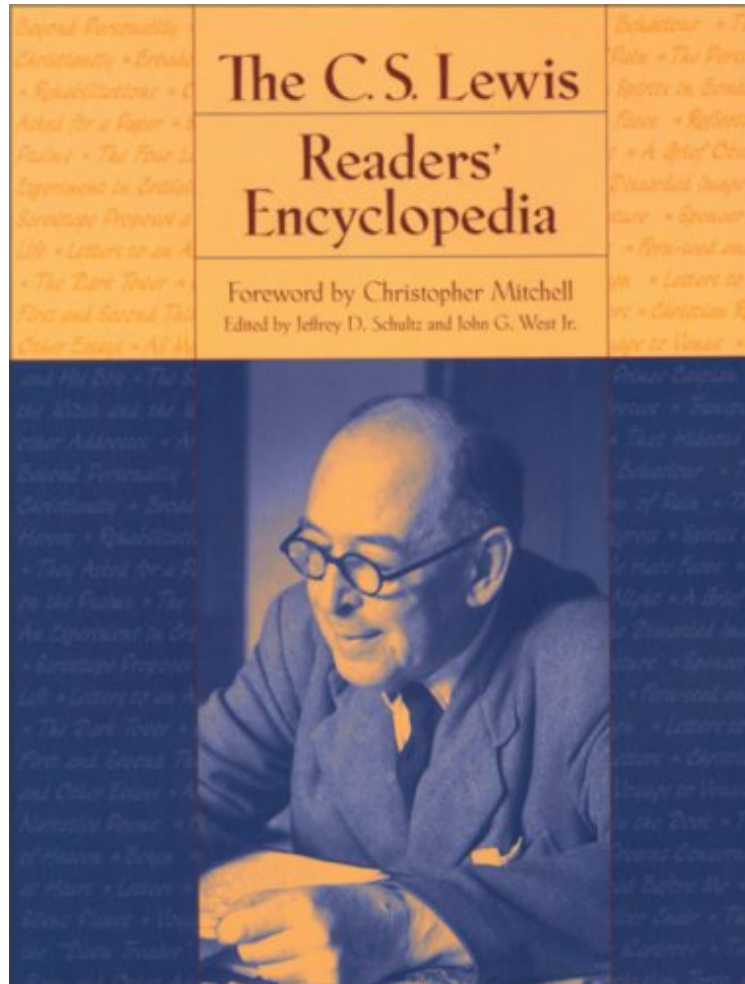


[FREE] The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia

## The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia

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**From Zondervan : The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Raymond I. Smithjrgood accumulations of a large field of info'.38 of 38 people found the following review helpful. The Lewis AbecedariumBy E. T. VealC. S. Lewis would doubtless have scoffed at the idea of a reference book about himself, just as he disapproved of university courses devoted to modern authors on the sensible ground that "helps" to reading them are not needed and come between the writer and his audience.Nonetheless, students and "fans" of the great Christian apologist and literary scholar now are offered two thick compendia on his life and work. Each has its virtues and faults, and both are worthwhile investments - though not a substitute for the straight, unfiltered Lewis.The "Readers' Encyclopedia", reviewed here, contains articles by 44 contributors, many of them very prominent in the world of C. S. Lewis studies. The one striking absentee is Walter Hooper, Lewis' semi-official literary executor and solo author of the rival work, "C. S. Lewis:

Companion and Guide". This omission is, as the saying goes, not accidental. In more than 400 pages, consisting of a 57-page biography followed by topical entries, the Encyclopedia covers the full scope of Lewis' life, work and thought. The "work" draws the greatest attention. There are articles not only on the major books but also on virtually all of Lewis' shorter pieces, including even letters to newspapers. In addition to summarizing content, most of the contributors consider its significance, respond to the views of critics or advance criticisms of their own. They may admire their subject, but this volume is not the production of a fan club. Weighing the Encyclopedia against the Companion, the latter is heavier (almost twice as many pages), but the former is wider in scope, with more attention to CSL's career as a scholar and more systematic coverage of his entire body of work. It makes room by treating topics more succinctly. Epitomes are shorter, there is less biographical detail, and quotations from the Lewis canon are less extensive. Unfortunately, one space saving idea was the omission of an index, the need for which is distinctly not obviated by putting articles into alphabetical order. Often both works are excellent, though many times in different ways. The Companion's life of CSL's close friend Owen Barfield tells much about the man but is rather imprecise on his ideas and how they influenced Lewis. The Encyclopedia's fine article fills those gaps. Elsewhere the Encyclopedia is clearly superior. The Companion's discussions of "An Experiment in Criticism" and "The Personal Heresy" leave out the context in which Lewis developed his critical theories. The Encyclopedia gives him a place in the debates occasioned by the "New Criticism". The Companion has its innings, too. Its introductory biography is fuller and less given to unsupported psychological speculations. The Encyclopedia writer, curiously, accepts the conjectures of the anti-Christian polemicist A. N. Wilson on major issues (e. g., Lewis's relationship with Mrs. Moore and the impact of his debate with Professor Anscombe), even while pointing out that Wilson is unreliable in detail and malicious in intent. There are spots, inevitably, where both volumes are weak. Neither describes the substance of Professor G. E. M. Anscombe's famous critique of Chapter III of "Miracles" or how Lewis amended the text to answer her criticisms. Those matters are surely of more lasting import than whether Lewis did or did not feel "defeated" after debating Anscombe. They can also fail in different ways on the same topic. The Encyclopedia's article on "The Dark Tower", the now controversial novel fragment published after Lewis's death, is a one-sided diatribe on behalf of the theory that the work is a forgery. The Companion naturally does not allude to that allegation (as Walter Hooper is the accused forger), and it also says virtually nothing useful about the story. In fact, the uninspired plot summary is marked by omissions and mistakes. (The writer does not realize, for instance, that "Michael" is the given name of the protagonist, not of his Othertime double.) Finally, each volume has its (very small) share of this-can't-be-real lapses. An Encyclopedia article begins, "C. S. Lewis followed traditional theological thinking of his time in presuming the Holy Spirit was the third person of the Trinity." What a ripe example of the liberal historicizing that CSL so persistently combated! But it is probably a more serious matter that the Companion barely notices "The Allegory of Love", Lewis's pioneering work on medieval love poetry that laid the foundation of his academic reputation. But let me pause here. It is easy - and an occasion of intellectual sin - to scrutinize every inch of a mighty edifice in search of blemishes. Overall, the Encyclopedia is a capacious and well-wrought work. It may not be a work that C. S. Lewis would have desired anyone to undertake, but I do not think that he can be displeased with the quality of the result. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very Versatile By Anonymous The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia is really useful. It covers a broad range of topics that relate to Lewis' work. I used it for biographical and theological background on *The Great Divorce*. The only two features that I didn't like were the introductory biography of Lewis, which was not very focused, and the encyclopedia entry on Lewis, which was basically a reminiscence.

Thirty-five years after his death, Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) only continues to grow in popularity among Christian and secular readers alike. Numerous books about Lewis and his writing have been published. Until now, however, none has offered an exhaustive treatment of his works. In one definitive volume, *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia* addresses all of Lewis's writings as well as the major themes of his work and life. This masterful book, with more than 50 photographs, gives you a thorough grasp of C. S. Lewis--the man, the thinker, and the writer. Here at last, for fan, scholar, and critic alike, is a complete guide to Lewis's 52 published books, 153 essays, and numerous miscellaneous writings, including prefaces, letters, book reviews, and poems. *The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia* contains - a biography that examines Lewis as a man of his time and his development as a thinker - a discussion of each of his works - discussions of the topics Lewis dealt with -- people, places, and ideas, scores of which have never before been addressed - a timeline of Lewis's life and writings - extensive cross-referencing throughout - a resource guide.