

## Barfield Contra Lewis on Truth and Imagination

Before C. S. Lewis converted to Christianity, he engaged in a protracted debate with the Inklings philosopher Owen Barfield over the relation of the imagination to truth. In his autobiography, *Surprised By Joy*, Lewis dubbed this debate as he and Barfield's "Great War." Touching on points from epistemology, aesthetics, and metaphysics this "war" and its many battles provide rich soil for examination. Tonight I hope to explicate Barfield's position and Lewis's objections in order to demonstrate that Barfield is "victorious in the war," or, more specifically, that Lewis's objections fail to deny Barfield's primary thesis. I begin by examining Barfield's theory of imagination as found in *Poetic Diction*, which undergirds his arguments for imagination's both passive and active relationship toward truth. I then consider Lewis's objections to these two arguments. Finally, I return to Barfield's theory of imagination to illumine how and why Lewis's objections miss the mark.

### *A Theory of Imagination and its Arguments*

Owen Barfield's position, as primarily articulated in his book *Poetic Diction* and secondarily in his letters with Lewis,<sup>1</sup> holds that the imagination can both perceive and create truth via poetry. In order to begin making sense of this thesis, one must consider Barfield's theory of imagination. In a talk entitled "Lewis, Truth, and Imagination," Barfield himself defines a theory of imagination as an account of the relationship between imagination and truth.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I intentionally consider Barfield's thought without reference to his Anthroposophy.

<sup>2</sup> Barfield, "Lewis, Truth, and Imagination," 97.

From *Poetic Diction*<sup>3</sup> one can enumerate the basics of Barfield's theory of imagination:<sup>4</sup>

1. The poet sees Meaning through inspiration;
2. The poet creates meaning<sup>5</sup> through metaphor;
3. The meaning of the metaphor arouses the aesthetic imagination of a reader, allowing him or her to perceive previously unapprehended Meaning;
4. Meaning represents the true nature of reality;
5. Thus, the poet creates truth via metaphor, and the reader perceives truth via the arousal of imagination.

Before we more fully reconstruct his precise arguments, we ought first to understand his definitions. The key terms to be defined are imagination, truth, and reality. Let us begin with imagination.

Barfield defines imagination as a felt change of consciousness.<sup>6</sup> Though this is an opaque definition, we benefit by limiting ourselves to one type of "felt change of consciousness": perception. When one perceives an object, a discernable change occurs in one's consciousness. Consider, for example, someone approaching a tree from afar. From a distance one sees only a green speck, but as one walks forward this speck becomes more definite. The moment the mind realizes that the green speck is a tree there is a "felt change of

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter simply referred to as "*POETIC DICTION*."

<sup>4</sup> This overview comes primarily from Barfield, *POETIC DICTION*, 141.

<sup>5</sup> Note the difference between "Meaning" with a capital M and "meaning" with a lowercase m. The difference between these forms will be elucidated in the reconstruction of Barfield's argument for imagination's ability to create truth (see below, pages 5-7).

<sup>6</sup> Barfield, *POETIC DICTION*, 48.

consciousness.” Whenever pleasure accompanies this moment of realization, perception is connected with aesthetic imagination.<sup>7</sup>

Aesthetic imagination is the faculty that apprehends the outward form of an object as a shadow of inner meaning.<sup>8</sup> Returning to the tree example, the eyes perceive the form of a green speck, and the mind apprehends that this form represents “treeness.” Within *Poetic Diction*’s opening paragraph, Barfield states explicitly the foundational role aesthetic imagination plays in his consideration of poetic diction: poetic diction is involved fundamentally in arousing aesthetic imagination.<sup>9</sup> The arousal of aesthetic imagination is therefore the bright line for determining whether or not a given text is poetic, though this determination is somewhat subjective. Barfield quickly notes, however, that although personal experience provides the starting point for a theory of imagination, such subjectivity is not final.<sup>10</sup> Poetic diction has an objective aspect. It can give rise to knowledge, as one is able to establish objective similarities among phenomena.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, this active ability to recognize resemblances ultimately leads to wisdom. As Lionel Adey summarizes, insofar as poetry arouses aesthetic imagination, the reader grows in knowledge, wisdom and perceptive-ability.<sup>12</sup>

Barfield makes the connection between truth and imagination explicit when, in his letters to Lewis, he defines truth as reality taking the form of

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<sup>7</sup> Note the etymology of “aesthetic” from the Greek *aisthetikos* (sensitive, perceptive), which derives from *aisthanesthai* (to perceive, whether by the senses or by the mind). Indeed, Barfield plays with this distinction between perception by the mind and perception by the senses in his differentiation of apprehension and sight (see below, page 5).

