstly, he is shown as a son and then his position shifts to a father figure. Alboin is actually quite similar to Tolkien. He is born around the same time and through his life Tolkien reveals some part of the process of discovering legends Tolkien he collected in *The Silmarillion*. Alboin loves old languages and myths, words and phrases slip from his lips quite unconsciously. “They look like the eagles of the Lord of the West coming upon Númenor (*The Lost Road and Other Writings* 38)”. It is the most common line shared in thoughts by all men in the contemporary England although they are not sure what it really means. They feel it is somehow important and have a tendency to think of Númenor as if it really existed. Alboin speaks with the father about his strange ability to create new words (with meaning) but also admits that he sometimes thinks of two different languages. This was a clear parallel to Tolkien’s two versions of the Elven languages. Another similarity was his interest in the Latin and Greek world.

### 3.5 Tolkien’s Influence on Lewis

It seems to be very likely that Lewis was always more influenced by Tolkien than Tolkien by Lewis. Tolkien was already a professor when he and Lewis met and he became one of the most popular persons at the Oxford University. Tolkien was outgoing, his lectures were attended by many students and he had already created a ban of his Elven languages and mythology by that time. The Inklings played a major part as well. The members met regularly to read and discuss mainly their own unfinished work. The club was named by Tangey Lean (*The Inklings* 57). Both of them read their attempts aloud to the Inklings at their regular meetings in various pubs in Oxford and therefore they could help or inspire each other. Lewis had never really focused on anything that complex before writing *The Space Trilogy*. By that time his writing consisted of various essays, letters and singular stories. He followed this pattern while working on *The Chronicles of Narnia* with the exception of creating his own languages because these stories were mainly focused on religion and children so he felt there was no need to complicate it. Actually, Lewis wanted to pay a tribute to his dear friend.
The most obvious result of this inspiration was the main character of *The Space Trilogy* – Dr Elwin Ransom. Lewis’ philologist dedicated to languages showed the same passion Tolkien was full of. Tolkien’s aim was to create a world which could be taken as plausible of human history. He wanted readers to believe as if this world was real. Lewis tried to evoke the same result. That is why he changed the names of the planets. Yet he did not set up his story into completely different universe so he always revealed the real name of the planets. He meant to come up with an ideal place which would look like familiar. Then people could accept the civilised alien forms easily. Generally the non-human forms of being were presented in positive way. They showed intelligence, as well as ability to be merciful and to forgive. These are the values which were usually attributed to humans but Tolkien and Lewis created utopian societies governed by fantasy races that were able to run their affair better than humankind on the Earth.

Tolkien encouraged a general antipathy to the modern world. Both of them for example did not like the cars and grieved over the changes of the countryside especially after the wars. Lewis and Tolkien went back to the Renaissance time and even to medieval cosmos where they admired the imaginativeness of the society and the high standards of morality. They lacked these attributes in the contemporary world and they hoped to influence possible readers to become more aware of the state of the society.

Lewis listened very carefully when Tolkien read his myth. As it is known, Tolkien was not the clearest speaker. He had the tendency to speak either too quickly or to swallow the endings thus making his speeches quite intelligible. It was probably the reason for his later usage of twisted names in *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength* that are loosely based on the ones found in *The Silmarillion*. For example, the name “Numinor” was a misspelled version of Númenor, the realm of people in Tolkien’s mythological world.

The other area strongly affected by Tolkien was the characters. Anybody who is at least partly familiar with Tolkien’s work can find a parallel between Tor and Tinidril in *Perelandra* and Tuor and Idril in *The Silmarillion*. Tor and Tinidril were the King and the Queen of Perelandra, couple full of love. The story of Tuor and Idril is one of the best pieces of Tolkien’s literary work and it is also well known. It is connected to the
Fall of Gondolin, one of the eldest stories that Tolkien wrote. Tuor is a mortal man whereas Idril is an elf but they get married and have a child – Eärendil. The Eldils from *Out of the Silent Planet* probably came from the Eldar, Middle-earth high elves.

It is also very likely that the Oyéresu were loosely based on one of the most important story of Tolkien’s mythology - the Music of Ainur, which is the opening chapter of *The Silmarillion*, in which the Middle-earth is created by creatures who represent “the One” and the angels and saints. The first conflict between good and evil is introduced. Tolkien created the first villain of his universe and made an explanation for the later fight. Lewis used this motif again in *The Magician’s Nephew* (1995) when creating Narnia.

### 3.6 THE CONCEPT OF TIME TRAVELING

Time and space traveling should have been the most important principle in the both books. Eventually, Tolkien and Lewis spent more time on elaborating the narrative features of the stories. Nevertheless the device of time travels remained essential in them. Lewis combined time and space travels openly whereas Tolkien worked mainly with time travel but he actually let the couples of the father and son make mental journeys in their minds.

