

# Contemporaneity, Religious Instruction and Music in Dryden’s “A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day” and C.S. Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia*\*

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## Summary

In English literature, we sometimes find biblical messages that have been adapted to the contemporary reader, and may be interpreted as veiled religious instructions such as John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The present study delves into this idea by presenting and comparing John Dryden’s neoclassical poem, “A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day”, with C.S. Lewis’s fantasy heptalogy, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Both texts contain the Christian doctrine of faith and morals and fulfil the requirements for the Catholic catechism, given their respective historic and cultural context. The way that Dryden and Lewis incorporate music in their texts follows a common pattern that serves as a unifying factor for this structured analysis, and justifies a comparative study.

## Opsomming

In die Engelse literatuur vind ons soms Bybelse boodskappe wat vir die hedendaagse leser aangepas is, en geïnterpreteer kan word as bedekte godsdienstige instruksies soos John Bunyan se *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Die huidige studie ondersoek hierdie idee deur John Dryden se neoklassieke gedig, “A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day”, aan te bied en te vergelyk met C.S. Lewis se fantasie-heptalogie, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Albei tekste bevat die Christelike geloofsleer en sedes en voldoen aan die vereistes vir Katolieke kategismus, gegewe hul onderskeie historiese en kulturele konteks. Die manier waarop Dryden en Lewis musiek in hul tekste inkorporeer, volg ’n algemene patroon wat as ’n samebindende faktor vir hierdie gestruktureerde analise dien, en ’n vergelykende studie regverdig.

## Introduction

Literature often presents music as a melody of the soul, capable of touching the deepest depths of our spirit, the attunement which elevates us to spaces where, thanks to the works of great poets and writers such as John Dryden and C.S. Lewis, believers can sense a heavenly presence. In the present

technological age, reading Dryden's "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day" (1687)<sup>1</sup> – a poem made up of eight irregular stanzas of between four and fifteen lines each – or Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956)<sup>2</sup> – a fantasy heptalogy – can feel like being transposed into the worlds of talented writers whose works have contributed to our understanding of the creation of the universe as a musical piece carefully conducted by a musical director to whom they both pay homage: the Christian God.

The present article consists of a comparative analysis of two works of English literature that can be interpreted as veiled religious instruction, wherein these texts' implicit Christian doctrine of faith and morals fulfils the requirements for the pastoral intention of a Catholic catechism within the authors' respective cultural-historical contexts. The article begins with a catechetical contextualisation of the selected texts; it then shows how the use of music in the texts follows a similar pattern, which gives way to a structured analysis by which I will compare the works and their biblical passages. I will conclude that, in the two texts, both Dryden and Lewis reveal part of the Christian message to their readers and fulfil the catechumenal work that one would expect to find in the catechisms of their respective times.

### **"A Song for St. Cecilia's Day" and *The Chronicles of Narnia* in the Context of Catechism**

Pope John Paul II, in response to a request of the Extraordinary Assembly of Bishops of 1985, in which the elaboration of the catechism was proposed, explains that it is a "compendium of all Catholic doctrine, both of faith and morals" (*vatican.va*), "which contains the fundamental Christian truths formulated in a way that facilitates their understanding" (Ratzinger 2005). Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (1994) – later Pope Benedict XVI – adds that "Catechism is meant to assist theology" and "recognize that its paramount task is the transmission of knowledge of the faith. For all believers, [...] (catechism) is designed to help them know their faith better, to live it more profoundly and to hand it on with firmer conviction" (7). Generally speaking, these definitions capture what a person of the twenty-first century may understand by the "Catholic catechism". Of course, the two works selected for this study cannot be presented as twenty-first century catechisms. Rather, the present study uses the idea of a Catholic compendium of faith and morals, placing this within the specific cultural-historical context in which the selected texts were written and published.

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1. Hereafter referred to as "A Song".

