



# Friends of the Wade

The Marion E. Wade Center      Wheaton College

## International Scholars Widen Wade Center's Sphere

If you lived under an oppressive government and in a state of physical and spiritual want, what would you look to for a glimmer of hope? This past summer, the Wade was privileged to host two Romanian scholars who have found just such a hope in the works of the Wade Center authors.

Despite the repressive circumstances of living in a Communist and now post-Communist nation, Denise Vasiliu and Emanuel Conțac built their lives and careers around the meaning they have gleaned from the writings of C.S. Lewis. Denise, an educator and evangelical pastor's wife in Iași, Romania, is writing her doctoral dissertation on Lewis's role in the intersection of Christian spirituality and fiction, and when that thesis is published, it will be the first book written on Lewis by a Romanian in Romania. Emanuel, a professor at the Theological Pentecostal Institute in Bucharest, Romania, is interested in writings by Lewis and Chesterton, and thus far has translated three of Lewis's works into Romanian. These two scholars traveled to Wheaton College through the Central & Eastern European Summer Study Program, a program that funds European Christian scholars' research at Wheaton College.



Members of the Central & Eastern European Summer Study Program, including Emanuel Conțac and Denise Vasiliu. (Photo courtesy of Emanuel Conțac)

A third international scholar currently at the Wade, whose research is focused on George MacDonald, is Olga Lukmanova, a 2014 Fulbright Scholar from Nizhny

Novgorod, Russia, where she teaches at Nizhny Novgorod Linguistics University. Wheaton College's first Fulbright Scholar, Olga is currently utilizing the Wade's resources on MacDonald and will continue to do so through February of 2015—a six-month period during which she will research and

begin writing the first Russian-language biography of the 19th-century pastor and novelist whose work of myth and fairy tale influenced and inspired C.S. Lewis. "As a translator of MacDonald's books into Russian," she explains, "I know that reception of his writings in Russia over the last ten years has been very encouraging, and there is general demand for a fuller description of his life, worldview, and thought as important origins of his mythopoeic symbolism."

All of these scholars come from historical, political, and religious contexts that differ greatly from that of the United States, and that fact has shaped their life's study—as well as their need for the Wade Center's resources.

Denise and Emanuel, in particular, feel motivated in their work by a desire to shine

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*"We want to see with other eyes, to imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts, as well as with our own. . . . Literary experience heals the wound, without undermining the privilege, of individuality."*

— C.S. Lewis,  
Experiment in Criticism



EDITING & DESIGN: Kendra Juskus

The Marion E. Wade Center  
Wheaton College  
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

Phone: 630-752-5908  
Fax: 630-752-5459  
E-mail: wade@wheaton.edu  
www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter

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the light of imagination, meaning, and faith into what is still a despairing society. Even helping to open a once-



Olga Lukmanova, Fulbright Scholar at the Wade Center. (Photo courtesy of Olga Lukmanova)

closed society to the possibility of discussing and asking questions about religion is new and exciting ground for these scholars.

Denise, who organized the first-ever C.S.

Lewis symposium at the University of Iași

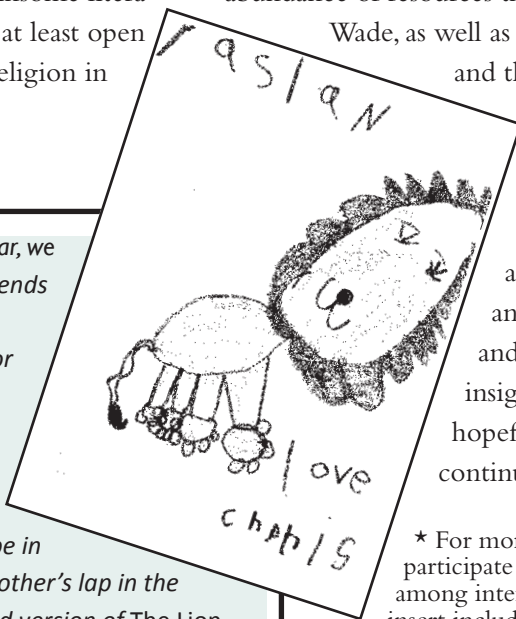
last November (it was so popular that university officials approved having

a second such event this year), explains that one of the great benefits of the symposium was that attendees "could talk openly about [Lewis's] Christianity and his faith without having any problem. . . . And the fact that they are so willing to have it again and to continue to debate all these things is just a great thing."

Emanuel—who presented a paper on the Romanian reception of Lewis at the 2013 symposium—agrees that exposing more Romanians, particularly Romanian intellectuals, to Lewis's winsome literature and engaging Christian thought will at least open the door to a bolder conversation about religion in Romanian public life.

## Did You Know?

Do you know who visits the Wade Center? Every year, we welcome 8,000 – 10,000 visitors. (Many of our Friends are among them!) Of these, a large number are children, coming on a field trip with their class or on a special excursion with their families. This summer we had a delightful visit from five-year-old Charis, who came with her mother, an employee of Wheaton College. During her visit she fully explored the Lewis family wardrobe in the Museum, and then settled comfily on her mother's lap in the Reading Room to enjoy Robin Lawrie's illustrated version of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Charis's main question of the day? "Why can't we go through the wardrobe to Narnia?" **W**



"It would be a pity for people to . . . be very apologetic and shy and almost sorry that they would have to discuss such issues [of faith]," he explains, "whereas the [Wade] authors are very honest, they discuss difficulties, they address and engage these issues, and I think it would give many other Romanian intellectuals, from whatever religious denomination, the same kind of courage and willingness to address such issues, seeing that in other times and places they were addressed."