There are two ways in which the authors use dealing with time traveling. The first one is that the actual time freezes in the moment the main hero leaves his original world or the time flows on and on. Both Tolkien and Lewis followed the easier way and made time stop. Lewis used the same device later in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Tolkien’s time traveling was more obvious because his characters underwent a long journey back from the 20th century England to the old realm of Númenor whereas Lewis sent his character to different planets but within the same century.

At this time, the title of Tolkien’s book, *The Lost Road*, must be taken into consideration. It actually reveals the basic motif of his story. Tolkien was so obsessed with the idea of producing a literary bridge between the modern world and his Middle-earth that he created a legend about the long forgotten road which linked the worlds of people and especially elves. According to the history of Middle-earth, there used to be a
road between the blessed land of Valinor, the home of high elves, and the kingdom of people Númenor, but due to human pride the road was forgotten, destroyed and hardly anybody knew about it. People wanted to reclaim the old route, they wanted to find their way back to the holy land but they were not permitted. It was one of the reasons why people started to listen to Sauron and brought a catastrophe on Númenor. It came in a form of a big green wave, a dreadful vision. It was Tolkien’s version of the Atlantis myth.

The downfall of Númenor was probably finished even before The Lost Road but nobody is really sure about it. Tolkien wrote several different versions during his life and the work on it took him a lot of time. Fortunately, Tolkien knew the importance of this myth because it had haunted him from his childhood that is why all the boys in The Lost Road had these strange visions. The road was destroyed after the downfall, the men fled to the shore of the Middle-earth where they founded new kingdoms Arnor and Gondor. The direct road remained visible and opened only for some high elves or their friends. Tolkien actually did not abandon the idea and used the road motif in the Lord of the Rings where Frodo sails away together with high elves and Maiar. The principle of the lost road is repeated several times, for example through the sailors Aerendil and Aelfwine. This narrative device served Tolkien well and he was able to create a link between contemporary world and his mythological realm.

On the other hand, Lewis’ main theme was space travel where Dr Ransom covered great distance in a short period of time. The time which passed on the Earth or another planet was never very important and Lewis probably wanted to create a story where time would not be essential. He worked more on the story, action and the development of the main characters.

3.7 LANGUAGES, NAMES, MEANINGS

The two books differ in their topics and the fact that Lewis usually did not spend time on elaborating a new world with the exception of The Chronicles of Narnia. On the other hand, Tolkien started to write mainly because it gave him an opportunity to create whole universe from the beginning, especially his fictional world’s history and language.
The name of Lewis’ main protagonist, Elwin Ransom, is very interesting. Elwin means “Elf friend” in Anglo Saxon which proves that Tolkien’s influence on Lewis was very strong. The origins of the surname have never been truly explained; it seemed for a while that it is only a nickname. Ransom was probably derived from Old English “Ranolf’s Son”. Lewis produced a special communication code called the Old Solar language which used to be a common language for all planets, but people lost the ability to speak it due to the influence of the Evil one. Lewis got inspired by the Tolkien’s Elven languages. However, he never spent enough time developing it so its grammar was not very well explained. The only rules readers can obtain are those about making plurals of nouns. Generally the expressions in Old Solar language are longer, more complicated, the proper form of the words is always needed and the speaker must be very careful in order not to offend somebody. So it is usually recommended to use longer sentences and not to go straight to the merit.

Tolkien was already focused on his two versions of the Elven languages and he used his knowledge of philology. From the beginning his intention was to alternate two meanings namely “Elf – friend” and “Friend of fortunate, Blessed friend, Bliss friend”. Both meaning, were related to Tolkien’s mythological world, because one could see the Elf friend as one loyal to the friendship with the High-elves and the second one as one loyal to the Valar. The couples in The Lost Road discuss the meanings and for example Alboin is especially interested in the origin of his name. They talk about misspelled forms and other names they are called by an accident. Alboin’s father Oswin explains that he named him after the son of the Lombard King and points out to the fact that the name Alboin is very old and that it means Elf-friend. The Old English form is Aelfwine. It is clear that Oswin is well educated in old languages and history because he gives a list of other famous people in history with the same name to show his son that he should be proud of being Alboin. He also mentions that he gave him the Latin version because it is easier and the old days of North are gone (The Lost Road 38). The characters of The Lost Road spend hours thinking of languages, they are all familiar with Latin, Greek but they prefer the old languages of the North.

Alboin follows his father’s tradition and calls his son Audoin. He chose also a Lombardic name, the Anglo Saxon Eadwine or, as it is known now, Edwin. It means a
friend of fortune, fate, and blessedness. It is revealed later that Elendil is the same as Elf-friend, and Herendil matches Friend of fortune. These names’ origins came from the Erresēan, the language Alboin invents mostly in his dream but he later changes the naming “the Erresēan” to the Númenórean.