2. Hereafter referred to as *The Chronicles*.

In their analysis of the Synod Documents of 1985, Matos and Pedrosa (1999) present an interesting list of contents that refers to forms of catechism from the seventeenth until the twentieth century. They explain how, during this period, catechism used abstract language, deductive method, and magisterial pedagogy to instruct children and young people in the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith. They also point out how, despite the division of the Church in the sixteenth century, the Catholic world continued to experience a union of the religious and the socio-political, recognising, however, the numerous methodological, linguistic and anthropological limitations that still exist in the institution of the catechism. However, these obstacles are compensated for by a “family and social environment still loaded with a certain educational-religious impregnation” (*mercaba.org*). William Howard Dannenmaier states that during the Restoration period, “catechisms were developed for use in the church, home and school, and were used by all major religious factions in England – Catholic, Anglican, and Puritan” (1989: v). In Elizabethan England, Diego de Ledesma’s *Doctrina Cristiana*<sup>3</sup> (1567-1571) concerns the need to learn about the catechetical theme (Resines 1997: 251). To summarise, here Ledesma presents a way to teach the Christian doctrine to students and young people, submits that Christian doctrine originates in Spain, and explains how to move towards God while effecting the doctrine. Importantly for our purposes, he then states that music may be used for the purpose of disseminating the doctrine among street kids: “*Proemio della Dottrina christiana per poter cantare*” (251). As we will see, that catechism – vaguely defined at the time – could be learnt through the use of music is something that Dryden might have taken to heart. Ledesma’s catechism then proposes that the Christian doctrine might be taught through dialogue between master and disciple and ends with a description of how to pray to God in Heaven (251).

In the second half of the seventeenth century, John Dryden – England’s first Poet Laureate and one of its most influential literary figures – wrote on topics spanning religion, politics, philosophy and art. In 1682, his poem “*Religio Laici*” defends the precepts of the Anglican Church against the Roman Church and deism (Latt & Monk 1976: 6, 86), but despite living in a troubled time for Catholics, Dryden soon changed his position in favour of Rome. The year 1685 marked his complete conversion to Catholicism (Latt & Monk 1976: 7). Two years later, James II, England’s last Catholic King, ordered the first translation of a Catechism into English. That same year, Dryden published both “*The Hind and the Panther: A Poem*” – to commemorate his conversion to Catholicism – and “*A Song*”. This, then, is the cultural-historical context in which we must situate our chosen poem and its author.

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3. “[The] primitive text is a manuscript, concerned with other catechetical documents” (Resines 1997: 274) translated into English in 1623 (Dannenmaier 1989: 29).

Matos and Pedrosa (1999) affirm that the sociocultural changes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries make traditional catechisms insufficient manuals for the Christian community (*mercaba.org*). During the Second Vatican Council, it was decided that the most convenient suggestion should be to create local catechisms for different episcopal conferences (Alberigo 2015: 112-119). It was around this time that *The Chronicles* – the second of the works selected for this comparative study – by C.S. Lewis was published.

Lewis was born into a Protestant family in Belfast, and his mother played a fundamental role in his initiation into the Christian belief. After her death, Lewis abandoned the faith. In 1931, after a long talk with his Catholic friend J.R.R. Tolkien, Lewis acknowledged that he had undergone a conversion from simple theism to Christianity (Duriez 2002: 210). Almost two decades later, and as an active and recognised Christian, Lewis wrote *The Chronicles*. His religious sentiment was also expressed in his essay *Mere Christianity*, published in 1952. In Lewis's time, the Church Catechism in England dealt with "the Baptismal Covenant, the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Christian Sacraments, and contains twenty-five questions and answers" (Packer 1961: 112). In 1958, the Church of England appointed the Archbishop's Commission to revise the catechism. *The Chronicles* had already been written by then, but the reasons that led to the catechism review are relevant for understanding the role of the *Narnia* saga when it was published. Catechesis seemed to also be in play in *Mere Christianity*, which presents a common basis for Christian teaching in the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> The Commission's aim was to "consider the revision of the Church Catechism in order that its scope may be enlarged and its language more suitable for present conditions" (Packer 1961: 107). Packer adds that "the *second* of these tasks was undoubtedly practical politics. It was simply a matter of eliminating archaisms and anachronisms, of seeing that all the wording of the new Catechism was in line with contemporary speech, and that all references to social and cultural matters were made in up-to-date terms" (107). *The Chronicles* heptalogy satisfies these criteria, written with a mind to accessibility both of reading and understanding its – deeply Christian – topics. On the other hand, the first task, that a "Catechism should limit itself to Christian essentials as professed and understood by the Church which is to use it" (110), lends itself less to the reading of *Narnia* as a strict catechism, since Lewis's work is obviously independent of the Church.

As Aranda (1993) points out, there are at least two possible perspectives on the readings of the catechism: one that focuses on content and the other on its nature. Looking at content, the analysis will tend primarily to discern and judge the elements of theological criticism and look at how the book is

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4. Lewis re-explained the Christian faith to a modern audience during the Second World War through some talks on BBC radio, later edited as *Mere Christianity*.

structured. However, attending to the nature of the catechism will tend to its pastoral intentionality and status as a magisterial document (415). Aranda adds that the catechism of the Catholic Church, although a theological text, is not a manual for theology or religious instruction, but rather a text that presents essential and fundamental truths of the Catholic faith and morals, formulated in the most clear and synthetic way (417) and must thus be aligned with the Sacred Scripture, Apostolic Tradition and the ecclesiastical Magisterium. This position forms the starting point for the present analysis. The meaning of the many biblical images that appear in “A Song” and *The Chronicles* should not differ excessively from the content of the relevant biblical passages, although Dryden and Lewis’s works were adapted to their time and readers – the general public of the seventeenth century and the children of the twentieth century, respectively – to be useful as veiled catechisms.

John Dryden wrote “A Song” in 1687, on the occasion of the celebration of Saint Cecilia’s Day, which took place “every November 22 from 1683 to 1703 and sponsored by the London Musical Society” (Trammel 2003: 1). In the poem, Dryden playfully experiments with sound and form as musical resources concomitant to lyrical writing. With typical seventeenth century ingenuity, he invokes the role of music in the creation and dissolution of his universe, suggesting that if music has given birth to humanity, then humanity has been given music. To understand the use of musical instruments in the poem, Roger Bray starts by explaining how in *Timaeus* (360 B.C.), Plato presents his own view about the creation and structure of the universe, in which proportions and numbers based on Pythagoras’ theories are key elements for understanding Creation. Bray shows how Dryden uses Pythagoras’ tetractys when he makes ten references to instruments, and then divides them to effect (1997: 319-320). Although we are aware that the “St. Cecilia celebration was itself a spectacle, and judging from most of its productions, of no more religious elevation than poetic” (Levine 1965: 50), the present analysis will explore the poem’s religious dimension as a possible source of catechetical value. In Dryden’s time, a catechism was expected to use abstract language to describe the creation of the universe and represent human emotions while deductively reaching the conclusion that God controls the beginning and end of everything. Dryden complies with these premises and lets his poem open with the process of creation of the universe, in which divine harmony is the creator of life (lines 1-2), to later present the human being as the absolute end of creation (line 15). Dryden makes no reference to the natural or animal world in his poem, favouring, instead, an entirely anthropocentric vision. The poet also incorporates Saint Cecilia as an intermediate between God and human (lines 51-52). God presents himself as an inaccessible entity (lines 57-60), close to Old Testament paradigms: hierarchical, omnipotent and omniscient.

*The Chronicles* may similarly function as a complement to the catechism, helping the child reader of the twentieth century to understand Christian concepts. Lewis's saga – which was conceived in the wake of the Second World War and constructed to guide children through the principal tenets of Christian belief in a bleak, incipiently secular period – was written and published at a time of transition, in which questions arose as to what a catechism should be. For this reason, Lewis is committed to writing in a language that is easy to understand and interpret. He starts from particular premises, using inductive reasoning about God, and provides examples of God's close way of being and acting, which need no intermediaries (Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* [1950]2015: 136). Lewis comes to the general conclusion that God is Truth, and Hope for life after death (Lewis, *The Last Battle* [1956]2015: 221). When *Narnia's* Aslan, the talking lion, begins to chant, his voice gives life to beings and elements of the new world, with the exception of the human being, even granting rationality and language to animals (Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* [1955]2015: 134-135). As we can see, Lewis is not only not satisfied with personifying animals and plants, endowing them with spirituality, but he takes a figure from the animal kingdom – the lion – to represent the Christian God, thus pivoting towards an ecocentric vision of the world. The human and animal characters that parade through the work can all access Aslan, who represents a God closer to the one we find in the New Testament, rather than the Old Testament.

Despite “A Song” and *The Chronicles* belonging to very different literary genres, the two works share a strictly biblical chronological framework, taking the Book of Genesis<sup>5</sup> as starting point and the Book of Revelation – the Apocalypse of John<sup>6</sup> – as the end. Dryden presents the creation myth in the first stanza and the end of the world in the final stanza. Lewis, for his part, presents the creation myth in the first book of *The Chronicles* – *The Magician's Nephew* – to close with the end of the world in the last book, fittingly called *The Last Battle*. It is scarcely surprising that texts with an avowedly Christian orientation should begin with the creation and end with the apocalypse, the framing moments of the Christian narrative. What makes these authors stand out in this tradition and warrant a comparative analysis is their use of music to achieve catechumenal content in these literary texts. I shall therefore now turn to demonstrate to what extent music – or its absence – can be interpreted as a vehicle for interpreting the Christian faith in these texts.

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5. Hereafter referred to as Genesis.

6. Hereafter referred to as Apocalypse.

## The Use of Music as a Common Pattern for a Comparative Literary Analysis

As Fubini (1976) explains, there are two main positions by which to relate to the use of music in literature.<sup>7</sup> The first is supported by those rhetoricians of music who reject the union of music and literature on the basis that music cannot be understood as a language and lacks expression and meaning. The second position defends the expressive and denotative capacity (37) of music, with poetry, especially, taken to enhance the semantic level of the two art forms. In line with this second position, Perpiña (2013) argues that music has played a transcendent role since the beginning of human history, both in mythology and archaeology. Literature is, then, to a certain extent, a type of music that represents a story outside itself to satisfy a structural pattern on its own, in which “the objects of representation have become things not immediately perceptible by the senses” (11). Musical instruments, on the other hand, have “for their main concern the patterns themselves” (11). Taking certain biblical passages (*Biblia de Jerusalén*, Ez. 1: 24, 3: 12, 10:5, or Is. 6: 3) as examples, Perpiña points out that the influence of these civilisations [Babylonian, Chaldean and Persian] on the Old Testament at the time of configuring a mobile and sonorous cosmos in which celestial beings acquire for the first time a sonorous description of the Hebraic religion (2013: 1850) is unquestionable. Perpiña adds that the breakthrough of music as a heavenly element, in both images and text, came at the end of the sixteenth century and cemented itself in the culture throughout the seventeenth century, and by then, Saint Cecilia had already been officially appointed patron saint of sacred music through the Bull *Ratione Congruit* (1585) and musical activity held a position of great importance in the ecclesiastical liturgy (1859-1860).

The seventeenth was also John Dryden’s century. Dominating English literary life in the Restoration period, he was undoubtedly familiar with the music of liturgical rites. “A Song” begins with a presentation of the “Heav’nly harmony” (line 1) – a concept clearly aligned with the music of the spheres surrounding the earth.<sup>8</sup> It was thought that singing angels moved the spheres, thus creating the “music of the spheres”. This celestial music is what

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7. Of course, Fubini’s is not the only or final word on this debate. Fascinating and important discussions can be found on the topic in different historical milieus and interpretative traditions, notably Rudolf Schäfke’s *Geschichte der Musikästhetik in Umrissen* (1934). However, the cultural-historical emphasis of the present analysis makes Fubini’s interpretation of the music-in-literature debate particularly pertinent: “Enrico Fubini’s brave attempt at providing a history of music aesthetics is [...] an essay in the history of culture” (Bujic 1993: 412).

8. For other writers on this topic, see Godwin and Joscelyn, *The Harmony of the Spheres: A Sourcebook of the Pythagorean Tradition in Music* (1992).

composes the universal frame (line 2) that emerges in a world of chaos, in which “a heap of jarring atoms lay” (lines 3-4). These atoms will then follow God’s command and re-order themselves, bringing the dead back to life (line 7) in a natural, full and harmonious process. God, then, brings order and life out of chaos through music, and in Dryden’s Genesis the human being is the last and most beautiful piece in the creative process, and the voice of God the instrument – accompanied by a diapason – by which this last element of Creation is tuned (lines 14-15).