In Russia's political and religious context, Olga has discovered, the challenge is less about religious freedom and more about redeeming anemic or damaging narratives that have been perpetuated within the church. Her hope for the dissemination of knowledge about MacDonald is that his portrayal of God as unfailingly good and wise will encourage readers and prove to have "transformative power." At the Wade she is delving into materials she would not be able to access from Russia or most other places, and connecting with other MacDonald scholars, in order to better reveal to Russian readers the "heartening effect" of MacDonald's words.

It has been a delight for the Wade staff to get to know and serve these and other international scholars, all of whom have been grateful for easy access to the abundance of resources they are privileged to use at the Wade, as well as for the connections they build and the intellectual mentorship they

receive through the Wade and Wheaton College faculty. In turn, we are buoyed by their enthusiasm about the Wade authors' work, and our perspective is expanded and enriched by their distinctive insights into just how powerful and hopeful the Wade authors' words continue to be for our world. **W**

\* For more information on how you can participate in the Wade's outreach to and among international scholars, please see the insert included in this newsletter.

## Up Close

### *The Pilgrim's Regress:* Wade Annotated Edition

Together with the Wade Center, Dr. David Downing has given modern audiences a key to understanding one of C.S. Lewis's most obscure books.

*The Pilgrim's Regress: Wade Annotated Edition* (Eerdmans) represents a number of distinctions for Lewis: It was the first book he wrote after he became a Christian, his first work of fiction, and the first book

he published under his name. The book is a fictional processing of Lewis's own journey after abandoning his childhood faith and later returning to Christ, the spiritual home for which he realized he had always longed.

We had the privilege of hosting Dr. Downing; his editor at Eerdmans, Jenny Hoffman, and her father, Lewis scholar Dr. Peter Schakel; and Eerdmans Vice President and Editor-in-Chief Jon Pott at the Wade for a book launch, talk, and reception on Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. The evening's festivities drew enough attendees to necessitate an overflow room, and at the conclusion of his talk Dr. Downing signed copies of the book, which are available for purchase through the Wade Center while copies last.

In his talk, "Journey to Joy," Dr. Downing explained that *The Pilgrim's Regress* is a critical text, establishing the central motifs of Lewis's later works, but because of its obscure references, untranslated quotations, and general complexity, it is less widely read than his more popular volumes. Dr. Downing, R. W. Schlosser Professor of English at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, set out to change this. With the assistance of Wade Associate Director Marjorie Mead and Archivist Laura Schmidt, he published notes that Lewis had personally made on a student's copy of the book, now archived at the Wade Center. To these, Dr.



Dr. David Downing with his wife, Dr. Crystal Downing, and Wade Center Associate Director Marjorie Lamp Mead

Downing added 500 of his own notes, clarifying references, making translations, and providing historical and ideological context. These notes are contained within the margins of the book's text, where they remain

unobtrusive for those who wish to read the text straight through, and convenient for other readers who wish to reference them.

To listen to Dr. Downing's talk, view photos from the evening's celebration, and read an interview with Dr. Downing about the process of annotating Lewis's work, please visit [www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter/News-and-Events/WadePublications](http://www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter/News-and-Events/WadePublications). **W**

## Spotlight on *SEVEN*

### Volume 31

Volume 31 features articles on five of the seven Wade authors. The trend of transcribing previously unpublished work continues in this volume with Charlie Starr's transcription, dating, and analysis of writings from one of Lewis's notebooks. Chesterton's work is examined in two articles: Philip Mitchell explores Chesterton's style of biography, and Walter Raubicheck compares the role of God in works by Chesterton and Sayers. We are always excited to publish strong scholarship on Williams, such as Andrew Stout's examination of the seriousness of Williams's doctrine of substituted love. Finally, in an article about character, Glenn Davis looks at J.R.R. Tolkien's usage of medieval poetics in *The Hobbit*.

This volume also includes two remembrances: for Chris Mitchell, former director of the Wade Center; and for Stratford Caldecott, whose thinking and writing on beauty, faith, culture, and the imagination made him a modern-day friend of the Wade Center authors. With gratitude, we seek to honor the contributions of both men in this volume of *VII*.

For more details and ordering information, please visit [www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter/Journal-VII](http://www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter/Journal-VII). **W**

**The Marion E. Wade Center**  
Wheaton College  
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

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## Highlights



Over the summer a new Wade resource was born: “Off the Shelf: The Blog of The Marion E. Wade Center,” features topical posts, published bi-monthly, on the work and collections of the Wade.

“Rather than just providing collection listings and event announcements, as we do on our website and Facebook,” says Wade Archivist Laura Schmidt, “our blog allows us to focus on a particular topic or collection object more in-depth—making the posts timeless windows into the heart of what the Wade is all about.”

Recent posts include an interview with editor David C. Downing on the *The Pilgrim’s Regress: Wade Annotated Edition*, reflections from Lewis scholar Joel D. Heck on what it is like to research at the Wade, and the “Artifact of the Month” series, which regularly highlights items from the Wade Center’s collections. Readers can also sign up on the blog to be notified via email of new posts.

Where to find us: <http://wadecenterblog.wordpress.com> **W**