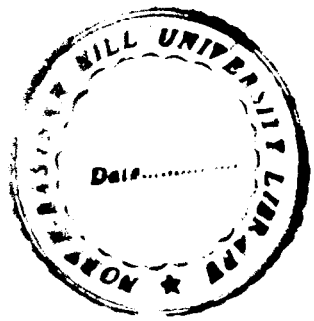
A STUDY OF C. S. LEWIS AS A LITERARY CRITIC



By

NIU FRANCIS WHISO

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Submitted

in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong

पूर्वोत्तर पर्वतीय विश्वविद्यालय
मयूरभंज परिसर, शिलांग-७९३०१४ (मेघालय)
Phone :
Grams : NEHU
North-Eastern Hill University
Mayurbhanj Complex, Nongthymmai, Shillong - 793014 (Meghalaya)

Dr. E.N. LALL
Professor
Department of English

SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the dissertation entitled ***A Study of C.S. Lewis as a Literary Critic*** submitted by **Niu Francis Whiso**, in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, is the record of original investigation carried out by him under my supervision.

He has been duly registered and the dissertation presented is worthy of being considered for the award of the Ph.D. degree. This work has not been submitted for any degree of any other University.

December 18, 1997

(E. N. LALL)
Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Prof. E.N. Lall, Former Head of the Department of English, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, who provided wise and caring guidance throughout my research which helped me overcome many hurdles in my work. He was also considerate enough to correct my untyped manuscripts which were invariably written in an almost undecipherable minuscule handwriting. No supervisor could have been more considerate, patient and helpful. My gratitude also goes to Mrs. Lall for her unfailing hospitality during my visits to their home.

I am also grateful to the Government of Nagaland for granting me study leave for three years and the subsequent earned leave. These leaves enabled me to devote myself fully to my research work in Shillong. I am highly indebted to the Rt. Rev. Abraham Alangimattathil, Bishop of Kohima, who - through his contacts abroad in his Salesian Congregation - helped me to obtain from U.K. and U.S.A. most of the books I needed for my work

I would like to thank Dr. K.C. Joseph Kurismmootil, Department of English, North-Eastern Hill University, Kohima Campus, for introducing me to the works of C.S. Lewis and for having encouraged me to work on the author for my dissertation.

I wish to express particular thanks to all my colleagues in the Department of English, Science College, Kohima for looking after the Department during my long absence, especially Mrs. Chubatola, Mrs. Nina Kire and Mrs. Amenla who had to do the additional work of the Head of the Department. Many thanks also to the Librarian and staff of the NEHU Central Library, Nongthymmai, Shillong, for their friendly and efficient service.

For typing the manuscripts and putting the dissertation in its final form Mr. Godfrey Pathaw deserves special thanks. He did a fine job for me.

Most importantly my wife Nichuvono and my children Niselie, Atsono and Akhotso deserve my warmest gratitude for their spirit of sacrifice as often they had to live for days, weeks and months without a husband and father for the last five years.

Shillong,
the 18th December, 1997

(NIU FRANCIS WHISO)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Although C.S. Lewis was a novelist, a critic and a writer of popular theology, he is better known as a literary critic in the academic world. Some of his critical works have been acclaimed as major contributions to literary criticism, and his critical theories have attracted new interest in recent years because of their relevance to the contemporary situation in literature and their challenging propositions. Though the present study is concerned only with his critical theories, some of his critical works have also been examined along with his theories as they contain insights, views and theories.

The development of his critical theories can be traced back as far as his childhood. He was a precocious child and by the age of ten he had already acquired the habit of writing fiction and poetry. These childhood ventures into writing made him aware of the qualities essential for a good work of art. Some of the qualities he frequently mentioned in his letters to Arthur Greeves, his childhood friend, were clarity, conciseness, elevation of style, evocativeness and romantic charm.

Lewis' potential as a critic became evident while he was studying in the English school, Oxford University: his performance there indicated that he had the ability for extraordinary scholastic attainments, and also had original critical ideas as some of his tutorials there became seminal works for his published essays and books later.

Lewis firmly established himself as a first rate critic and "writer of exceptional imaginative power"[1] after the publication of The Allegory of Love. Another book that won wide critical acclaim was A Preface to Paradise Lost. He also wrote one volume, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (excluding drama) for The Oxford History of English Literature. It was highly praised as "being brilliantly written, compulsively readable, and constantly illuminated by sentences that are true as they are witty".[2] Besides, he wrote essays on theory and also on major authors in poetry, drama, and the novel from Chaucer's time to the present. But his most important books on critical theory were The Personal Heresy and An Experiment in Criticism.

As Lewis responded to literature as a romantic, any discussion on his literary theory has to begin with his romanticism. Romanticism manifested itself quite early in his childhood, and at the centre of his romanticism was *Sehnsucht*. *Sehnsucht* is an intense kind of longing which borders on pain but which is a delight in itself. It can be

triggered, for instance, on seeing a beautiful sight. But its visitation can neither be forced nor discontinued at will. But when it comes, the delight is so intense that no other earthly joy can be compared with it.

Sehnsucht made a powerful impact on Lewis as a writer. It made him aware of the existence of a transcendental realm *from where* thrills of joy come. It also made him extraordinarily sensitive to the beauty of nature. As a critic, he formulated a theory on transcendental longing which found artistic expression in his novel The Pilgrim's Regress.

However, despite the presence of this romantic temperament, it is difficult to label Lewis as a romantic critic. Because he was very eclectic in his approach and did not subscribe to certain important romantic theories such as the expressive theory of art, the intentionality of the poet, the theory of genius and so on. But his eclecticism does not end here. His eclectic approach was applied to the Neoclassicists as well. He shared similar views with T.S. Eliot on tradition and the impersonality of art. He also had a common approach with the New Critics to textual analysis. But he disagreed quite strongly with Eliot on his view that only practicing contemporary poets could be judges of Paradise Lost. And Lewis also had no faith in F.R. Leavis'

belief that civilization could be saved by discreet literary criticism.

Lewis was a scholar with great natural intelligence, analytical power and dialectical skills; in addition he enjoyed polemics - both private and public. And one fortunate aspect of this rather disagreeable habit is that some of his best insights, views and theories on literature emerged from his polemical writings. One of such exposition is his book, The Personal Heresy. The book came out as the result of a controversy between E.M. Tillyard and C.S. Lewis on the role of the poet's personality in a work of art. In this book Lewis defends the view that a poem is not the expression of the poet's personality. He contends that in reading a poem we apprehend what the poet presents to us in the poem and his skill in presenting it but not his personality. When we read a poem we look at something with the poet's eyes and see as he saw it. It is true that in the act of reading we come into contact with the poet's consciousness in a very intimate manner as he is sharing it with us. Often this consciousness is mistaken as his personality but they are not identical. This is not his normal consciousness as it is a heightened one and comes only at certain times, so it cannot be his personality. In fact, an act of composition is an escape from personality rather than an expression of it. Let us illustrate the point with the example of a poet who is

presenting an intensely dramatic situation. In presenting the situation, though the character may be in the overwhelming grip of a particular emotion, the poet has already escaped from that emotion to be able to present it to us objectively.

In A Preface to Paradise Lost, Lewis is at his polemical best. In the book he defends Milton's epic against detractors, and he also refutes two errors in the interpretation of Paradise Lost. In his defense of Paradise Lost he contends that Milton's criticism is lost in misunderstanding because many modern readers are unfamiliar with the epic form and they set out to find in Paradise Lost "little patches of delight" as if they were reading lyrics, and when they are not found those readers get frustrated. This happens because the readers have no idea that in a long narrative poem the line is subordinated to the paragraph, and the paragraph to the book and the book to the whole; and they condemn those properties which the poet laboured hardest to attain. Lewis, therefore, believes that the study of Milton should be preceded by a study of the epic in general.

Epic poetry is a species of the genus narrative poetry, and Lewis divides epic poetry into primary epic and secondary epic. This is simply a chronological division without any suggestion of one being superior to the other. Primary epic is oral, solemne, aristocratic, festive, public and ceremonial; and attains its effect through the use of stock-

words, phrases, whole lines and also a special diction which is familiar and yet non-colloquial.

Then Lewis discusses the subject of 'primary epic'. He says it doesn't have to be on a subject of national or cosmic importance. All it requires is that it has to be a heroic story, e.g. The Illiad. In the poem the Trojan war provides only the background for a personal story of Achilles. Concerning the subject of 'secondary epic', Lewis says Virgil was the one who invented it. He was interested in an epic to rival Homer, and he chose a national theme to satisfy the Roman spirit and found a solution by narrowing down his theme to a national legend and handling it with great skill. By discovering this procedure, Virgil discovered new possibilities for poetry itself; and any further development of the secondary epic proceeds from Virgil. In a way the secondary epic is more complicated than the primary as it has to create solemnity without external aids such as a hall, a garlanded priest and an altar. Moreover, the secondary epic requires even greater solemnity than the primary one as it is meant for a person in his armchair in the privacy of his room. So blaming it for being ritualistic is to blame it for being what it is intended to be.

Lewis next discusses the technique of 'secondary epic'. In general it is produced by the elevation of style. In Paradise Lost, grandeur is produced mainly by three things:

the use of slightly unfamiliar words and constructions, the use of proper names, and continued allusion to what heightens our sense experience, such as light, darkness, storm, flowers, and jewel. The effect is mainly achieved by unremitting manipulation of his reader. He makes him feel that he is attending an actual recitation. Another technique is the evocation of stock responses like constancy in love and friendship or loyalty in political life. Yet one more technique in epic style is continuity which is done by maintaining a sense of continuity between sentences, paragraphs and books.

In the Preface Lewis attempts to refute two errors that have been prevailing in Milton criticism for more than one hundred years. The first one is the doctrine of unchanging human heart. According to this doctrine the things which separate one age from another are superficial and if we strip people off their beliefs we find the same unchanging human heart. But Lewis points out that this method is absurd as it may deprive a work of its very essence and render it a mere abstraction. For example, we cannot study Hamlet after stripping off the revenge code as Hamlet no longer exists after stripping off that code. In the same way, we cannot study Paradise Lost after stripping off Milton's theology. So Lewis suggests that we rather put ourselves in the position of the character by embracing their traditions and beliefs

and try to feel how they felt so that the full meaning of the poem may emerge.

The second error is the Satan-hero theory. Lewis contends that though Satan is a magnificent poetic creation it is not meant to be an object of admiration. And he believes that there are both literary and theological evidences in Paradise Lost which confirm this view. As Paradise Lost is an epic, Milton has to treat the satanic predicament in the epic from which involves treating the subject in a grand style by subordinating his absurdity to his misery. Moreover, Satan is the best drawn character in the poem as it is easy to draw a character worse than oneself. So a magnificent Satan emerges. But this is only one side of the picture. Milton also has clearly shown that Satan is full of absurdity. There is a co-existence in him of a subtle intelligence with an incapacity to understand anything. He is the cause of his own predicament. He develops a sense of injured merit after the exaltation of the Messiah as head of the angels though this does not do him injustice in any way. His revolt against God is suicidal as he is a derived being: it is analogous to "the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower".[3] His degradation is rapid and repelling. He comes to Eden as a spy but soon turns into a prying peeping Tom, and then by his own will turns into a toad and then finally a snake. This progression from hero to

snake was mistakenly considered by some critics as a miscalculation on the part of Milton who made Satan more glorious than intended and then attempting to rectify it again. But Lewis believes it was Milton's design to show Satan at the height of his glory and then trace what becomes of such self-intoxication when confronted with reality.

Lewis had a conservative temperament and his conservation is reflected in his attitude towards modern poetry, and the use of psycho-analysis and anthropology in literary criticism. Regarding modern poetry Lewis feels that it has differentiated itself too much from prose and as a result it has become too difficult for the common people to understand it. Moreover, even for the professionals who read it, the interpretation of poetry has become so subjective and variable that it is no longer possible to tell which is the right interpretation. So the future of such poetry is not promising. Lewis is equally sceptical about the use of psycho-analysis in literary criticism. Because some critics use psycho-analysis to infer the pathology of the poet instead of concentrating on his work and thus, it becomes a digression from genuine criticism. Secondly, Lewis has serious doubts about the interpretation of certain symbols by Freud which are too farfetched to be a contribution to literary criticism. Lewis also finds no merit in the use of anthropology as a critical tool. Anthropology's supposed

contribution is the discovery of the mythical or ritual origin of the romances. But these origins are only conjectural and they may or may not be true. Or even if they are true they have no literary relevance as they simply furnish facts about the origin of a poem and do not reveal anything about the literary equality of the poem.

Lewis was more of a reactionary critic than anything else. An in his book An Experiment in Criticism he is reacting against an extreme form of evaluative criticism prevailing in the universities at that time. In this book he proposes a new system of criticism in which literature is to be judged by the way men read it. He says this is possible because a good book is read in one way and a bad one in another way. And a good book is one which permits, invites and compels good reading. Thus good reading is a key concept in his system. According to him good reading consists in surrendering ourselves totally to a work of art to make ourselves receptive to the work. And this total surrender has something in common with love, religion and intellectual attainment.

Thus in the system, reading is made the basis for our judgement, and any literature which has the power to compel good reading can be considered potentially good literature. However, to distinguish the good from the bad, Lewis uses double distinctions. He puts some books beyond the pale, and

then from within the pale the better has to be separated again from the worse. In judging readers, he does the same. To quote him, "we make a broad but hardly disputable division between those who read seldom, hastily, hazily, forgetfully, only to kill time, and those to whom reading is an arduous and important activity. But within the latter class, we distinguish 'good' from 'bad' taste".[4]

Then Lewis enumerates the advantages of the system. Firstly, it fixes our attention on the act of reading. Books are only potential literature and they become actual only when read. So also is literary taste. It is a potentiality till we read literature. But in reading, both scholarship and criticisms find their fulfilment as their sole function is to multiply, prolong, and safeguard experiences of good reading. The system thus helps us to get away from abstraction and focus our attention on the act of reading literature itself.

Secondly, the system "puts our feet on solid ground, whereas the usual one puts them on quicksand".[5] So it is risky because one begins to condemn somebody's taste on the strength of an inference. For example, my taste may be condemned simply because I like a particular author. But one's condemnation is based on either one's own isolated personal reaction, like my own, or the prevalent view of the literary world. If it is the former, as one has not heard my view it is a one-sided judgement and one is never sure that

one is right. So one's condemnation of my taste is simply insolent. But if it is based on the prevalent view how long is it going to prevail. Because literary judgements change according to the vagaries of fashion, and dethronements and restorations are almost monthly events and one can trust no judgement as permanent.

But suppose one goes the other way round and observes the reading habit of men one will find oneself standing on firmer ground. For example, suppose one had encouraged me to talk about Lamb and discovered that I was ignoring things he really has and reading into him a great deal that he does not have and also that I seldom read what I so praised and the very terms of praise revealed how completely it was for me a stimulant to wishful reveries of my own. And suppose one went around and on testing others, one found the same kind of result, one has solid ground to presume that Lamb is probably a bad author as the worst kind of reading is used by those who enjoy Lamb. Thus the observation of how men read provides a strong basis for judgement on what they read, as "the distinction between attentive and inattentive, obedient and willful, disinterested and egoistic mode of reading is permanent, if ever valid, valid everywhere and always".[6]

Thirdly, it would make critical condemnations difficult. Lewis considers this an advantage as condemnation has become too easy which has produced detrimental effects on

sane criticism. All the great names in English literature have been condemned except half a dozen protected by the current critical establishment. These dethronements are a great waste of energy as the real function of criticism is not to denigrate somebody's favourites but to help him to enjoy something better. In the established system, in judging books, a critic puts some books beyond the pale and some within. But often the books he puts beyond the pale may be books he has never read. However, in the new system it works in the open. If we can observe the reading habit of people, we can assign those habits to the 'literary' and 'unliterary'. If we find that a book is read only in one way and no other we have a *prima facie* case that the book is bad. But on the other hand, if a book is passionately and constantly loved and reread by the reader or readers, we can with certainty say that the book has to be good no matter what the critics or the current literary fashions say.

In An Experiment in Criticism, apart from advocating a new system of criticism to replace the present evaluative system, particularly the judgemental and condemnatory type, Lewis also refutes certain literary assumptions of his age. The dominant one among them was the assumption that civilization could be saved by literary criticism. But Lewis had no interest in a substitute religion as his critical

position was aesthetic rather than moral. And in An Experiment in Criticism he emphatically denies that literature is to be valued for telling us truths about life and as aid to cultural propaganda.

Thus as a critic, Lewis was a complex man: he was a romantic who could not be called a romantic critic, he was a conservative man whose conservatism did not prevent him from being eclectic as he would not hesitate to learn from different schools of criticism if it suited his taste; he was a conservative man who was also a reactionary. These qualities put him at odds with his times at times. But they also made him an original critic and thinker.

The present dissertation is an exploration of Lewis' works to study his insights, views and theories on literature and to assess his contribution to the modern critical tradition.

CHAPTER-II

LEWIS' ROMANTICISM

Romanticism deserves special attention in Lewis' criticism as he responded to literature essentially as a romantic. Romanticism was something ingrained in him and it began to manifest itself quite early in his childhood. Lewis observes in his autobiography, Suppressed by Joy, "My earliest aesthetic experiences, if they were aesthetic ... were already incurably romantic ... ."[1] Among his early aesthetic experiences, two were crucial in his life as a writer because they awakened in him the love of natural beauty and also initiated him into *Sehnsucht* or longing which played a central role in his romanticism.

> Once in those very early days my brother brought into the nursery the lid of a biscuit tin which he had covered with moss and garnished with twigs and flowers so as to make it a toy garden or a toy forest. That was the first beauty I ever knew. What the real garden had failed to do, the toy garden did. It made me aware of nature - not, indeed, as a storehouse of forms and colours but as something cool, dewy, fresh, exuberant. I do not think the impression was very important at the moment, but it soon became important in memory. As long as I live my imagination of Paradise will retain something of my brother's toy garden. "And every day there were what we called "the Green Hills"; that is, the low line of the Castlereagh Hills which we saw from the nursery windows. They were not very far off but they are, to children, quite

> unattainable. They taught me longing – *Sehnsucht*; made me for good or ill, and before I was six years old, a votary of the Blue Flower.[2]

Sehnsucht is an intense kind of longing and it is usually triggered by seeing a beautiful object of nature or by hearing a certain sound or by reading a romantic tale. It is

> ... that unnameable something, desire for which pierces us like a rapier at the smell of a bonfire, the sound of wild ducks flying overhead, the title of The Well at the World's End the opening lines of "Kubla Khan", the morning cobwebs in late summer, or the noise of falling waves?[3]

It also can be triggered by recalling a happy memory:

> As I stand beside a flowering currant bush on a summer day there suddenly arose in me without warning, and as if from a depth not of years but of centuries, the memory of that earlier morning at the Old House when my brother had brought his toy garden into the nursery. It is difficult to find words strong enough for the sensation which came over me...[4]

In *Sehnsucht*, the longing is so acute that it borders on pain, yet the longing itself is a delight. "The hunger is better than any other fulness; this poverty better than all other wealth". It is a bitter-sweet desire, and "cuts across our ordinary distinction between wanting and having. To have it is, by definition, a want; to want, we find, it is to have it." Secondly, there is something mysterious about the object of the desire. The inexperienced people feel that they know what they desire and are completely deceived by false

desires. For instance, a child looking at a distant hillside may feel that he will fulfil his desire when he reaches there. But when he reaches the hillside he will get either nothing or a recurrence of the same desire. It is equally illusive when the object of the desire is a happy memory or remembered joy, the existence of an enchanted place described in a tale, a perfect beloved. Even if you are granted all these wishes, "the Sweet Desire would have disappeared; would have shifted its ground, like the cuckoo's voice or the rainbows end, and be now calling us from beyond a further hill".[5]

Thus the call is, tantalizing, mysterious and unattainable. This call is the call of the imagined ideal and the search for it is the romantic quest for the imagined ideal.[6] That ideal whatever form it assumes - whether it is a perfect beloved, an ideal vacation or a distant hill always proves elusive.[7] The call has another level of meaning. Lewis is a Neoplatonist and in Neoplatonism a number of things have double existence. Ideas or universals which exist in the mind of the Infinite can also exist in the finite mind of the artist. That is why it is possible to reflect the universals in the particulars of art. Besides, Lewis also believes that a universal spirit exists and that he has this spirit within him. "... I do believe that I have in me a spirit, a chip, shall we say, of universal spirit, and that since all good

and joyful things are spiritual and non-material, I must be careful not to let matter (=nature=Satan, remember) get two great a hold on me, and dull the one spark I have."[8] His perception of beauty has the same pattern. For where he looks at a beautiful sight he sees not only beauty but finds that behind the veil of sensuous beauty which gives the temporary thrills, another force actively operates inviting him to further mystery, "... beauty seems to me to be always an invitation of some sort; usually an invitation to we don't know what. A wood seen as 'picturesque' by a fool (who'd like a frame around it) may be purely contemplated: seen as 'beautiful' it seems rather to say "come unto me"[9] because beauty is the call of the spirit.

> You see the conviction gaining ground on me after all spirit does exist; and that we come into contact with the spiritual element by means of these 'thrills'. I fancy that there is something right outside time and place, which did not create matter, as the Christians say, but is matter's great enemy: and the Beauty is the call of the spirit in that something to the spirit in us.[10]

Thus beauty is not only the call of the romantic ideal but also the call of the spirit from the eternal realm. After his return to Christianity, it dawned upon him that *Sehnsucht* was the beginning of joy in the Christian sense and in fact it was really the desire for union with God. He also realised that as every human desire has a purpose, this mystical longing also has an ultimate purpose.

> Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were not meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing.[11]

The real thing is our true home, and the desire or *Sehnsucht* aroused in us is only a foretaste of it to remind us of our real destiny as human beings. "Corbin Scott Cornell personifies *Sehnsucht* as the 'hound of Heaven, relentlessly pursuing man in order that he may discover his true identity and home". The final fulfilment of *Sehnsucht* is portrayed beautifully in The Last Battle where the Narnian unicorn shouts with joy".[12]

> I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew till now. The reason why we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this.[13]

The *Sehnsucht* motif is central to Lewis' romanticism and though it figures most prominently in The Pilgrim's Regress and Surprised by Joy it "can be identified in nearly all his works".[14]

In one's discussion on *Sehnsucht*, a clear pattern emerges concerning Lewis' romanticism.: the predominance of

Neoplatonism and Christian mysticism. In the beginning it was almost pure Neoplatonism and after his conversion to Christianity, Neoplatonism and mysticism merged. But his romantic self remained unchanged, and his mode of perception of transcendental realities remained the same. Like other Romantics he was concerned with how those realities are revealed and perceived. According to him they are revealed in the form of knowledge and they are perceived by the two mental faculties of reason and imagination. Like Plato and Aristotle, Lewis draws a distinction between two forms of knowledge: *savoir* and *connaître*. *Savoir* is knowledge about Reality acquired through the use of logic and reason. But in contrast *connaître* is experiential knowledge of Reality acquired through imagination. These two faculties are *complementary* and they *re-enforce one another*: reason abstracts things and imagination concretizes them and makes them more susceptible to sensuous experience. Lewis views are further elaborated by Michael Christensen as follows:

> Reason and imagination for Lewis are the complementary human faculties for knowing. In the realm of facts, empirical evidence, sense objects, particulars, and so on, truth is known through reason. But transcendent Reality - knowledge of universals in the eternal realm - if it is to be known at all, must be grasped by imagination ... while reason perceives the truth or falsity of particulars, imagination apprehends universals (though never in an absolute way). What is conveyed through imagination, Lewis says,

> 'is not truth but reality', carefully distinguishing between the two: 'Truth is always about something, but reality is that about which truth is. Reality then is concrete and absolute, while truth is abstract and approximate ... The imaginative approach to reality is the nineteenth-century romantic affirmation of intuition over discursive reason, feeling over intellect, and the heart over the head, as the primary faculty of knowing. Imagination serves to grasp the essence of reality, intuit the immaterial universals, and embrace meaningful images - images which then become the tool of reason. But without the prior work of the imagination, reasoning, itself is impossible.[15]

Thus, for Lewis though reason and imagination are complementary faculties, imagination plays the primary role. Reason can understand things of the factual and empirical realm but only imagination can grasp the spiritual or external realm of universals. Reason can grasp truth but only through imagination reality can be experienced, and only after it has grasped the essence of reality and intuited the immaterial universe reason can set to work and make meaningful images out of it. While science and philosophy are concerned with abstract, descriptive knowledge of the cosmos, religion is concerned with who man is in relation to who God is, with what is Beautiful, Just and Good. Knowledge of the universals requires divine acquaintance, "some 'tasting' of Love Himself". "A 'baptized imagination' as Lewis termed the romantic, mystical, intuitive sense, is necessary to obtain essential knowledge of the Ultimate."[16]

Lewis is advocating here the use of not merely imagination to understand the ultimate as the other Romantics would usually do but a "baptized imagination". This is understandable in the light of his conversion which had made a profound and radical impact on his attitude towards life and beyond. So in a way the "baptism" was not just a baptism of the imagination but it was also extended to his other aesthetics as well; and thus his romanticism itself acquired a new dimension. Once Lewis described his friend Charles Williams as a "Christian Romantic" and defined the term as follows:

> A romantic theologian does not mean one who is romantic about 'theology, but one who is theological about romance, one who considers the theological implications of those experiences which are called romantic. The belief that the most serious and ecstatic experiences either of human love or of imaginative literature have such theological implications, and that they can be healthy and fruitful only if the implications are diligently thought out and severely lived, is the root principle of all his work.[17]

As Michael Christensen has suggested in his book, C.S. Lewis on Scripture, the term "Christian romantic" can be a fairly descriptive term for Lewis as well, as he has made serious and successful attempts in his works particularly in his romances like Out of the Silent Planet, Peredendra, That Hideous Strength to embody or convey theological

implications or truths. But this is not all. His new Christian approach was directed to his literary theories as well which find expression in books like Of This and Other Worlds and Christian Reflections.

In his essay, "Christianity and Literature" which is one of the essays in Christian Reflections, Lewis deals with the questions of imitation and originality and asks whether a Christian writer can be original. He traces the chain of hierarchical order in the epistles and also the gospel. In his epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul says, we are 'of Christ and Christ is of God (2:23). Again in the gospel of St. John, Our Lord compares the relation of the Father to the Son with that of the Son to his flock in respect of knowledge (10:15) and of love (15:9). This is not just a passive and inoperative hierarchical order but it is a matter to be reflected or imitated in life as Christ is to be formed inside each believer (Gal.4:19) or again Christians are told to imitate Paul as he in turn imitates Christ (1 Cor.11:1). So from this Lewis draws the following conclusion:

> In the New Testament the art of life itself is an art of imitation. Can we, believing this, believe that literature, which must derive from real life, is to aim at being 'creative' in 'original', and 'spontaneous'? Originality in the New Testament is quite plainly the prerogative of God alone; ... the duty and happiness of every other being is placed in being derivative, in reflecting like a mirror. Nothing would be more foreign to the tone of scripture than the

> language of those who describe a saint as a 'moral genius' or a 'spiritual genius' thus insinuating that his virtue or spirituality is 'creative' or 'original'.[18]

Therefore, Lewis is of the opinion that in the New Testament there is not much room for creativeness in any sense, literal or metaphorical. Because our destiny lies in the other direction: to humble ourselves and to be as little as possible, to be a mirror to reflect a face that is not ours, and to be a fragrance which is borrowed and not our own. But of course, he is not supporting the doctrine of depravity but only affirming that "the highest good of a creature must be creaturely — that is derivative or reflective — good. In other words, as St. Augustine makes plain (De Civ Dei 13, Cap.1) pride does not only go before a fall but is a fall — a fall of the creature's attention from what is better, God, to what is worse, itself."[19]

Lewis applies the same principle of reflective and derivation to literature as well and says it should form the basis of all critical theory. But now a question arises as to whether imitation and originality in the modern critical sense can go together. Because if a Christian's good consists in being creaturely by imitating beauty or wisdom not of his own there seems to be no room left at all for originality to operate in his art, and lack of originality means lack of genuine creativity and any work lacking in it is considered

worthless. Lewis probes this question further in his essay and finds that in one sense a Christian can be genuinely creative and also original.

> I spoke just now of the ancient idea that the poet was merely the servant of some god, of Apollo, or the Muse; but let us not forget the highly paradoxical words in which Homer's Phemus asserts his claim to be a poet — 'I am self-taught; a god has inspired me with all manner of songs'. It sounds like a direct contradiction. How can he be self-taught if the god has taught him all he knows? Doubtless because the god's instruction is given internally, contrasted with such external aids as, say, the example of other poets. And this seems to blur the distinction I am trying to draw between Christian imitation and 'originality' praised by modern critics. Phemus obviously claims to be original, in the same breath admits his complete dependence on a supernatural teacher. Does not this let in 'originality' and 'creativeness' of the only kind that have ever been claimed?[20]

Thus a Christian writer also can be both self-taught and original. He can be self-taught in the sense that the inspiration received is internal and can be treated as a part of the self, and he can be original in the sense that he does not follow the example of his predecessors.

Lewis makes yet one more distinction between the originality of a Christian and an unbelieving poet. Both of them can be equally original in the sense that they are not influenced by the example of their predecessors but have

drawn on resources of their own. But their resources can vary greatly because of their differences in attitude towards self.

> The unbeliever may take his own temperament and experience, just as they happen to stand, and consider them worth communicating simply because they are facts or, worse still, because they are his to the Christian his own temperament and experience, as *mere* fact, and as merely his, are of no value or importance whatsoever: he will deal with them, if at all, only because they are the medium through which, or the position from which, something universally profitable appeared to him.[21]

Then Lewis gives the examples of Rousseau and St. Augustine both of whom wrote confessions. For the former his own temperament is absolute. But for the latter it is a humble appeal to the Lord to come to his aid and rebuild his wretched self which is in ruin. Wordsworth who is a romantic and who has one foot in each world writes about himself in both the manners of the unbeliever and a Christian. On the one hand he writes about himself and says:

> [For] I must treat on shadowy ground, must sink
> Deep, and aloft ascending breathe in the world
> To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil[22]

On the other he craves indulgence if

> with this
> I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
> Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
> Contemplating; and who and what he was -
> This vision.[23]

Even in the sense of what Wordsworth writes, a Christian can be self-taught and original because his work is based on "the transitory being, that is he, not because he thinks it valuable for he knows that in his flesh dwells no good thing but only because of the 'vision' that appeared to it."[24] But a Christian writer should guard himself against one thing - whether it is an idea or a method - he should not ask "Is it mine?" but "Is it good?" But this is not to suggest that a person should give preference to write only about himself. In fact, he should do it only if it is the thing he can do best. But if he has enough talents to produce work in "an established form and dealing with experiences common to all his race" he should do it more gladly. Because it is a point of weakness rather than strength if a person can respond to a vision only his own way.

We have heard Lewis' view on the difference of temperament between a pagan and a Christian poet. Next we shall look into his view on the difference between an existentialist and a true poet. Michael Christensen has explained Lewis' views as follows:

> The true poet, in Lewis' view, is fundamentally neo-Platonic in outlook. In acknowledging a higher plane of reality, he naturally approaches literature differently from the existentialist poet who affirms only what is real and meaningful to him. The latter aims to express himself through his art. the former seeks to embody universal realities. The existentialist literary

> critic values creativity and originality in art form. The neo-Platonic critic values external reality and concrete experiences portrayed in a beautiful way. The existentialist or 'modern' approach to literature is concerned with "art for art's sake". The Platonic or 'classical' approach is concerned with art for truth's sake.[25]

Then Christensen goes to comment that Lewis' classical understanding of the function of art is nowhere better portrayed than in The Great Divorce. In the book there is a scene about an artist who has just reached the outskirts of heaven from hell travelling by bus along with other tourists. As soon as he sees the majestic beauty of heaven he wants to paint it immediately. But his guide, the spirit, suggests that he look rather than paint. The artist is perplexed. So the Spirit tries to explain:

> When you painted on earth — at least in your earlier days — it was because you caught glimpses of Heaven in the landscape. The success of your painting was that it enabled others to see the glimpses too. But here you are having the thing itself. It is from here that the messages came. There is no good telling us about this country, for we see it already.[26]

The scene depicts beautifully a modern tendency to be obsessed with self-expression. "The artist was no longer interested in the embodiment of eternal Beauty in terms of his art, but rather in self-expression.[27] The Spirit perceptively remarks: 'Every poet and musician and artist,

but for Grace, is drawn away from the love of the thing he tells, to love of the telling.'"[28]

There are three other concepts that deserve our attention as they figure prominently in Lewis' romantic aesthetics, sentiment and homeliness and remember joy. We shall first discuss sentiment. Lewis had an overabundance of sentiment or feeling in him. He was "as intensely romantic as a young nineteenth century poet, so romantic that at times he feared his feeling would lead him to madness."[29] Feeling was most powerfully aroused by beauty in nature and marvellous literature as both evoked in him *Sehnsucht*. But paradoxically, he also had developed a natural distrust of sentiment, as a consequence, perhaps, of seeing frequently, the unpredictability, unreliability and unpleasantness of his father's emotional outbursts at home. Besides, he had a very rational mind and to such a mind sentiment is a nuisance and an embarrassment. But with the instinct of a true artist he continued to uphold the role of feeling in aesthetic creations where it can give delight. On the role of feeling he wrote to Arthur Greeves:

> I am perhaps more sentimental than you, but I don't blow a trumpet about it. Indeed, I am rather ashamed of it. Feeling ought to be kept for literature and art where they are delightful and not intruded into life where they are merely a nuisance".[30]

Lewis also has made interesting observations in another letter to Greeves about feeling in painting, poetry and music. He says painting can express only visible beauty and poetry can express only conscious feeling which can be analysed but there are hundred of feelings that cannot be put into words or even thoughts. But music can begin where the other two leave off as moods and feelings that cannot be expressed in them can come out in music. Yet something even more unique about music is that it can express pure feeling and this kind of music can be found in the works of Schubert and Beethoven. So he considers music as the highest form of art.[31]

The next concept to be discussed is homeliness. It is considered by Lewis as one of the desired qualities in a work of art as this statement indicates: "... trying to think of some subject at once romantic, voluptuous and homely".[32] But what is the meaning of homeliness in the way Lewis uses it? Although Lewis never defined 'homeliness' the word appears frequently in his letters and it indicates a sense of settled domesticity.[33] Yet the longing is not specifically for a particular place but for a particular atmosphere that goes with idealised settled domesticity. "Homeliness in this sense is physically unattainable in this world but nevertheless a potent, mysterious yet compelling force whose call constitutes at least a species of that joy which Lewis was

later to designate as the centre of his life."[34] It is also a part of "the search conducted by all romantics for the ineffable child and for the holy and innocent place."[35]

After his return to the Christian faith it became easier for him to link homeliness with transcendental longing. So he grasped the idea immediately when his friend Owen Barfield described to him the spiritual world as home during a conversation.

> He said among other things that he thought the idea of the spiritual world as home — the discovery of homeliness in that which is otherwise so remote — the feeling that you are coming back tho' to a place you have never yet reached — was peculiar to the British, and thought that MacDonald, Chesterton, and I, had this more than anyone else.[36]

Among the works of Lewis, The Pilgrim's Regress embodies best the above statement. John, the hero's journey back to the Christian faith is like returning home to discover homeliness with its feeling of acceptance, security, peace and joy. Thus something which was formerly only a vague, mysterious pagan aestheticism was transformed into a Christian theory of art which found expression in The Pilgrim's Regress, The Dawn Treader and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and all these works give us a flavour of the homeliness.

Then finally, we shall look into what Lewis says about "remembered joy". It is related to both *Sehnsucht* and his

theory of beauty. It is related to *Sehnsucht* because a beautiful sight reminds him of other beautiful sights seen in the past which in turn triggers longing. It is also related to his theory of beauty because he considers "remembered joy" as a condition of beauty.

> To me, it seems that a great many emotions are united in the perception of beauty: it may turn out to be not a simple thing but a result of unions. For one thing nearly all beautiful sights are to me chiefly important reminders of other beautiful sights: without memory it could be a poor affair. The process presumably has a beginning but once going it grows like a snowball. Could it be that joy remembered ("which now is sad because it has been sweet") is a necessary element in beauty? There is too, I think, a purely sensuous element: that such and such notes and tints (in themselves - not in their combinations) just happen to satisfy our nerves of hearing and sight — as certain food satisfy those of tastes. This would be rather a condition of beauty, perhaps, than an element in it.[37]

"Joy remembered" is a keynote in Lewis' theory of beauty, as he has described above, and it generates a chain of reactions "accumulating in intensity as it increases its scope through time".[38] It is also an important element of *Sehnsucht* and Lewis has given a concrete example in the scene of the current bush in Surprised by Joy in which while he was looking at the bush it suddenly flashed in his mind the memory of his brother's by garden which in turn brought *Sehnsucht*. This type of event convinces Lewis that there is

no such thing as pure contemplation of beauty or cold aesthetics. Because in the perception of beauty many emotions are involved and you get the total impact of beauty from their union and not separately. But one special characteristic to be remembered about "joy remembered" is that it cannot be called at will as the memory of every beautiful sight seen in the past does not bring or produce ecstasy. It has to come on its own and in a sudden flash of memory. "Remembered joy" can lead to creativity as "the impulse to create beauty stems from a desire to reproduce 'notes and tints', sensuous experiences which through memory and associations have taken on particular meaning for the artist and which have drawn him towards a central mystery, a beauty which cannot perhaps be fathomed".[39]

So far, we have discussed Lewis' theories on *Sehnsucht* remembered joy, sentiment and homeliness. We also have pointed out the predominance of Neoplatonism and Christian mysticism in Lewis' romanticism. Neoplatonism is predominant because of his belief in the existence of two realms — the material realm and the spiritual or eternal realm; and the existence of the universals in the eternal realm which are reflected in the particulars of art. Next we have discussed the question of imitation and originality. Lewis continues to believe even after his conversion to Christianity that beauty is a reflection of the eternal beauty or wisdom and that an

artist does not create new beauty but simply imitates what is already in existence in the mind of the eternal Wisdom. But he also admits that a Christian writer can be both inspired and original because inspiration is an internal phenomenon. Lewis also compares a pagan and a Christian writer. The difference is that for a pagan his own temperament is absolute whereas for a Christian his temperament has value only because a vision of universal importance appeared to it. Lastly, he compares a true poet and an existentialist poet.[40] An existentialist writes poetry only for self-expression. So for him art is for art's sake whereas for a true poet (a Neoplatonist) he writes poetry which embody universal truths and thus for him art is for truth's sake. Thus Lewis' aestheticism is a progression from an intuitive love of nature to *Sehnsucht* and from *Sehnsucht* to Neoplatonism and from Neoplatonism to Christian mysticism and from there to Christian romantic theories.

CHAPTER-III

LEWIS' THEORIES ON FICTION

Lewis was a critic who also happened to be a fiction writer and he drew on his experiences as a creative writer to formulate theories especially on children's fiction. He was also possibly the first to analyse science fiction and classify it into five sub-species. In this chapter we are going to examine his essays on children's fiction and science fiction. We shall begin with his theories on children's fiction. In his essay "On Stories" he says abundant discussions have been entered into by critics on style and delineation of character, but on the story itself, which is a series of imagined events, hardly any serious attention has been given by critics except by three notable exception: Aristotle, Boccaccio and Jung and his followers.

As a result, a curious consequence has followed. The story has been used not for the sake of the story itself but for other purposes like illustrating manners of characters or for depicting social conditions. Worse of all not only have they been despised as fit only for children but the pleasure derived from them have been considered low in the scale of modern criticism. So Lewis wants to remedy the second injustice, as he suspects it is based on a very hasty

assumption. In order to derive the right kind of pleasure from reading the story, it is necessary to make a division of books and also of readers:

> I think that books which are read merely 'for the story may be enjoyed in two very different ways. It is partly a division of books (some stories can be read only in one spirit and some only in the other) and partly a division of readers (the same book can be read in different ways).[1]

Regarding the first distinction, as Lewis has said in An Experiment in Criticism, what is meant lightly should be read lightly and what is meant gravely has to be read gravely to get the most out of an author. Regarding the second distinction, though two readers read the same story, they may enjoy the story for entirely different reasons. To illustrate this point he tells us about his encounter with an American pupils of his.

> We were talking about the books which had delighted our boyhood. His favourite had been Fenimore Cooper whom (as it happens) I have never read. My friend described one particular scene in which the hero was half sleeping by his bivouac fire in the woods while a Redskin with tomahawk was silently creeping on him from behind. He remembered the breathless excitement with which he had read the passage, the agonised suspense with which he wondered whether the hero would wake up in time or not.[2]

Lewis thought certainly it was not the sheer excitement, and if it was so, any other scary story would

have done as well. But it must be the atmosphere evoked by the Redskinnery with all its associations — the tomahawk, the high cheek-bones, the feathers, the whiskered trousers, the snow and the snow-shoes, beavers and canoes, warpaths and wigwams, and Hiawatha names. But he was shocked to hear from his pupil that it was only the excitement that mattered, and if the Redskin was substituted by an ordinary crook with a revolver it would have served the purpose equally well. In this case excitement was the sole element that gave him pleasure. But he is not alone; there are many others with similar taste and many believe that excitement is the only pleasure stories can ever give. But Lewis feels that this is not entirely true. Because, for some readers another factor comes in; and that factor is atmosphere. First of all he talks from his own experience as a reader of a great many romance from which he has received an enormous amount of pleasure. So if the love of story is to be equated with the love of excitement he should be the greater lover of excitement. But this is not so. He says The Three Musketeers supposedly the most exciting novel in the world did not appeal to him at all; the total lack of atmosphere repels him. There is no country and so there is no difference between Paris and London; there is no weather so you have no sense of season; and it is nothing but a series of event. "There is not a moment's rest from the adventures: one's nose

is kept ruthlessly to the grindstone. It all means nothing. If that is what is meant by Romance, then Romance is my aversion and I greatly prefer George Eliot and Trollope".

Lewis also has given an example in which atmosphere is partially spoiled by an excessive concern for excitement. It is the last scene in King Solomon's Mine which has the right atmosphere but which was altered by the producer in the movie version of it. In the scene "the heroes are awaiting death entombed in a rock chamber and surrounded by the mummified kings of the land".[3] But the film maker substituted this with a subterranean volcanic eruption and an earthquake. If sheer excitement is what one wants, the increase in danger increases the excitement and these two immediate and massive dangers should be better than one single danger of prolonged starvation to death in a cave. But this is not so. So Lewis draws the following conclusion from the scene.

> There must be a pleasure in such stories distinct from mere excitement or I should not feel that I had been cheated in being given the earthquake instead of Haggard's actual scene. What I lose is the whole sense of the deathly (quite a different thing from simple danger of death) — the cold, the silence, and the surrounding faces of the ancient, the crowned and sceptred dead."[4]

Atmosphere can be of different types and they can be derived from entirely different sources. As the Redskin evokes a world of its own, so also do giants and pirates. But these are not the only sources of danger for mankind. A

hostile environment or blind natural forces can be equally dangerous. But now let us examine first the atmosphere evoked by giants.

> Jack the Giant Killer is not, in essence, simply the story of a clever hero surmounting danger. It is in essence the story of such a hero surmounting danger from giants. It is quite easy to continue a story in which, though the enemies are of normal size, the odds against Jack are equally great. But it will be quite a different story. The whole quality of the imaginative response is determined by the fact that the enemies are giants. That heaviness, that monstrosity, that uncouthness, hangs over the whole thing .... The dangerousness of the giants is, though important, secondary. In some folk-tales we meet giants who are not dangerous. But they still affect us in much the same way. A good giant is legitimate: but he would be twenty tons of living, earth-shaking, oxymoron. The intolerable pressure, the sense of something older, wilder, and more earthly than humanity, would still cleave to him.[5]

However, the world of giants is entirely different from that of pirates. The atmosphere stirred up by giants has more of a physical nature with its heaviness, monstrosity and uncouthness. But that of pirates is one of moral depravity and evil and thus is pervaded by an atmosphere of lawlessness, greed, violence and ferocity. And again danger alone is not responsible for the sinister atmosphere.

> It is not the mere increase of danger that does the trick. It is the whole image of utter lawless enemy, the men who have cut adrift from all human society

> and become, as it were, a species of their own - men strangely clad, dark men with earrings, men with a history which they know and we don't know, lords of unspecified treasure in undiscovered islands. They are, in fact, to the young reader almost as mythological as giants. It does not cross his mind that a man — a mere man like the rest of us — might be a pirate at one time of his life and not, at another, or that there is any smudgy frontier between piracy and privateering. A pirate is a pirate, just as a giant is a giant.[6]

Now let us consider the kind of atmosphere generated when man is pitted against nature. One possibility is being shut in causing claustrophobia, and the other possibility is being shut out causing agoraphobia. In King Solomon's Mines the heroes were shut in. It was a slow prolonged death, almost a premature burial among the ancient mummified kings. It caused a hushing spell on the imagination and one's breath shortens as one watches them. But what is it like to be shut out on the surface of the moon. With the setting of the sun, the air and the heat also have gone as well; and the first tiny flakes startles one into a realisation of the enormity of the situation. One has to do something quickly or perish. Finally, one reaches the sphere and is saved. What has kept one enthralled while reading the episode is more than mere suspense concerning the safety of the hero as it makes no difference whether one is frozen to death on earth or on the moon. So it was a mixed feeling of awe and fear as the hero is exposed to an outer darkness of cosmic proportion.

> 'Over me, around me, closing in on me, embracing me ever nearer was the Eternal ... the infinite and final night of space ...' That airless outer darkness is important not for what it can do to Bedford but for what it does to us: to trouble us with Pascal's old fear of those eternal silence which gnawed at so much religious faith and shattered so many humanistic hopes to evoke with them and through them all our racial and childish memories of exclusion and desolation: to present in fact, as an institution one permanent aspect of human experience.[7]

Lewis is of the opinion that the emphasis on excitement may pose a danger to the deeper imagination. Because a good idea or theme can be obscured or ruined by the compulsion to provide excitement after excitement. This tendency is often noticed in some inferior American romance which appear in magazines on science fiction. So he remarks: "... we have come across a really suggestive idea. But the author has no expedient for keeping the story on the move except that of putting his hero into violent danger. In the hurry and scurry of his escapes the poetry of the basic idea is lost."[8]

This happens in a milder degree in Well's War of the Worlds. "What really matters is the idea of being attacked by something utterly outside". So it is more than the mere fact that the Martian invaders are dangerous and can kill us. If this is so a bacillus or a burglar can do the same. So when the hero goes to look at the newly fallen gleaming projectile with unfamiliar hero the whole mystery is laid bare, and the

word "extra-terrestrial" which is the key word of the story loses its power of awe.

In good stories, the supernatural is often introduced and it is more misunderstood than anything else. Once Dr. Johnson remarked that children like marvels because they didn't know that they are not true. But this is a gross misunderstanding of the nature of marvels in stories. To start with all children do not like marvels nor all who do are children. Secondly, it is not necessary to believe in fairies or giants or dragons. In fact, belief may be a positive disadvantage. Children know that fairy-tales are not true and enjoy them all the same. So also are adults who enjoy marvels in romances. Thirdly, marvels are not mere arbitrary fictions stuck on to the story to make it more sensational. "The logic for a fairy tale is as strict as that of a realistic novel". Kenneth Grahame did not make an arbitrary choice in making a toad the hero in The Wind in the Willows. A toad is so chosen because its face has some grotesque resemblance to the human face with its fatuous and perpetual grin. "The ludicrous quasi human expression is ... changeless: the toad cannot stop grinning because its grin is not really a grin at all. Looking at the creature we thus see, isolated and fixed, an aspect of human vanity in its funniest and most pardonable form ..."[9]

The characters in The Wind in the Willows are all thinly disguised. But why is this disguise at all? It is indispensable. Because when they are completely humanised, we are immediately confronted with a dilemma: are the characters to be children or adults? They can be neither as either will fail to depict the kind of smugness and happiness the author is trying to depict. So it is a mixture of both. The characters are like children in the sense that they have no responsibilities and everything is taken for granted. But they are also like adults in the sense that "they go where they please, do what they like and arrange their own lines".

Another group of stories is based on fulfilled prophecies such as Oedipus, The Man Who Would be King and The Hobbit. In these stories usually the steps taken to frustrate the fulfilment of the prophecy brings about its fulfilment. In the story of Oedipus, for instance, it is prophesied that he will kill his father and marry his mother. To prevent its fulfilment he is exposed on a mountain to die. But that exposure, by leading to his rescue and his consequent life among strangers in ignorance of his real parentage, renders possible the fulfilment of both the prophecies. Such stories produce in us a feeling of awe coupled with bewilderment.

There are certain stories to which the reader can go again and again with interest and pleasure. Lewis gives us a reason why this happens. He says that this is not because the

reader finds excitement every time he re-reads it. In fact, excitement must disappear from the second reading as there is nothing to surprise him anymore. But what attracts him to the same romance again and again is the quality of surprisingness.

> The reader is looking not for actual surprises (which can come only once) but for a certain surprisingness ... the surprise works as well as the twentieth as the first. It is the quality of unexpectedness, not the fact that delight us ... knowing that 'surprise' is coming we can now fully relish ... free from the shock of actual surprise you can attend better to the intrinsic surprisingness of the peripeteia.[10]

In this essay, the internal tension between the theme and the plot engages the attention of Lewis as well. He compares the plot to a net and the theme to a bird. But he finds that it is not always easy to catch the bird with the net because the theme may be something that does not have sequences, as it may be a state or a quality such as giantship, otherness or the desolation of pace. So the net does not succeed always in catching the bird. However, Lewis suggests that "this internal tension in the heart of every story between the theme and the plot constitutes, after all; its chief resemblance to life". Because in life too we meet the same failure and commit the same blunder. For example, the idea of adventure fades when the details of the day-to-day affairs begin to distract us. Other grand ideas like

homecoming or re-union with a beloved also similarly elude us. So he further comments,

> ... it seems to me [both in life and art], we are always trying to catch in our net successive moments that is not successive. Whether in real life there is any doctor who can teach us how to do it, so that at least either the meshes will become fine enough to hold the bird, or we be changed that we can throw our nets away and follow the bird to its own country, is not a question for this essay. But I think it is sometimes done — or very very nearly done — in stories. I believe the effort to be well worth making.[11]

In another essay "On Three Ways of Writing for Children", Lewis has suggested three ways for writing for children, and also has defended the fairy tale as a valid and useful form of art. Lewis begins by stating that there is one bad way and two good ones for writing for children. The bad way is to treat children like a special public department and to give them what the public wants no matter whether one likes the story or not. The second way which is a good way is "to let the printed story grow out of a story told to a particular child".[12] One is certainly giving the child what it wants, but the similarity with the first is only superficial as one is dealing with a concrete person, a particular child who is different from all other children and not with children as a species. Moreover, one is telling the child not only what it wants but also what one values and likes. And thus with the child, "A community, a composite

personality, is created and out of that the story grows".[13] this is the method used by Kenneth Grahame, Lewis Caroll and Tolkien. The third way, which is also a good way, 'consists in writing a children's story because it is the best art-form for something you have to say: just as a composer might write a Dead March not because there was a public funeral in view but because certain musical ideas that viewed to him went best into the form".[14]

Under the third species comes fantasy or the fairy tale. But there are other sub-species as well. E. Nesbit's trilogy about Bastable family is a good specimen of another kind. It is children's story about the childhood of Oswald. But it is also the only form in which E. Nesbit could have given us a much of the humours of childhood. The book is more realistic reading for adults about children than books about children addressed to them. At the same time it is also more mature reading than children realise as it is the character study of Oswald which is a satiric self-portrait and which children can read and appreciate but which they may not do so in any other form.

Lewis feels that on the basis of what is found in the Bastable trilogy a principle can be formulated thus: "where the children's story is simply the right form for what the author has to say, then of course readers who want to hear that will read the story or re-read it, at any age."[15] And

Lewis further adds, "I am almost inclined to set it up as a cannon that children's story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's story."[16]

There has been some adverse criticism of fantasy or fairy tale by the modern critical world. They use the term 'adult' as a term of approval, and are thus hostile to what they call 'nostalgia' and 'Peter Pantheism'. They scorn the fairy tale and despise and pity those adults who enjoy reading them for arrested development. Lewis — "who admits that dwarfs and giants and talking beasts and witches are still dear to him" — puts up a defence against these charges because they go against his whole view of the fairy tale and also literature. His defence consists of three propositions.

1) Critics who treat 'adult' as a term of approval, instead of only as a mere descriptive term, cannot be adult themselves as to admire the grown up and to be ashamed of being childish are marks of childhood and adolescence. In children this attitude in moderation may be natural and even healthy, but to carry it to middle age it is really a work of arrested development. "When I became a man I put away childish things, including the fear of childishness and desire to be very grown up."[17]

2) The modern view apparently involves a false conception of growth. Arrested development consists not in refusing to lose old things but in failing to add new things.

Thus the charge of arrested growth cannot be levelled against those who refuse to lose and still cherish a taste in childhood.

3) In his essay on "Fairy Tales", Tolkien says that "in most places and times, the fairy tale has not been specially made for, nor exclusively enjoyed by children. The whole association of fairy tales and fantasy with childhood is local and accidental ... It has gravitated to the nursery when it became unfashionable in literary circles, just as unfashionable furniture gravitated to the nursery in Victorian houses".[18] Many children do not like fairy tales and many adults do like it. An for those who like it, children or adults, must have a common reason. Regarding the reason, three theories have been formulated by different authors including one by Lewis himself.

1) Tolkien is of the view that fairy tales have an appeal because in writing fairy tales man is exercising mostly his function as a sub-creator by creating a subordinate world of his own. As creativity is "one of man's proper functions, delight naturally arises whenever it is successfully performed."[19]

2) Jung believes that "a fairy tale liberates Archetypes which dwell in collective unconscious" and when we read a good fairy tale we learn about ourselves.

3) Lewis is of the view that beings like giants, dwarfs and talking animals which in some ways resemble human beings act as admirable hieroglyphs and "convey psychology and type of character, more briefly than novelistic presentations". Consider Mr. Badger in The Wind in the Willows — the extraordinary amalgam of high rank, course manners, gruffness, shyness, and goodness. The child who has once met Mr. Badger has ever afterwards, in its bones, a knowledge of humanity and of English social history which it could not get in any other".[20]

Periodically some reformer tries to banish the fairy tale on the ground that it gives false impression to the children of the world they live in. But Lewis thinks that this is not true.

> I think no literature that children could read give them less of a false impression. I think what profess to be realistic stories for children are far more likely to deceive them. I never expected the real would be like the fairy tales. I think that I did expect school to be like school stories. The fantasies did not deceive me: the school stories did. All stories in which children have adventures and successes which are possible, in the sense that they do not break the laws of nature, but almost infinitely improbable, are in more danger than the fairy tales of raising false expectations.[21]

Secondly, there is also the charge of escapism. The charge can be answered more or less in the same way. Both fairy tales and school stories arouse longing and imagina-

tively satisfying wishes. But there is a subtle difference between them. The longing to enter fairy land may stir and trouble one; but it doesn't bring discontent whereas longing aroused by school stories which are often very close to real situations in life can become ravenous and deadly. And when one is confronted with disappointments and humiliations in real life one may run to them to escape problems and return to the real world undivinely discontented. "For it is all flattery to the eye. The pleasure consists in picturing oneself the object of admiration".[22] the longing for fairy land is very different. Though it arouses a longing beyond one's reach, far from dulling or emptying the actual world, it gives a new dimension of depth. Reading about enchanted woods does not make a child despise actual woods but makes all woods a little enchanted. Thus longing for fairy land is a spiritual exercise but the other type of longing aroused by realistic stories is a disease.