In *Surprised by Joy* (1955), C.S. Lewis describes the importance that music came to acquire in his life, and how he reached music through literature (73-75). Schakel explores the importance of music in Lewis’s work, holding that music fills the Narnia heptalogy with themes without which a full reading experience would be severely hindered. He adds that *Narnia* contains at least forty-five references to the use of music, appearing in the most varied contexts (2002: 89-99). The process of creation of a new world called Narnia originates in the first book, *The Magician’s Nephew*. In chapters eight and nine, the protagonists of the adventure, the children Digory and Polly, travel from a primary world – our world – to the secondary world of Narnia. Upon reaching Narnia, they experience how Aslan’s majestic and musical voice erupts, filling what was darkness with light and life (Lewis, *The Magician’s Nephew* [1955]2005: 114-123). At the end of this creative process, Aslan crowns a man to rule the new world (157).

We can see how, both the beginning of the Narnia saga and in the first stanza of Dryden’s poem, the biblical story that refers to the creation of the heavens, the earth, the light, the stars, the rivers and life in general is reflected through the voice of God (Gen. 1). In all three cases, music is presented as a force in the creation process in the form of the divine song of God.

Molina shows how the ancient Greek study of cosmic harmony established a correspondence between the celestial bodies and the strings of the ancient Greek lyre. Indeed, Pythagoras referred to the Pleiades as “the lyre of the Muses” (2008: 28-38), making this the first celestial body associated with music. The Jewish tradition credits Jubal (Gen. 4: 21), the son of Lamech, with inventing the lyre and the flute (Sachs 1927: 1915). In the second stanza of Dryden’s poem, he uses one of Jubal’s instruments, the lyre, to help human beings connect with God (lines 16-24). However, the poem has already turned from celestial to terrestrial harmony. Bruner and Ware point out how, in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), it is always winter but Christmas never comes. Following Celtic and Teutonic Yuletide traditions, which celebrated the return of light at the winter solstice (Eriksson 2002: 2), we celebrate Christmas in the cold, dark month of December to remind us that Christ descended upon us at a time of physical and spiritual hardship and despair. When Father Christmas at last appears in Narnia (Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* [1950]2015: 115), it is implied that Christmas has come at last, and that the eternal winter of Narnia is coming to an end



(Bruner & Ware 2005: 42-43). Continuing the biblical homology, three of the four Pevensie children receive very special gifts from Father Christmas, as in the biblical story in which the Three Magi (Mt. 2: 1-12) bring gifts to the newborn Jesus. The Pevensies here represent humanity, and the musical horn that Susan accepts as a gift helps our young heroes to contact Aslan, the creator of Narnia and thus the divine figure of the story (Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* [1950]2015: 116-117). Lewis adds various traditions seemingly at random, in this case, Christian and Teutonic, and although discordant, it seems that the aim is to help his readers – English boys and girls affected by the Second World War and its aftermath – to understand the biblical message, presenting in a simple way how prayer is but a call to God whom we find if we seek (Mt. 7: 7-8), as long as we have faith (Mt. 21: 22),<sup>9</sup> Dryden draws on the classical tradition to help us make the connection between God and human, making use of the lyre – this musical instrument from the beginning of time. The genesis of Narnia, on its part, includes no musical instruments, the first such introduced in the story being the horn that Father Christmas gives to Susan. This ancient wind instrument has many similarities with the flute created by Jubal in the Bible.

The third stanza of “A Song” is filled with a very specific type of music, which stirs passion and hatred in human hearts. It is music that calls us to arms, places us on alert and prepares us for physical or spiritual battle (lines 25-28). Indeed, the sound of bugles and trumpets accompanied by a rhythmic drum would transport the seventeenth century British reader to marches and calls to battle (lines 29-32). The warlike feelings that precede the fight can also be found in various places in *The Chronicles*. Himself a soldier of the First World War, Lewis was aware of the importance of music in combat, and the rituals that prepare the warrior to avoid death, as when the characters get ready for the battle of Anvard (Lewis, *The Horse and the Boy* [1954]2015: 197). The war episodes that appear in the two works in our study testify to both the social and historical realities of their conception: Dryden conceived of “A Song” just a year before the Glorious Revolution (1688-1689), while *Narnia* was written five to ten years after the end of the Second World War (1939-1945). Several of the biblical descriptions of God preparing His people for battle give special relevance to the trumpet (:) (Ne. 4: הַצִּוְרָה 20), (Num. 10: 2-10) or the idea of music – including the trumpet – related to the preparation of the self through the devotion in God (Psalm 150: 1). The trumpet is also a recurrent feature in “A Song” and in *The Chronicles*, in which, again, it serves to represent war.