Unfortunately, there are no dictionaries of the Old Solar language or the two versions of the elven languages. Both stories were written mainly in English and therefore readers can learn only some words. Lewis paid attention mainly to the names of the races living on the planets; they usually resembled humanoids with animal features such as whiskers, feathers, hair. Some of their sounds were very difficult to produce especially by humans. It was revealed later that the language of the race hrossa is the original Old Solar language.

Tolkien, on the other hand, wanted to develop an independent language. He worked systematically on its grammar, vocabulary and ways of pronunciation. To do so he used his character Alboin who spends most time thinking of meanings of the words that somehow enter his mind. He talks with his father about it and gradually comes up with the English versions, so for example sun is anor and moon means ithil, tree is galadh.

Tolkien later used these nouns in *The Lord of the Rings*. Minas Ithil and Minas Anor were two towers which guarded the Kingdom of Gondor and Caras Galadhon was the fortress of Galadriel and Celeborn.
CONCLUSION

The Lost Road and Out of the Silent Planet are extremely important to understand the later work of Tolkien and Lewis. The original innocent challenge gradually turned into a major occupation for the rest of their lives. Even though it took time for these books to achieve popularity they are now praised for the quality of what they contain.

Lewis expressed his newly discovered ideas, arguments and the religious point of view for the first time in a science-fiction genre which has not been used for such an important message before. Out of the Silent Planet carries a message about humans and their way of living and understanding the world. Lewis wanted to warn people not to behave so arrogantly. Dr Ransom became the superhero yet not in the traditional way like, for instance, Superman but he tried to wake up humanity, forgiveness and kindness on the Earth. Lewis’ two sequels followed the same pattern. The material and purely scientific world was showed as an evil one and the characters of scientists usually embodied the bad qualities such as cruelty, ignorance and aggression. Lewis intended to reveal how easy it is to implement new ideas and attitudes to people’s mind through books. He wanted to encourage them to long for great stories full of adventure.

In his writing Lewis used a combination of religion and cosmology, the study of the origin, evolution and fate of the universe which was very popular in the Elizabethan England. It made the book more available for non-believing readers who could have difficulties to accept Lewis’ religious style of writing as it happened with The Chronicles of Narnia for example where Lewis uses the allegories of God and Jesus in the character of Aslan. Lewis was otherwise very open in expressing his religious opinions. He is one of the most active religious writers of the 20th century and his books such as The Great Divorce are very complicated for the atheists.

Tolkien was excited about the challenge because he wanted to fill the gap between the modern contemporary world and the ancient times that he admired. The narrative device of time traveling was a perfect instrument to invent the circumstances he needed. Tolkien was interested in the Atlantis myth and he saw a perfect opportunity to deal with his nightmare, the green big wave that brought destruction to his mythological island Númenor as it once was with the city of Atlantis. Time travel was a very useful
as he believed it could help him to explain all the strange ideas his contemporary protagonists had.

The title of the book was very important as well, he used the motif of the long forgotten lost road repeatedly and it actually represented his own desire to go back to the time of the old northern myths. Nevertheless it is interesting that he decided to let his character travel only in their minds, focusing more on the talks between them.

Tolkien was already famous for his novel *The Hobbit or There and Back again* (1937) and he was supposed to write a sequel but instead of that he produced a book that revealed a lot from his life. One could also observe his growing ability to link the real and mythological worlds. Tolkien was well educated in history which he used very often and it helped him to stress the idea that he was writing about already existing yet forgotten world.

The challenge between Tolkien and Lewis resulted in two completely different books but both authors were already quite dependent on each other and their works only made the connection stronger. On one hand, Tolkien found somebody who could admire his legends and his ability to create a completely new world. Lewis supported him, he read his first attempts and he was ready to present his suggestions. On the other hand, Tolkien helped Lewis to restore his faith in Christianity. He influenced his understanding of legends. Both authors shared the same background; they grew up without parent’s love, so they had strong relationships with their brothers. When they met they found a perfect counterpart for their philosophical and also philological discussion. Lewis brought Tolkien to literature whereas Tolkien evoked the linguistic side in Lewis. Tolkien and Lewis formed a perfect friendship and their readers admire both of them for their creativity, imaginations and ability to catch reader’s attention until the very end of the books.

After Lewis’ death in 1963 Tolkien said that “so far I have felt the normal feelings of a man of my age – like an old tree that is losing all its leaves one by one: this feels like an axe-blow near the roots” (*JRR Tolkien A Biography* 321). Lewis’ death broke the remarkable friendship but its legacy is still an inspiration for many future writers.
5 Sources:


