

ADDRESSING CONCRETE HUMAN EXPERIENCE: C.S. LEWIS'S THEOLOGY OF LANGUAGE AS AN INSPIRATION FOR TODAY¹

ThLic. Bc. Barbora ŠmejdoVá, Ph.D.
Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University

<https://doi.org/10.47433/tv.xcviiiin9-12.42>

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to introduce the basic starting points of C.S. Lewis's theology of language and offer a possible interconnection of his insights in order to sketch the background on which we can search for the language of theology that would be comprehensible and approachable today. Starting with the introduction of Lewis's understanding of metaphor in line with the contemporary findings of cognitive linguistics, the paper argues for the view of the figurative nature of human language. In the following chapters, it shows how such a view is interconnected with Lewis's approach towards myth and the doctrine of the Incarnation to suggest that the contemporary language of theology should be based on the interconnectedness between the divine and natural order, body and spirit, concrete action and abstraction.

Keywords: C.S. Lewis; metaphor; myth; incarnation; language; dialogue.

Introduction

The ability of language to communicate truth not only about theological themes but about reality as such is a red thread of C.S. Lewis's work. On the one hand, the author has to face the fact that truth is fully ungraspable, and that language reveals the meaning while hiding it at the same time. On the other hand, Lewis never gives up the struggle to grow into truth and find the most appropriate means of expressing it in the best way he could in his time and place. The context of his work is not too different from the one in which we live now. In Lewis's life during the first and second world wars, the language was frequently misused

¹ The article is part of the grant project "Theological Anthropology in Ecumenical Perspective", UNCE No. 204052 (HUM/012).