In contrast to the battle scenario, the Bible’s Song of Solomon describes a relationship of harmony and desire between lovers (Ct. 1-8). Again, unlike the music of battle, there are no musical instruments here, and the song is

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9. *Mere Christianity* may represent the perfect example for an adult audience at the time.

given by lovers' voices. Moreover, Genesis contains a distinct lack of musical instruments in its depiction of Adam and Eve naked in Paradise (Gen. 3: 7). Sexuality and reciprocal love are not, in the Holy Scriptures, linked to any musical instrument.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, Dryden's "Song" and Lewis's *Narnia* contain no links between music and the reciprocal love between man and woman, but this may be because this type of relationship does not appear here, except as tangential references, eg., when at end of *The Horse and his Boy* (1954) Lewis describes how Aravis and Cor remain friends, end up marrying and become good monarchs (2005: 237). In the fourth stanza of his poem, Dryden delves into the subject of unrequited love, and tells us that music can reflect sharp and refined feelings, such as those associated with heartbreak. Dryden chooses the flute and lute to achieve this effect (lines 33-36).

The fifth stanza brings the heartbreak into despair, while maintaining the tone of the previous stanza. Dryden again incorporates a string instrument – the violin – to immerse us in a torrent of negative emotions that end up presenting love as a spell; a feminine curse that evades masculine emotional control and against which nothing can be done (lines 37-41). These two stanzas describe the vicissitudes of lovers in a largely conventional register as they experience disappointment, jealousy and passionate conflict. The "fair, disdainful dame" has been a stock figure since at least the Middle Ages. Furthermore, *Narnia* contains heartbreak (Lewis, *The Silver Chair* [1953]2005: 178). When a "deviation from the moral law" exists, as in the case of the Green Witch, evil charms and enchanting tunes do not achieve their purpose and fail. "The divine music, on the other hand [...] always succeeds because it invokes the Deep Magic of the fictional world and is in step with the cosmic rhythm of Narnia" (Todd 2019: 63).

Although linking Dryden's stanzas in this manner may appear a somewhat strained and fortuitous reading that ignores the author's light humour and wit, it does serve to bring out how the literature of both the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries understood and incorporated the idea that heartbreak and lovers' grief is the fault of the woman. The first book of the Bible describes disagreement and the lack of love between Man and Woman (Gen. 3: 12-13) as a consequence of original sin and female recklessness. However, in the Bible, no particular instrument links music to heartbreak, while both "A Song" and *The Chronicles* associate these emotions with string instruments.

Bowles emphasises the irrefutable importance of the organ in medieval sacred theatre, claiming that this instrument was known as "the house of God" (69). McKinnon also explores the idea of the importance of the organ, contending that this instrument was considered a sacred apparatus as early as the fifth century, and that it held a venerable status as a liturgical instrument (1968: 3-20). Dryden, for his part, is aware of the religious qualities of the

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10. The Hebrew word *shir* means both "poem" and "song", and the book is, indeed, highly erotic.

organ and does not hesitate to contrast it with the virtues of the human voice. In this way, he exalts the value of music, raising it above all song and sounds from vocal cords (lines 42-47). Although it is true that *The Chronicles* contain no use of the organ or any other type of instrument with sacred connotations, there is an element which obtains a similar effect to the one achieved by Dryden's organ. Lewis compares the sound that Aslan lets out when he first appears precisely to an organ. This is an opportune moment, because the little heroes of history really need him (Lewis, *Prince Caspian* [1951]2005: 167). The Bible groups instruments into three categories: string, wind and percussion. Alves explains how the musical ministry develops in these sacred settings, giving special significance to trumpets (2 Sam. 6: 15), which were chosen by the Lord and are therefore of greater importance (Rev. 1: 10), as well as to cymbals, lyres and harps.<sup>11</sup>