<sup>8</sup> Barfield, *Rediscovery of Meaning*, 19.

<sup>9</sup> Barfield, *POETIC DICTION*, 41.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>12</sup> Adey, *C.S. Lewis’s “Great War,”* 20.

consciousness.<sup>13</sup> Regarding both imagination and truth, the consciousness of an individual is the primary object affected. Yet this definition of truth is as opaque as that of imagination above. In order to understand Barfield's definition of truth, therefore, we must first assess his conception of reality. Once we comprehend what form reality takes, we may more easily understand how this is truth.

For Barfield, reality can be either revealed or seen. As a result, reality takes the form of consciousness as either concepts or percepts. Concepts are the knowledge gained via aesthetic imagination, by which, to recall, one apprehends the form of an object as an image of inner meaning. Percepts, however, arise from pure sense-data. This distinction is directly analogous to the distinction between how the poet and the reader each perceives truth. As stated in the outline of Barfield's theory of imagination, the poet *sees* truth through inspiration, but the reader *perceives* truth via the arousal of aesthetic imagination. The sight of the poet is distinguished from the perception of the reader just as percepts differ from concepts. Poetic inspiration, in its purest form, occurs when reality enters the consciousness of the poet as a result of sense-data; thus poetic inspiration derives from percepts. Poetic diction permits reality to enter the consciousness of the reader as a result of aesthetic imagination; so poetic diction derives from concepts. This bifurcation of reality with respect to truth is, however, only one aspect of Barfield's definition of reality; the other concerns reality with respect to meaning.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 42.

Throughout *Poetic Diction* Barfield asserts that reality affects an individual's consciousness when the concrete, unified meaning of various phenomena is revealed. While today such phenomenal unity must be *revealed* to most people via concepts, Barfield contends that all ancient peoples (as opposed to a handful of poets) were able simply to *see* such unity via percepts.<sup>14</sup> This insight stems from Barfield's philology. He contends that words in ancient languages have a concrete, unified meaning that only subsequently produces abstract, differentiated ideas. To support this argument he provides the examples of the Latin term *spiritus* and the Greek term *pneuma*, since both have the tripartite meaning of wind, breath, and spirit. For the ancients, each word had its own peculiar, unified meaning of 'wind-breath-spiritness'. This unified meaning, which the ancients simply *saw*, best represents true reality for Barfield. Reality, therefore, can take the form of consciousness as either percept or concept, and a *true* concept or percept will represent such concrete, unified meaning.

These definitions form the premises upon which Barfield argues that the imagination can perceive truth. The poet can see truth via inspiration in a way similar to the ancients. The reader, by contrast, must have truth revealed by means of poetic diction. The most efficacious form of poetic diction in this regard is the metaphor. A poetic metaphor allows the reader to perceive truth because it restores the primal unity between abstract and concrete. For example, the first stanza of William Wordsworth's poem, *We Are Seven*, blurs the distinctions

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<sup>14</sup> This latter thesis is an attack on the "logomorphism" that Barfield found nearly ubiquitous in his contemporaries' thought. Logomorphism is "projecting post-logical thoughts back into a pre-logical age" (*POETIC DICTION*, 90). For the views of some of these contemporaries, see the *Preface to the Second Edition*.

between spirit and breath, allowing the permeated meaning of the two terms to be revealed to a reader: “*A Simple Child, / That lightly draws its breath, / And feels its life in every limb, / What should it know of death?*” To the extent that a poetic metaphor permits the imagination to perceive this interpenetration, true reality enters into conscious experience as a concept, and the imagination perceives truth.

Yet one may ask *how* a poetic metaphor allows the reader to perceive this primal unity. Here Barfield’s argument becomes slightly more nuanced. The perception available to moderns via metaphor is distinct from the perception available to the ancients. While ancient people *saw* the unified relationships between things, they did not *apprehend* them, strictly speaking.<sup>15</sup> Apprehension necessitates concepts, yet the ancients comprehended reality simply as percepts. Thus while the ancients easily saw the unified nature of reality, and we must have it revealed, we are nonetheless in a superior position. Perception via metaphor allows the reader to experience the permeation of meaning by reconnecting a term’s modern, narrow range of meanings with its older, extensive range of meaning. Whenever reality is revealed (or perhaps unveiled), our apprehension allows us to establish objective similarities among phenomena; such is Barfield’s understanding of knowledge. The recognition of similarities, and consequently knowledge, is thus dependent upon one’s ability to maintain distinctions between previously-viewed phenomena. The unified understanding of reality for the ancients *precludes* Barfield’s form of knowledge. The perception

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<sup>15</sup> Barfield, *POETIC DICTION*, 87.

available through poetic metaphor is therefore superior to that of ancient peoples because it connects percepts with concepts.

While C. S. Lewis concedes Barfield's argument for the truth-perceiving abilities of the imagination, he doubts the argument for the truth-creating ability of the imagination.<sup>16</sup> In order to appreciate why Lewis is skeptical, we must both reconstruct Barfield's second argument and assess Lewis's definitions of the key terms of the debate. I turn first to Barfield's second argument, and then examine Lewis's objections.

Barfield's argument for the imagination's ability to create truth is, in its basic form, quite simple. The argument may be reconstructed as follows:

1. Meaning is truth,
2. Insofar as a poet creates true meaning, he re-creates Meaning,
3. Thus, insofar as a poet creates true meaning, he re-creates truth.

Its complexity derives from Barfield's definition of creation and his distinction between meaning and Meaning (with a capital "M"). In order to investigate the validity of this argument, we must examine these particular points of interest.

Barfield distinguishes between creation as an aesthetic term and creation *ex nihilo*. The former is bringing further into consciousness something essentially unconscious; the latter is a power belonging to God alone. Thus, while the poet is involved in re-creation, strictly speaking, he can be a true creator from an aesthetic point of view. As demonstrated above, by creating a poetic metaphor, the poet arouses cognition of concepts. He does so by means of suggestion from

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<sup>16</sup> Adey, *C.S. Lewis's "Great War,"* 42.

percepts, which he perceived as a result of inspiration. To arouse concepts in a reader classifies the poet as an aesthetic creator of meaning. Yet Barfield must also demonstrate how the meaning that the poet is bringing further into consciousness is representative of the true nature of reality. Barfield's argument on this point relies on his distinction between meaning and Meaning (with a capital "M").

For Barfield, *meaning* is particular, while *Meaning* (with a capital "M") is universal. That is to say, meaning is the created associations of a word, while Meaning is the indivisible relationship between mind and nature.<sup>17</sup> The poet aesthetically creates new meaning via metaphor by recovering the lost, unified meanings of particular words or ideas. The (re)creation of meaning is the recovery of forgotten meaning. For example, when William Wordsworth uses the verb "ruining" with reference to a waterfall in the lines: *Ruining from the cliffs their deafening load / Tumbles,*<sup>18</sup> he is reconnecting the particular ideas of rushing, falling, and destroying, and thus recovering the term's original, unified meaning. Yet Barfield argues that beyond static recovery, this process yields positive gain through the creation of new meaning.<sup>19</sup>

Barfield's example of the word "ruin" exemplifies this thesis. Its etymological root, the Latin verb *ruo*, is today either translated as *rush* or *fall*, with both terms denoting a sense of swift, disastrous movement.<sup>20</sup> However, over the course of history, the verb began to entail not only the act of falling, but also

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<sup>17</sup> Barfield, *POETIC DICTION*, 179.

<sup>18</sup> A quote taken from his *Descriptive Sketches* (1815), lines 201-2; though these lines don't appear until an 1835 edition.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.



the consequent state of having fallen. The process of loss and recovery created new meaning for the verb “to ruin”—not just to fall, but to destroy. This new meaning, however, is not arbitrary. It allows for a clearer perception of the Meaning of *ruo* as a swift but also disastrous movement. The waterfall both falls from and, through erosion, destroys the cliff. By reconnecting these ideas of swift movement and disastrous effects, Wordsworth’s metaphor truly does create new meaning. Because this created meaning allows for clearer perception of Meaning, Wordsworth here also creates truth.

### *Lewis’s Objections*

Lewis’s disagreement with Barfield centers on his belief that no one can create truth, whether by imagination or any other means. This position is informed by Lewis’s own views on the natures of imagination and truth. Thus, in order to appreciate Lewis’s objections fully, one must analyze his views on imagination and truth. I turn first to Lewis’s conception of imagination.

Lewis’s contention that the imagination cannot create truth rests on his view of the imagination as static and non-assertive. In a letter to Barfield, Lewis adumbrates this understanding of imagination.<sup>21</sup> Lewis states that the exercise of the imagination is necessary only to know meaning. Implicit in this statement is Lewis’s belief that the imagination is a state.<sup>22</sup> Lewis also implies that the imagination is non-assertive, that is, its products are neither true nor false as

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<sup>21</sup> Adey, *C.S. Lewis’s “Great War,”* 42-43.

<sup>22</sup> Adey cites examples of Lewis’s use of prepositions when describing imagination: He is “in,” a state, “during” a time, “after” which he “emerges” (76). These quoted prepositions are taken from various other letters to Barfield over the course of the Great War.

such.<sup>23</sup> Given this view of imagination, Lewis contends that the imagination can at best create meaning, but never truth.<sup>24</sup> This led to Lewis's famous declaration that reason is the vehicle of truth, imagination of meaning.<sup>25</sup>

Lewis's objection to imagination's active relation to truth also rests on his understanding of truth. Lewis denies<sup>26</sup> Barfield's belief in truth beyond true assertions (I wish to pause shortly to note that I use the verb "denies" as a nod to Barfield and Lewis's habit of writing either "*Credo*" or "*Nego*" next to one another's claims—a fact I learned from examining their personal correspondences, an experience do solely to the generous people at the C. S. Lewis and Friends Collection at Taylor University. To return to the point however) Lewis denies<sup>27</sup> Barfield's belief in truth beyond true assertions because, for Lewis, truth is only manifest in the internal consistency and experimental verifiability of an assertion.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Peter Schakel argues that Lewis held objective truth only to be found in concrete facts, which are received by reason rather than the imagination.<sup>29</sup> Lewis maintains that truth is a static, consistent body of facts and judgments. Therefore, only facts (percepts or concepts) are "true", while the process of imagining is at best "meaningful." This view of truth supports Lewis's conception of knowledge as merely one's sensory experiences

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<sup>23</sup> Adey, *C.S. Lewis's "Great War,"* 42.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>25</sup> The direct quote, "reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning," comes from the essay, "Bluspels and Flalansferes: A Semantic Nightmare" in *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* on page 265.

<sup>26</sup> This verb is precisely used. In their personal correspondances, which I was able to examine thanks to the generous people at the C. S. Lewis and Friends Collection at Taylor University, Barfield and Lewis would write either "*Credo*" or "*Nego*" next to one another's claims.

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<sup>28</sup> Adey, *C.S. Lewis's "Great War,"* 25.

<sup>29</sup> Schakel, *Reason and Imagination*, 111.

in systematized form.<sup>30</sup> For Lewis, knowledge is a *state*, while, for Barfield, it is the *activity* of recognizing unity. These conceptions of truth and knowledge reveal Lewis's pre-conversion materialistic rationalism.<sup>31</sup> This rationalism, as Stephen Thorson has shown, barred Lewis from believing that imaginative experiences, poetic or otherwise, could create new knowledge of truth.<sup>32</sup> Schakel argues that this tension between reason and imagination in Lewis's epistemology continues well after his conversion precisely because of his static, logocentric<sup>33</sup> conception of truth.<sup>34</sup>

Lewis's differing views of truth and imagination inform his objections to Barfield's position. Schakel succinctly sums up Lewis's differences with Barfield as the belief that "reality" is superior to "meaning" because reality objectively exists, and meaning is only a subjective reflection of the "real." Reason ranks above imagination because the former deals with concrete facts and the latter only with imaginative meaning.<sup>35</sup> This position contrasts with Barfield's view that the subjective individual to some extent determines the nature of his experienced phenomena. In Lewis's mind, if Barfield argues that truth can be created, then Barfield must conceive of reality as subjective; Lewis adamantly rejects the subjectivity of reality; therefore, truth can in no way be created.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 90-91.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>32</sup> Thorson, "Knowledge," 91.

<sup>33</sup> Logocentric here refers to Lewis's strict definition of truth as ordered reason, and thus it is a definition focused purely on the relationship between *kosmos* and *logos*.