Thirdly, there is a more serious attack from those who do not want children to be frightened. Not wishing children to be frightened can mean two things — that we must not give the child phobias, and also that one must keep out of his mind the knowledge that he is born into a world of good and evil. If they mean the first, Lewis agrees but if the second he doesn't. Because agreeing with the second "would give children a false impression about life and would feed them on

escapism in the bad sense". So Lewis makes the following suggestion:

> There is something ludicrous in the idea of so educating a generation which is born to the Ogpu and the atomic bomb. Since it is so likely that they will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage. Otherwise you are making their destiny not brighter but darker.[23]

But regarding the phobias they cannot be controlled by literary means. Perhaps sometimes a fear can be traced to a particular image in a book. But eliminating that fear does not ensure controlling other fears which may come from all sorts of unexpected and unpredictable sources. Because, "we seem to bring them into the world with us readymade".[24] What does one do when a child develops a term for insect or a memorial stone or a particular edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica? So for a healthy and balanced exposure, Lewis suggests the following:

> ... I think it possible that by confirming your child to blameless stories of child life in which nothing at all alarming ever happens, you would fail to banish the terror, and would succeed in banishing all that can enable them or make them endurable. For in fairy tales, side by side with the terrible figures, we find ... comforters and protectors, the radiant ones, and the terrible figures are not merely terrible, but sublime.[25]

After having discussed the nature of fantasy and its effects on readers. Lewis gets into the theme proper, namely,

writing for children. But he declines to give outright any advice for writing stories for children on the grounds that there are better story writers than he and also that he has never exactly made a story by deliberately applying a particular technique. He says the process is more like bird-watching than like talking or building. Because he sees pictures and if he keeps quiet and watches they begin to join themselves up. In certain case a whole set might join themselves very consistently to make a complete story, but very often there are gaps which he has to fill up by deliberate invention.

Lewis rejects the approach which asks, "what do modern children like"? He also rejects the moral or didactic approach, "What do modern children need"? Not because he doesn't like stories to have a moral but because that approach will not lead to a good moral. So he suggests asking, "What moral do I need"? Because what does not concern us deeply will not deeply interest our readers either whatever their age. But the best thing is not to ask questions at all and let the pictures tell their own morals. "For the moral inherent in them will rise from whatever spiritual roots you have succeeded in striking during the whole course of your life".[26] But if the moral is not inherent in them, don't put any. It will look false and impertinent to the children. "For we have been told on high

authority that in moral sphere they are probably at least as wise as we are ... The only moral that is of any value is that which rises inevitably from the whole cost of the author's mind."[27]

Lewis also suggests that we give up the attitude of superiority towards children and write with an attitude of equality and oneness with them as we usually share the same nature with them especially in our imaginative life.

> We must write for children out of those elements in our imagination which we share with children ... The matter of our story should be a part of the habitual furniture of our minds. ... We must meet children as equals in that area of our nature where we are their equals. Our superiority consists partly in commanding other areas, and partly (which is more relevant) in the fact that we are better at telling stories than they are. The child reader is neither to be patronized nor idolised: we talk to him as man to man. But the worst attitude of all would be the professional attitude which regards children in the lump as a sort of raw-material which we have to handle ... [But we should treat] them with respect. We must not imagine that we are Providence or Destiny.[28]

In yet on more essay "sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to be said", Lewis has dealt with story writing. As Tasso did, Lewis also makes a distinction between the poet as poet, and the poet as man and citizen or Christian. This distinction is necessary because one without the other doesn't work. "... there are usually two reasons for writing

an imaginative work, which may be called Author's reason and the Man's. If only one of these is present, then, so far as I am concerned, the book will not be written. If the first is lacking, it can't, if the second is lacking, it shouldn't."[29]

Then Lewis describes how he writes his own fairy tales. Contrary to what some people think, he doesn't start by asking how he could say something about Christianity to children, then fix on the fairy tale, then collect information about child psychology and then draw a list of Christian doctrines and then a write allegories to embody them. "This is all pure moonshine". Because it begins in a much more spontaneous manner than that though it has to go through a process of ferment in the mind of the author before a story emerges.

> In the Author's mind there bubbles up every now and then the material for a story. For me it invariably begins with mental pictures such as fawn carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge or a magnificent lion. The images do not have to be anything Christian about them as that element would push itself of their own record. It was a part of the ferment. This ferment leads to nothing unless it is accompanied with the longing for a Form: verse or prose, short story, novel, play or what not. When these two things click you have the Author's impulse complete. It is now a thing inside him pawning to get out. He longs to see the bubbling stuff pouring into that form as the housewife longs to see the new jam pouring into the clean jar. This nags him all day long and gets in the way of his work and his sleep and his meals. It's like being in love.

> While the author is in the state, the Man will of course have to criticise the proposed book from quite a different point of view. He will ask how the gratification of the impulse will fit in with all the other things he wants, and ought to do or be. Perhaps the whole thing is too frivolous and trivial (from the Man's point of view, not the Author's) to justify the time and pains it would involve. Perhaps it would be unedifying when it was done. Or else perhaps (at this point the Author cheers up) it looks like being good not in a merely literary sense, but 'good' all around.[30]

Lewis is possibly one of the earliest to analyse science fiction as a species. His essay, on "Science fiction" was written at a time when science fiction was having a boom, and all sorts of writers were writing it to avail themselves of the opportunity to "cash in". Though many were commercial trash some were genuine and legitimate works of art. Lewis has analysed them and divided them into the following sub-species.

1) The fiction of Displaced Persons. In this sub-species science fiction is written by commercial writers who write only to take advantage of the popularity of science fiction for financial gain. The writers themselves may have no real interest in science fiction and this becomes apparent in their works as they simply give them a veneer of science fiction to their normal works of fiction. In this sub-species it is common for an author "to leap into an imagined future

in which planetary, sidereal, or even galactic travel take place ... Against this huge sackcloth he then proceeds to develop an ordinary love-story, spy story, wreck-story, or crime story".[31] There is nothing wrong in doing this if the author can "develop a story of real value which could not have been told in any other way." But it becomes tasteless if it is done without a good reason such as leaping "a thousand years to find plots and passions which they could have found at home."

2) The Fiction of Engineer. This sub-species of science fiction is written by persons "who are primarily interested in space-travel, or in other undiscovered techniques, as real possibilities in the actual universe. They give us in imaginative form their guesses as to how the thing might be done."[32] Some good specimens of this kind are Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea and Well's Land Ironclads. These stories excited great interest before the introduction of real submarine and real tanks.

3) Speculative Science Fiction. In this form of fiction the interest is scientific but speculative. When we learn about the probable nature of places from science it arouses our curiosity as to what it would be like to go there and to live there. "The scientists themselves, the moment they go beyond purely mathematical statements, can hardly avoid describing the facts in terms of their probable effect

in the senses of a human observer. Prolong this, and give along with that sense experience, his probable emotions and thoughts, and you have at once a rudimentary science fiction."[33]

However, travelling imaginatively to a remote places is not just a modern phenomenon. Men have been doing this for centuries. What would it be like to visit Hades? Homer sends Odysseus there. And Dante takes one to the Antipodes which was believed to be forever inaccessible because of the torrid zone. And "he describes with all the gusto of the later scientifictionist how surprising it was to see the sun in such a position."[34] In The First Man in the Moon you get "the first glimpse of the unveiled airless sky, the lunar landscape, the lunar levity, the incomparable solitude, then the growing terror, finally the overwhelming approach of the night."[35]

This kind of stories can be called special novels and they will have to be judged by their own rules. So it will be absurd to condemn them because they don't have deep or sensitive characterisation as it is a fault if they do. In fact the stranger the story the more ordinary and less prominent should be the character. "Hence Gulliver is a commonplace little man and Alice a commonplace little girl. If they had been more remarkable they would have wrecked their books. The ancient mariner himself is a very ordinary

man. To tell how odd things struck odd people is to have an oddity too much: he who is to see strange sights must not himself be strange."[36]

Though this particular form of science fiction is capable of many virtues, it cannot endure copious production. Because only the first visit to the Moon or Mars or any star for that matter can be interesting as "it becomes difficult to suspend our disbelief in favour of subsequent visits. However, good they were they would kill each other by becoming numerous".[37]

4) The Eschatological. This kind of fiction gives an imaginative "speculation about the ultimate destiny of our species". Examples are Well's Time Machine and Olaf Stapledon's Last and First Men. Here it becomes imperative to separate this form of fiction from the novel. Take Last and First Men, for instance, "it is not novelistic at all. It is indeed a new form of pseudo history. The pace, the concern with broad general movement, the tone; are all those of historiography, not the novelist".[38] In this form we can include Geoffrey Dennis' The End of the World, J.B.S. Haldene's Possible Worlds and The Last Judgement. All these works are good reminders of our need for a larger perspective on life. We tend to become engrossed in our needs or hopes or fears whether they be individual or social or political and lose sight of the larger perspectives of life. This enslaves

us to the present and makes us forget that we have a whither and a whence. But this kind of work gives us a more balanced view of life and makes us feel the apparent absurdity of many of our fears and hopes producing a sobering effect in us.

> Works of this kind gives expression to thoughts and emotions, which I think it good that we should sometimes entertain. It is sobering and cathartic to remember, and now and then, our collective smallness, our apparent isolation, the apparent indifference of nature, the slow biological, and astronomical processes which may, in the long run, make many of our hopes (possibly some of our fears) ridiculous'.[39]

5) Fantasy and Science Fiction. In the last sub-species, apart from space travel; one will also find stories about gods, ghosts, ghouls, demons, fairies, monsters and so on. Lewis believes that this sub-species represents a deep imaginative need of man to satisfy his desire for the strange, exotic and the marvellous. This desire to visit "strange regions in search of such beauty, awe or terror as the actual world does not supply have increasingly been driven to other planets or other stars. It is the result of increasing geographical knowledge ... As the area of knowledge spreads, you need to go further afield: like a man moving his house further and further out into the country as the new-building estates catch him up".[40]

But in earlier times, it was easier for authors to locate marvels close by without losing their effect. In

Grimm's fairy tales one will find witches or ogres in a wood which is just an hour's journey. In Homer's Odyssey, only after several days journey by sea he can meet Circe, Calypso, the Cyclops and Sirens. Swift takes us to remote seas, and Voltaire to America and so on. But now the world has shrunken in size and the unfamiliar in the past has become familiar and only extra-terrestrial regions are strange enough for marvels.

In this kind of story, in order to keep up the pseudo-scientific appearance, a machine or space-ship is used, and only the most superficial appearance of plausibility will do. But Lewis believes that it is more effective to use a supernatural means like an angel rather than a machine for transport in inter-planetary travels. Even after reaching the destination it is not necessary to be tied down to all scientific probabilities. Because, "It is their wonder, or beauty, or suggestiveness that matters."[41]

The nature of this sub-species is the same as those of fantastic and mythopoeic literature. But the problem is that "sub-species and sub-species break out in baffling multitude." And Lewis remarks that the subject "still awaits its Aristotle to classify them. However, he himself has managed to tame them quite well by bringing them under the following main types.

In the first type it may represent the intellect and it is almost completely free from emotion. Lewis cites Abbot's Flatland as the purest specimen of the type where emotion is kept at the minimal level. Another excellent specimen is Robert A. Heinteins "By His Bootstraps". It is "a story of a man who is enabled to travel into the future when he shall have discovered a method of time-travel, comes back to himself in the present (then of course, the past) and fetches him".[42]

In the second type, the impossible is a postulate which is to be granted before the story gets going. But "within the frame we inhabit the known world and are as realistic as anyone else.[43] A good example would be Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In F. Anstey's Brass Bottle the postulate liberates farcical consequences. But there are other works which are far from being comic in consequences. Marc Brandel's Cast the First Shadow is a case in point. It is the story of a man who is solitary, despised and oppressed because he has no shadow. Later he discovers a woman who shares the same innocent defect but he turns away from her in disgust as she has the additional defect of having no reflection.