The myth of Orpheus brings further nuance to our understanding of the role of music in Dryden's poem. Ovid tells us how Orpheus' wife Eurydice is bitten by a snake on their wedding day and dies. Heartbroken, Orpheus – a gifted musician – travels to the Underworld to beg the gods to return Eurydice to the world of the living. The gods, moved by the beauty of Orpheus' song of mourning, agree on condition that Orpheus must not look at Eurydice, who is to follow in Orpheus' footsteps on the way back to the world of the living. He violates this single rule, and loses his wife in the shadows forever (Crocci da Gracia & Mínguez Baños 1995: 64-69). Agnew explains how, despite his misfortune, Orpheus continues to sing, and trees and plants, beasts, birds, rocks and rivers come to listen to his song of mourning, lament and contention. Orpheus tunes the strings of his lyre as if trying to find a cosmic order or pattern (7-9). This legendary musician, prophet and poet had the ability to enchant all living – and even inert – creatures with his music. Dryden, however, endows Saint Cecilia's song with a musical power that surpasses Orpheus and his lyre. Indeed, Saint Cecilia works such miracles with her song that she even deceives an angel who, listening to her voice, mistakes earth for heaven (lines 48-54), elevating the Judeo-Christian tradition over the Greco-Latin by extension. We find no such intermediary character between God and human in *The Chronicles*, but we do find a female character capable of connecting with deity: among the Sons and Daughters of Adam and Eve, the most faithful follower of the lion God is little Lucy Pevensie. Lucy never stops believing in Aslan as the creator of Narnia and the essence of all good things. When others raise doubts, she stands firm, seeing the lion in places where others only glimpse shadows (Lewis, *Prince Caspian* [1951]2005: 83). All of nature hears Orpheus' music, and Lucy aims to achieve a similar effect when she addresses the trees in Narnia (128). Lucy, however, fails. Only God – as

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11. John Kleining (1990) points out that God ordered Moses to use trumpets to worship him, while David added cymbals, lyres and harps (1 Cr. 25: 1) (2020: 3).

the lion Aslan – is able to revive the inert and awaken beings from their physical and spiritual lethargy with his melodic voice (148-149).

The characters of Saint Cecilia and Lucy help us to understand the relationship between God and human beings, much like the biblical prophets – Jesus of Nazareth being the mediating figure between God and human beings par excellence. The Gospel of Saint John describes the wedding at Cana of Galilee as a celebration of love, and it is here that the music that accompanies Jesus' first miracle reaches out to his disciples and gives them faith (Jn. 2: 1-13).

The last stanza of Dryden's poem (lines 55-63) presents a choir of angels and saints – "the Great Choir" – singing melodies at the end of time. Here, Dryden uses the divine trumpet as the bearer of heavenly justice, creating rhythm and speed towards the cataclysm. Dryden's poem begins with the creation of the world – Genesis – tuned with a diapason, and ends with the end of time – Apocalypse – with a message of eternal life (line 62). In the last book of *The Chronicles*, the giant Time blows his horn and the golden gates of Narnia – emulating the heavenly gates – are opened to decide the fates of the righteous and the sinful. Note how the beginning of the end is announced with the sound of the horn (Lewis, *The Last Battle* [1956]2005: 183). The musical references in this last book are scarce – indeed, the reference to the horn of Time is the only one. However, the absence of music does not imply the end of time, as all who have kept their faith in Aslan will enjoy eternal life (218-221).

In the last book of the New Testament, a wind instrument appears: the trumpet, or seven trumpets, to be precise. After the opening of the seventh seal, seven angels play the seven trumpets, like an orchestra. After the last trumpet has sounded, a victory song is heard (Rev. 8-11), heralding life after death (Rev. 21-22).