<sup>34</sup> Schakel, *Reason and Imagination*, 108.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 124-125.

<sup>36</sup> Thorson, "Knowledge," 109.

This practical syllogism is complicated, however, because Lewis's stance with respect to subjectivity evolved over time. For example, Peter Schakel considers Lewis's different approaches to the act of reading in two of his critical works—"The Personal Heresy" and the later *An Experiment in Criticism*. In the earlier work, Lewis held an objective, depersonalized approach to reading.<sup>37</sup> In the later work, however, he perceives the act of reading as intellectual interaction between an author's words and a reader's response to them.<sup>38</sup> This positive view of the interchange between the objective meaning of the author and the subjective response of the reader perhaps displays influence of Barfield's thought.

The clearest example of Lewis's evolution is found in *The Abolition of Man*. While Lewis does not directly address the relation between imagination and truth, he does address the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity—the question at the heart of Lewis and Barfield's debate.<sup>39</sup> In this 1943 work, nearly 20 years after the "Great War," Lewis critiques the rationality of the modern world, which bases truth or falsity on subjective emotions. This criticism yet again reveals the tension between subjectivity and objectivity that Schakel observes throughout Lewis's corpus.<sup>40</sup> Lewis's conception of the *Tao*, however, suggests a partial engagement with Barfield's view of the synthesis of subjectivity and objectivity.

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<sup>37</sup> Schakel, *Reason and Imagination*, 164.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>39</sup> Adey, *C.S. Lewis's "Great War"*, 76.

<sup>40</sup> Schakel, *Reason and Imagination*, 108.

For Barfield, truth is the synthesis of subjective mind and objective nature from the point of view of reason, and likewise Meaning from the point of view of imagination. Lewis's conception of the *Tao* is similarly the synthesis of subjective sentiments and objective value from the point of view of ethics. Schakel's discernment of tension can be seen when Lewis reminds the reader that emotions are necessarily a-logical.<sup>41</sup> Barfield's influence is also seen, however, as Lewis immediately adds that emotions can be reasonable, if they respond in accordance with Reason.<sup>42</sup> Insofar as Lewis allows subjective sentiments to rank equal with objective facts, Barfield's position is in play. These indications that Lewis may have recognized the strength of Barfield's position do not, however, override the fact that Lewis remained fundamentally an objectivist to the end.

To this point, let us return to *The Abolition of Man* and examine Lewis's attack on the "Green Book." Lewis ardently critiques the Green Book's claim that anyone who says "this waterfall is sublime" is actually saying "I have sublime feelings about the waterfall." Lewis insists that the waterfall is sublime regardless of anyone's perception of it as such. The view of "Gaius" and "Titius,"<sup>43</sup> which says that each sentence containing a predicate of value is actually a statement about the emotional state of the speaker, represents precisely the modern trend toward subjectivism that Lewis traces in Barfield's position. His staunch critique of such a position, in a book published in 1943 no less,

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<sup>41</sup> The term "a-logical" is deliberate. The standard, philosophical division between logical and illogical includes the class of a-logical things, which are utterly opposed to the logical class. Illogical things are therefore lacking logical ordering, but this lack depends on them essentially being such that they could be logical. A-logical things, by contrast, can never be logical.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>43</sup> These are the authors of the "Green Book," who Lewis never names explicitly, and he consistently refers to the two authors by these pseudonyms. Scholars have since confirmed that the "Green Book" is in fact *The Control of Language: A critical approach to reading and writing*, by Alex King and Martin Ketley.

reveals that Lewis remained an objectivist even post-conversion. The final question thus arises: Barfield contra Lewis, who's right? I argue that Lewis has misinterpreted Barfield's position as it appears in *Poetic Diction*. Which is not to say that his interpretation of Barfield's position was not correct at the specific point in the Great Debate when articulated. Indeed, Lewis's arguments no doubt helped form Barfield's position in *Poetic Diction*. Nonetheless, as articulated, Lewis's objections fail to meet Barfield's position properly, as it lies in a synthesis of Lewis's objectivist views and the subjectivist views that Lewis opposes.

