

Letter from Arthur to Mary Prior, undated¹

Saturday.

Darling da,

I enclose Prior on C.S. Lewis², which I have been working on more or less all night and all morning. I am inclined to think it so much better that [sic]³ Prior on Popper⁴ that I will ask Charles B. ⁵ to use it first and give me time to treat Popper more worthily. I haven't yet been able to discover Una's address – Margaret Dowling⁶ doesn't know it (but says Una's away for the week-end), and the University offices are shut; so I'll have to find out on Monday.

Soon I'll be seeing you – just through the window, from down below – but tomorrow I'll be in with you again. And I'm sure it won't be very long before I'm not in with you, but you're out with me.

Love and love and love

- Arthur

X X X from Mutt.

¹ Editors' note: This letter has been edited by Martin Prior and David Jakobsen. It is part of the Martin Prior Collection, presently kept at Aalborg University folder B, item 3, undated-saturday. The letter is written on standard writing paper. The letter was enclosed in an envelope dated 14th August 1947. The envelope is from Canterbury University College and addressed to Mary at her parents' address at Bidwill St. in Timaru. It is sent from Christchurch where Mary and Arthur lived.

² Editors' note: Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) was the author of the children's books about Narnia as well as books of fiction for adults. He also published several books on Christian Beliefs such as *Mere Christianity* (1952) and, especially important with regard to Arthur Prior, *The Abolition of Man* (1943). The enclosed draft mentioned by Arthur is quite likely *Review of Clive S. Lewis, Abolition of Man*, published in *Landfall* Vol. 1, no 1, pp. 63-67 (1947). While Prior considered Lewis argument to be a restatement of the view that ethical precepts cannot logically be derived from non-ethical propositions, he nonetheless considered Lewis argument a brilliant re-statement of that fact. Prior's review of Lewis is among the earliest writing he did on ethics which he would later publish more extensively on in *Logic and the Basis of Ethics* (1949).

According to Martin Prior, Ann was with Arthur when they bumped into C.S. Lewis around 1962, possibly outside the pub Eagle and Child where C.S. Lewis and J.R.R Tolkien used to meet.

³ Editors' note: The sense suggests 'than'.

⁴ Editors' note: Prior wrote *Review of Karl R. Popper, The Open Society and its Enemies*, and published it in *Landfall* the same year, 1947.

⁵ Editors' note: Charles Orwell Brasch (1909-1973) was the editor of the literary Journal *Landfall*, which he also founded in 1947 and which is today New Zealand's oldest extant literary magazine. Brasch was also author of several books and poetry.

According to Martin Prior, Brasch was the cousin of Elespie Forsyth, who married Arthur's brother Ian.

⁶ Editors' note: Margaret Dowling was the wife of the poet Basil Cairns Dowling (1910-2000). He taught in British schools from 1952 to 1975. In the 30s he trained to become a Presbyterian minister. He was a pacifist and was jailed for his convictions. Arthur N. Prior was also a pacifist until 1942.