Regarding the musical elements in the compositions of Dryden and Lewis, the following stands out: just like in the Bible, the creation of the world takes place through unmediated divine intervention in the form of a voice/ song, while the end of the world does not. Jewish tradition presents Jubal as the creator of the first two instruments: the lyre and the flute. The lyre is also the first instrument in Dryden's poem. Lewis, however, chose a wind instrument, the horn – similar to the flute – for his first instrument. Both authors use these instruments to connect human beings with God. Their choices – explicit in Dryden's case and implicit in Lewis's – are inspired by the first instruments in the Bible. Both Dryden and Lewis explore heartbreak, and – like in the Bible – present women as a source of doom. Both authors accompany this emotion with string music, while the Bible story of the Fall contains no mention of music. "A Song", *The Chronicles* and the Bible all use the trumpet to denote impending battle; trumpet and organ to help human beings to contact God; and trumpet and horn to herald the end of the world and its judgement. In all three works, wind instruments announce, prepare and accompany

human beings in battle, including the last battle, which either brings us closer to, or further away from God. In Dryden's poem, after the final judgment, a choir of angels closes the circle referencing the moment of creation with its harmonic music of the spheres as a perfect symphony of the orderly creation of life through the voice of God. If the first stanza presents celestial music and the second introduces terrestrial music, the last stanza reverses this movement, with a return to celestial harmony. This circularity honours the infinity of the process of Creation, which includes humanity. In *Narnia*, however, not everything ends with the lack of music and the final judgment, because for all those who have faith and believe in Aslan there is eternal life in a Narnia within Narnia, each instantiation of which is bigger and more beautiful than what came before. In this way, despite the absence of music after the Apocalypse, Lewis offers the reader a message of hope that aligns with both the Bible's promise of eternal life and with Dryden's vision of celestial return. It is important to note that there are differences to the value and function that our authors attribute to music. Dryden exhibits a poem written by and for music, in which each stanza is related to at least one musical element. Music carries the fundamental weight of the poem, being precisely that which holds it together. In Lewis's heptalogy, on the other hand, music appears as a literary tool, but it does not constitute the main element of the work. Nevertheless, the similarities between how these two works and the Bible relate to and use music, reveal a distinct pattern worthy of analysis and interpretation, and although we are aware that Lewis quotes Shakespeare when writing "the eternal dance 'makes heaven drowsy with the harmony'" (Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* 1940: 183), we cannot deny the possibility that Dryden's "A Song" legacy also takes shape in the aforementioned allusion because

Lewis frequently calls upon the analogical power of music in order to convey the desirability of harmony. The notion of harmony underpins many of Lewis' writings, whether it refers to the ordering of the cosmos or the proper ordering of the soul. In fact, in the same way that music pervades his work, harmony fundamentally undergirds many of his writings, as it is relevant to a variety of topics and useful across genres. (Todd 2019: 73)

## Conclusion

Dryden's "Song" and Lewis's *Narnia* both maintain the thematic structure of Genesis and Apocalypse as beginning and end, presenting God as voicing the creation of the world, while wind instruments announce its final hour. Similarly, both authors link heartbreak with string instruments. Dryden presents Saint Cecilia as an intermediating figure between God and human beings, and his poem postulates an anthropocentric vision of the God of the Old Testament. Lewis, however, describes in Aslan a warm and close God, similar to the God of the New Testament, who relates directly to human beings

and is intrinsically linked to the natural world, thus leaning more towards an ecocentric vision of the world.

Dryden and Lewis both reveal part of the Christian message to their readers and fulfil the catechumenal work that one would expect to find in the catechisms of their respective times. It is important to note that, in their cultural-historical contexts, presenting these works as expanding the aim of Christian catechism would create tensions. However, catechumenal intent clearly underpins both works, whether the authors were conscious of this or not. This is demonstrated, in part, by the correlations in the use of musical instruments in the selected texts and the equivalent biblical passages. This way of combining literature with specifications of musical instruments may have helped the texts' contemporary readers to achieve a new level of religious consciousness when mentally imagining the words and the instruments sounding together. As such, music would be added as a new variant to debates related to "Christianity and Literature" presented in modern studies such as *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Religion* (2016), in which the use of music in literature with religious instruction is not contemplated but which I consider significant.

Despite Dryden and Lewis's different literary genres, their contrasting religious understanding of God's relation to human beings and the largely disparate audiences to which the works are directed, Dryden's "Song" and Lewis's *Narnia* present essential and fundamental truths easily related to Christian doctrines of faith and morals, which attend to the pastoral intentional nature of the Catholic catechism befitting the cultural-historical context of the reader for whom the texts were published.

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