### ***Barfield's Synthesis***

In the outline of Barfield's theory of imagination articulated above, the lynchpin is the claim that Meaning represents the true nature of reality. In order to illumine Barfield's theory of imagination fully, we must further examine this thesis. According to Barfield, Meaning reveals reality because it is objective reality interacting with both subjective reason and imagination. Contrary to Lewis, reason and imagination are here equal, as both are necessary to know and to create meaning. For knowledge of meaning, imagination is needed to *see* meaning, while reason is needed to *apprehend* meaning.<sup>44</sup> For the creation of meaning, both are needed to transmit meaning via poetic metaphor.<sup>45</sup> Thus, while Lewis supposed both that reason was superior to imagination and that Barfield

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<sup>44</sup> See page 5 above on Barfield's distinction between seeing and apprehension.

<sup>45</sup> Barfield, *POETIC DICTION*, 178.

held imagination superior to reason, Barfield's theory of imagination actually places imagination *equal* to reason.

To understand *why* Barfield sees imagination and reason as equal, one must analyze his conception of polarity. Shirley Sugarman, a student of Barfield's, describes his theory of polarity as the interdependence and permeation of opposite forces that have one source.<sup>46</sup> Imagination and reason are two opposite forces, but they are opposite forces on a unitary process, and are thus also, to some extent, one and the same thing. To explicate this enigmatic concept, I turn to an external example.

Barfield's theory conceptually echoes Socrates' understanding of opposites as presented in the *Phaedo*. On his deathbed, Socrates describes opposites as having one source or head (60b). Later in the discussion, Socrates distinguishes between "concrete opposites" and "essential opposites." The former is a class of opposites in which opposites are generated out of their opposites (70e). Socrates gives the example of smallness and largeness. Socrates points out, "when anything becomes greater it must inevitably have been smaller and then have become greater" (70e). The opposites of the latter class, however, are never generated into or out of one another (103c). These opposites are "the abstract concept[s] of an opposite" and "those very opposites the immanence of which gives the [concrete opposites] their names" (103b).<sup>47</sup> Under this hermeneutic, the

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<sup>46</sup> Sugarman, "BARSPECS," 75.

<sup>47</sup> All translations of Plato are by Fowler.

opposites of Barfield's theory of polarity are best understood as concrete opposites, that is, they are opposites generated out of their opposite.

This view of the relation between imagination and reason is seen most clearly in *Poetic Diction's* chapter on "The Poet." Here Barfield argues that the poet cannot simultaneously be creator and judge of his own work. Each requires the respective mood of creation and mood of appreciation, which are opposite poles in the unitary process of creating meaning—the one giving rise to the other and vice-versa.<sup>48</sup> Thus, in order to create meaning, and consequently to create truth, the poet must possess and use both imagination and reason, his consciousness oscillating between the two as he deliberates over each phrase.<sup>49</sup>

Barfield's theories of imagination and polarity reveal that Barfield's claim that the poet creates truth does *not* equal the claim that reality is purely subjective. Barfield's position is a much more nuanced account of the relationship between mind and nature that constitutes reality. Reality is neither mere objective nature nor is it mere subjective mind. It is, however, the interpenetration of these concrete opposites. The mind itself bars human consciousness from ever purely understanding this interpenetration, so that one can see it more clearly, but never perfectly (as this entire lecture has shown). One can only understand reality through a particular lens. Thus, from the point of view of imagination, reality is understood as Meaning, while from the point of view of reason, it is understood as truth. This is how and why Barfield

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<sup>48</sup> Barfield, *POETIC DICTION*, 107-108.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.



constantly, but implicitly, equates Meaning with truth. This mirror imaging of truth is how poetry can both perceive and create truth: the meaning it creates is a true reflection of Meaning, and the truth it perceives is a true reflection of Truth.

While Lewis does positively engage with Barfield's position, he does so only implicitly and slightly. The ethical truth of the *Tao* arises from the synthesis of subjective sentiments and objective value, but the aesthetic truth of the waterfall is found purely in objective nature, regardless of subjective emotions. This view of truth is precisely the static, logocentric view he held in the "Great War." The extent to which Lewis adopted views similar to Barfield's is therefore beyond our grasp. In order to weigh their positions in the "war," therefore, we are left to consider whether or not Lewis's objections hold. Though Lewis thought that Barfield held imagination as superior to reason, Barfield's theory of imagination places imagination *equal* to reason. Barfield's claim that the poet creates truth is *not* a claim that reality is purely subjective. Given a proper understanding of his position in *Poetic Diction*, we see that Lewis's objections miss the mark. As a result Barfield's arguments and position should be held as superior.

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