In the third type "the marvellous is in the grain of the whole work. We are throughout in another world. What makes that world valuable is not, of course mere multiplications of the marvellous either for comic effect or

for mere astonishments, but its quality, its flavour. ... give sensations we never had before and enlarge our conception of the range of possible experiences."[44] Works of this type would include parts of the Odyssey, The Fairie Queene, "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel". MacDonald's Phatastes, Tolkien's Lord of Rings, and David Lindsay's Voyage to Arcturus.

Lewis says nobody has so far given a satisfactory exploration as to why such stories can give us keen, lasting and solemn pleasure. Jung went furthest but he ended up producing another myth instead of a convincing explanation. But one thing is sure: those who like fantasy like it with great intensity and those who hate it also hate it with the same intensity. Thus the conclusion he arrives from observing the phenomenon is that "mythopoeic is rather, for good or ill, a mode of imagination which does something to us at a deep level".[45]

Then, by way of conclusion we may sum up Lewis theories on fiction. One of his theories is on the process o writing stories. In this theory he makes a distinctio between the poet as poet and the poet as man and citizen. Th author's mind bubbles every now and then with ideas. It i followed by the longing for a form. When the two thing click, the author's impulse is complete. Then he longs to pu the bubbling stuff into form. The men then decides the

advantages and disadvantages of writing the story. Another theory is on writing for children. He says there is one bad way and two good ways for writing for children. The bad way is to give the children what the public wants; and they good ways are to let the story grow out of a story told to a particular child, and writing a children's story because it is the best way for something you want to say. Lewis also has advanced a theory concerning the fairy tales' universal appeal. He says characters in fairy tales act as hieroglyphs which depict human types even more effectively, at times, than novelistic presentation can do. Lewis was the first man to examine science fiction critically and classify it into five sub-species. He did for science fiction what Aristotle had done for Greek poetry.

CHAPTER-IV

LEWIS' ECLECTICISM

Lewis' approach to literature was eclectic. His eclecticism stemmed essentially from his independence of judgement. For him taste was the deciding factor in accepting or rejecting a literary concept, not affiliation or loyalty to any school of criticism. For though a romantic he rejected certain romantic concepts and adopted some of those of the New Critics. Yet he also disagreed quite strongly with some of the literary assumptions of the New Critics. Some of his ideas are considered very relevant to the contemporary situation but again he also adopted a very conservative attitude towards psycho-analysis and anthropology as tools of literary criticism. Another prominent characteristic of Lewis was his polemical nature. He had great dialectical skills and he had a tendency to make his disagreements with others public and polemical.

In this chapter, the essays we are going to examine reflect his polemical and eclectic nature. As the essays in this chapter constitute some of Lewis' major views, insights and theories on literature they need to be examined in detail. We shall begin with The Personal Theory, a book which

came out as the result of a controversy between C.S. Lewis and E.M.W. Tillyard on the personal heresy.

The controversy first began when Lewis published an article in Essays and Studies[1] attacking the notion that poetry is the expression of the poet's personality. He labelled the supposed offence as "personal heresy" and accused particularly two persons of being guilty of the heresy: T.S. Eliot and E.M.W. Tillyard. Eliot wrote in his essay, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" that "The rage of Dante against Florence or Pistoia, or what not, the deep surge of Shakespeare's cynicism and disillusionment are merely gigantic attempts to metaphorse private failure and disappointment."[2] In the case of Tillyard, the controversy was occasioned by the publication of his book Milton in which he contended that the critics who handled Milton properly were the Satanists who "invested the character of Satan with all that Milton felt and valued most strongly".[3] Lewis also quoted another passage from the same book which implied that the real subject of Paradise Lost was studying "the state of Milton's mind when he wrote it."[4]

The latter view was even quoted by several of Lewis' pupils. This made him think that he had to do more than reprimand his pupils.[5] So he wrote an article attacking these views, and published it in Essays and Studies. A copy of this article was also sent to Eliot but he did not respond. But

Tillyard responded with a rejoinder and the controversy ran into six essays which were jointly published by Lewis and Tillyard in book form as The Personal Heresy.

In the first article of the book, Lewis introduces his position by saying "In this paper I shall maintain that when we read poetry as should be read, we have before us no representation which claims to be the poet, and frequently no representation of a man, a character, or a personality at all".[6] Then he goes on to illustrate his claim by interpreting the following passage from Herrick's poem "Upon Julia's Clothes".

> Whereas in silks my Julia goes,
> Then, then, methinks how sweetly flows
> That liquefaction of her clothes?

If the personal heresy was true the reader should get some impression of the poet's personality, and he should thereby be enriched by learning something of human nature from there. But no such thing is ever experienced in reading the lines. What the reader experiences is an apprehension of silk. The result of that apprehension is the perception of the poet's skill; and then comes the perception of the poet's personality implied by such skill. Thus it is twice removed from the essential poetic experience. But the perception cannot come unless the reader has already apprehended the silk, and a thing presented in a poem can never be the

personality of the poet, but only what the poet has presented to us to share a part of his experience with us.

> ... What I am aware of in reading Herrick's poem is silk, but not silk as an object in *rerum natura*. But as Herrick saw it; and in so doing, it may be argued, I do come into contact with his temperament in the most intimate — perhaps the only possible way.[8]

Thus the reader comes into contact with the poet not by studying his personality in the poem but by sharing his consciousness on temperament in the poem. The reader has to see with the poet to share his consciousness not by attending to it. So instead of becoming a spectacle himself the poet becomes a pair of spectacles. And as Professor Alexander suggests, the poet is to be enjoyed not contemplated. So the real nature of the role of a poet can be described as follows:

> The poet is not a man who asks me to look at him; he is a man who says 'look at that' and points; the more I follow the pointing of his finger the less I can possibly see of him.[9]

Lewis explains further the nature of the consciousness of the poet. Lewis contends that this consciousness of the poet is usually not the normal consciousness of the poet but a heightened one which comes only at certain times and not all the time. And thus to the reader,

> It was not, in fact, a personality of a person ... It was a mood, or a mode of consciousness, created temporarily in the minds of various readers by the

> suggestive qualities which certain words and ideas have taken on in the course of human history, and never, so far as I know, existing normally or permanently — never constituting the person — in anyone.[10]

That the poet's heightened consciousness is not something habitual with the poet and also that the poet expresses something else rather than his own personality in writing poetry has been unequivocally declared by the poets themselves. Homer has to invoke the Muse for inspiration. Herrick confides that every day is not good for verse. Emerson declares that "there is a good deal of inspiration in a chest of good tea". All these show that the words for poetic composition will not come for the asking; but they are wooed with great labour and far from being the poet's daily temper and habitual self.

Lewis gives another reason why poetry cannot be the expression of the poet's personality. To him it is the poet's starting point and his limitation. It is analogous to the position of a window. A window is put there not to study windows but so that you may forget the window and see a landscape through it. In the same way a poet who remains at mere personality, which is his starting point, is no poet. It is his business to start from his own mode of consciousness and lead us to a new mode of consciousness through his personality.

> He proceeds partly by instinct, partly by following the tradition of his predecessor, but very largely by the method of trial and error; and the result, when it comes, if for him, no less than for us an acquisition, a voyage beyond the limits of his personal view, and annihilation of the brute fact of his own psychology rather than its assertion.[11]

Lewis then explains the cause of the personal heresy. He feels that it is a product of the age in which so many are required to talk of poetry but only very few care for beauty. As a result they begin to indulge in gossip and devote their attention to details about a poet's life rather than reading and exploring his poetry. But this is not the only cause. There is a deeper and more serious reason. Moderns have an inability to make up their minds between materialist and spiritual theories of the universe. Both these theories are fatal to the personal heresy. But a personalist finds his opportunity "in the coming and going of the mind between the two". A typical modern critic is a half-hearted materialist who bases his beliefs not on science but on popularised science. He thinks that everything except the buzzing electrons is subjective fancy. So he thinks that poetry is an expression of the poet's "pure, uncontaminated, undivided personality" and everything outside the poet's head is the interplay of blind forces. But he forgets that if materialism is true everything inside the poet's head also should be equally blind and meaningless. Because, for a consistent

materialist what a poet produces is the result of "equally impersonal and irrational causes". Therefore, when a person embraces either the materialist or spiritual view of the universe, the personal heresy is cured.

As the controversy over the "personal heresy" continued it became clear that Lewis and Tillyard had different interpretations of the word "personality". In Lewis' opinion, "The name suggests warmth and humanity, intimacy, the real rough and tumble of human life". And personality is primarily associated with the variegated details such as "a wrinkle or a stammer". Besides, he makes a very clear distinction between our appeal to a real personality in life and our aesthetic response to a work of art which is necessary to avoid confusion between "imaginative delight in a work of art with social or affectional delight in a man". He says, "The appeal of real personality is to the heart to the will and the affections. The proper pleasure of it is called love, the proper pain, hatred. I do not owe the poet some aesthetic response. I owe him love, thanks, assistance, justice, charity — or it may be a sound thrashing."[12]

But Tillyard sees personality as a mental pattern. It is reached through style and can become the major delight of poetry. This mental pattern is also called by other names like predisposition or temperament or consciousness. This consciousness is definite enough to be habitual to the poet's

normal self "underlying the accidents of quotidian existence",[13] and thus when we read a poem a version of the poet's personality emerges through the poem. So Tillyard says,

> ... I believe we read Keats in some measure because his poetry gives a version of a remarkable personality of which another version is his life. The two versions are not the same but they are analogous. Part of our response to poetry is in fact similar to the stirring we experience when we meet someone whose personality impresses us.[14]

There is yet one more reason why Lewis objects to the personal heresy: it gives rise to poetolatry. The personalists believe that poetry is the expression of the personality of the poet "considered as an individual, contingent, human specimen". So what we read in Wordsworth's poetry, for instance, is "just Wordsworth's point of view as it happens to him as a psychological fact and that is whey modern criticism attends so willingly to psychology and biography".[15] And the personal heretics have fulfilled Arnold's prophecy that poetry would replace religion. Perhaps poetry has not attempted yet the salvation of souls and the enlightenment of the mind. But it has taken some secondary religious characteristics: "the worship of saints and the traffic in relics". Every teacher of English has had pupils who took the study of literature to be having devotions to some dead poets. So the recent spate of

biographies of poets like Keats and D.H. Lawrence. Even a rather tangled divinity has been proposed to us: Christ, Shakespeare and Keats.

This is side-tracking or perverting our response to personality; and the consequence is a movement away from criticism to cultism which is highly lamentable and the only remedy lies in the rejection of the personal heresy. So Lewis suggests:

> For the sake of personality, therefore, we must reject the personal heresy. We must go to books for that which books can give us — to be interested, delighted, or amused, to be made merry or be made wise. But for the proper pleasure of personality, that is for love, we must go where it can be found — our homes or our common rooms, to railway carriage and public houses ...[16]

As Lewis was asked to produce his theory of poetry towards the end of the controversy, he had to give one. He defines poetry as "imaginative literature whether in prose or verse".[17] It is an art or skill and its instrument is language. But language is used for different purposes and it can be divided into two types: scientific or philosophical language and poetic language. To illustrate the difference Lewis takes the sentence, "It is cold". He says it can be made more precise by saying, "This is twice as cold as that" or by saying "Ugh! it is something like a smack in the face". The former is scientific language as it is concerned with the

precise measurement of a quality whereas the latter is poetic language as it has an emotive quality which the former lacks. The first process will lead to science which escapes from the sensuous to pure qualities and the second should lead to pure poetry, if any such things exists, "using all the extra-logical elements of language — rhythm, or vowel-music, onomatopoeic, associations and what not."[18]

The majority of human utterances fall between the two extremes. Thus it is not possible to say, "This is poetry". All we can say is, "This is more in the poetical direction". Therefore, by a poem "... we mean an composition which communicates more of the concrete and qualitative than our usual utterances do. A poet is a man who produces such compositions more often and more successfully than the rest of us."[19]

In a strict terminological sense nearly all men are poets. Because they can exploit the extra-logical properties of poetry to communicate his experiences in a concrete manner. But even if the value of such utterances or writings using verse may be sensibly higher than zero, we don't call them poets as usage bids us to reserve the name only for those who do it specially well.

The difference between scientific and poetical language is not that the first utters truth and the second fancies. Both can utter truths though they may talk about

different realities. The abstractions science and philosophy use are real in their own way, perhaps as real or closer to the timeless realities Plato talks about. There is no organism as such in space or time, there are only animals and vegetables. There are no trees as such except oaks, beeches, elms and so on. In fact there is no such thing as an elm. There is only this particular elm of such a year and such an age at such an hour acted upon by its environments. "A real elm, in fact, can be uttered only by a poem". However, poetry does not tell us whether the one it describes does really exist. That is where science comes in. To prove things science infers and abstracts. Science can tell you where you can find an elm and poetry can describe what that meeting is like. Thus one answers whether a thing exists and the other tells what it is like encountering it. Science can abstract whether God exists, and Dante shows us what it would be like if He did. An abstraction is something like money. It is not real wealth but it does represent real wealth, and poetry is this real wealth which the abstraction represents.

Each of the languages has advantages as well as disadvantages. Each functions admirably in its own sphere. But the philosophic language fails to reach the concrete and poetic language is unsuitable to prove the existence of anything. It is unmitigated evil that you cannot be poetic and philosophical to any high degree at the same moment.

Because in a given treatise a poetical element of the wrong sort may spoil the argument, and an argument may spoil a given poem ..."[20]

After discussing poetic language, Lewis turns his attention to the content of poetry. For the sake of convenience he takes conversation as the base, and he claims that the content of poetry can be the same as that of conversation. But Lewis makes two exceptions here. He says,

> Whatever in ordinary conversation is concerned with proving anything is clearly embryonic science or philosophy, and will not be part of the content of poetry. Again, whatever in a conversation has a practical purpose conditioned by the proximity of the speakers in space and time ('Hand me the salt' — Don't be angry'_ will not find a place in ... poetry ... though dramatic and fictional imitations of such speech may well occur in it.[21]

After having eliminated these two, poetry can be written in as many things as you can talk about in ordinary conversation. Poetry is a skill of utterances and can be used to utter almost anything: "to draw attention to (though not, of course to demonstrate) a fact, to tell lies, to tell lies, to tell, to describe your own real or feigned emotions, to make jokes."[22]

In a certain sense poetry is not an art at all. The art or skill employed to say concretely what the poet wants to say is art but the thing said is not art. The skill has all the privileges of art: it is exempt both from moral and

logical criticism and the best judges for the skill are the fellow artists. But the same immunity cannot be applied to the thing said. You may allow the plumber to tell you how capable or incapable his predecessor was in allowing the scullery to get flooded but you may not allow him to tell you whether it is flooded or ought to be flooded.

In a discussion about poetry, a question naturally arises as to who will be the right judge for poetry. As poetry is a skill of utterances "it follows that the best judge of poetry is he who can best judge of human utterances, who can say best what is dull or interesting, what is stale or fresh, what edifies or corrupts, what gives delight or disgust."[23] Lewis has a distrust for the specialist because "he will smell of the shop", and also because of his supposed lopsided sensibility. Moreover, giving the sole responsibility for judging poetry will strip one more privilege of the ordinary man. This ideal judge may be simply called Aristotle's "best reader". There are no other qualifications for him except general wisdom and health of mind. Of course to make the wisdom effective, among other things "a good knowledge of the language and a wide experience of poetry" are essential.

Lewis, next, deals with the value of poetry. The value of poetry, he says, depends on what it does to the reader. So our second demand on literature is that, apart from being

"entertaining and charming or exciting it should have a desirable permanent effect on us if possible — shall make us either happier or wiser, on better".[24] Thus from reading literature, as it is traditionally believed we derive double benefit — pleasure and profit. Lewis strongly feels that all questions about the poet's attitude to what he says in a poem are irrelevant and expressions 'like sincerity' or 'disinterestedness' should be banished from criticism. Besides, dyslogistic terms like 'insincere', 'spurious', 'bogus' and 'sham' are indications that the speaker has not yet discovered what is wrong with the poem. So "unable to answer the real question, "what, in this series of words, excites a feeling of hostility which prevents enjoyment? he invents answers to the irrelevant questions "What was the poets state of mind when he wrote?"[25]

Lewis has pointed out earlier that as far as content is concerned poetry shares common characteristics with conversation. What lasts in conversation also has lasting effect in poetry, so he says,

> ... those utterances, and those only, whose value can survive detachment from their original social content: not the love-making and quarrelling, not the 'contacts', the friendships, and the affections, but on the contrary the stories, the jokes, the reflections. It preserves not primarily what excites love, but what contributes to amusement,

> entertainment, wisdom or edification; in fact those parts of conversation which are worth repeating.[26]

Lewis has a word of caution concerning the status of the poet. Though his theory runs the risk of having a tendency to lower the status of the poet as a poet, he believes that the future of poetry lies in lowering the status of the poet. If the poet does not speedily regain the humility of his great predecessors, poetry may disappear from us altogether.

Regarding Tillyard's response to Lewis' theories on poetry, he seems to have agreed with Lewis that the reading of poetry is a sharing with the poet of his temperament or personality and like other sharings it is directed towards a third thing. Lewis admits that many things about a poet can be learned from his works, and his example can reach many generations. They also agree that "exaltation of poets into demigods is all part of modern tendency to live vicariously".[27] Lewis grants that certain kinds of literature such as private letters and certain types of essays give impressions of the poet's personality. So towards the end of the controversy they come closer and closer and their differences were very much narrowed down though the shifting of camp was not possible for either of them due to fundamental differences in temperament.

Both of them were renowned scholars and each one had articulated his points of view with great skill and conviction. But apparently none of them could claim complete victory as both of them happened to be right and also wrong. So, on the controversy, "Most reviewers agreed that the increasingly biographical approach to literature was regrettable, but most also pointed out that understanding something of an author's personality could be a pleasure".[28]

In his Preface to Paradise Lost, Lewis' approach is again polemical and eclectic. He begins by refuting Eliot's claim that only practicing contemporary poets can be judges of poetry. He finds Eliot's claim unacceptable as it is absurd. Because one has to assume that one is a poet though one cannot make that critical judgement before one can answer the question whether one is a poet. This is an exposed *petitio* and no man of high intellectual honour can base his argument on such a logical fallacy.

Next Lewis defends Milton against detractors. He feels that Milton's criticism is lost in misunderstanding because many modern readers are unfamiliar with the epic form and they set out to find in *Paradise Lost* "little patches of delight" as if they were reading lyrics, and when they are not found the readers get frustrated. This happens because the readers have no idea that in a long narrative poem the line is subordinated to the paragraph, and the paragraph to

the Book and the Book to the whole; and that it takes a quarter of an hour for the poem to have its sweeping effect on the reader. So often we hear people condemning "as faults in *Paradise Lost* those very qualities which the poet laboured the hardest to attain and which, rightly enjoyed are essential to its specific delightfulness".[29]

Lewis, therefore, feels that the study of Milton should be preceded by an study of the epic in general. And there are two advantages in the procedure. The first advantage is that this was the procedure followed by Milton himself. He did not ask what he wanted to say but what kind of poem he wanted to make from the pre-existing forms such as epic, tragedy and lyric. In choosing the form, it is similar to that of a gardener in choosing whether he would build a rockery or a tennis court or of an architect whether he would build a church or a house. In choosing one thing you will have to lose the specific beauties and delights of one because the aim is not just excellence but excellence proper to a specific thing. The second advantage is that it forces us to attend to an aspect of poetry which has been very much neglected. Every poem has two aspects. What the poet has to say and the thing which he makes. Another way of stating the dual function is "to say that every poem has two parents — its mother being the mass of experience, thought, and the like, inside the poet, and its father the pre-existing Form

(epic, tragedy, the novel or what not) which he meets in the public world".[30] It becomes lop-sided if only one aspect is studied and the other left out. So the man who wants to write a love sonnet should be not only enamoured of a woman but also of the form of the sonnet. And Lewis does not believe that in submitting to the form the poet impairs his originality, nor does he believe that inventing a new form means producing a great work as "it is the smaller poets who invent forms", but in submitting to the form that the poet becomes really original; and if a poet makes a conscious attempt to be himself he fails to bring out the best that is in him.

Lewis next gives his views on the classification of the epic. He feels that the traditional method of dividing as epic into primitive and artificial is unsatisfactory as no surviving poem is primitive and all poetry is in one way artificial. So he divides it into 'primary epic' and 'secondary epic'. This is a chronological division and it does not suggest the superiority of one over the other. It simply means that the secondary comes after or grows out of the primary. Good examples of primary epics are the Homeric poems and Beowulf.

Both Beowulf and the Homeric poems belong to the heroic age. We get clues from the way the poems describe practical performances during festivals as well as on other occasions,

and thus studying the literary situations provided within the poems help us to understand the kind of poem and also the age they represent. Now we shall turn our attention first to the literary conditions Homer describes. All poetry is oral and it is delivered to the accompaniment of a musical instrument like a *kithara*. But oral poetry can be again divided into popular poetry and court poetry. In popular poetry usually dancing boys and girls and a minstrel or a youth playing a stringed musical instrument are involved. But in court poetry the court poet is the central figure though at times dancers are also involved. Again court poetry can be divided into light poetry and serious poetry. In light court poetry "the court poet gets up, steps into a central position in the midst of a troupe of expert dancers and sings a short lay which has three characteristics of being god's, not men, of being comic and of being indecent".[31] But serious court poetry is slightly different. "The poet has a chair placed for him and an instrument put in his hands. A table is set beside him with wine, that he may drink 'when his heart desires'. Presently, without orders from the king, he begins his lay when the Muse prompts him; its three characteristics are that it is about men, it is historically true, and it is tragic".[32]

In Beowulf we find that in the poem we hear nothing of poetry outside the court. But other characteristics are

similar. The court poet sings either a lamentation or a tale of strange adventures or a tragedy. Lewis further points out a special characteristic common to both Beowulf and Homeric poems.

> Here, as in Homer, Epic does not mean simply whatever was sung in the hall. It is one of the possible entertainments, marked off from the others, in Homer by the spontaneity and quasi-oracular character of the poet's performance, and in both Homer and *Beowulf* by tragic quality, by supposed historical truth, and by the gravity that goes with 'true tragedy'.[33]

Thus the epic in the loftiest and gravest poetry about nobles, made for nobles and performed on occasion by nobles in a court when the court was the common centre of many interests. It was the place of festivity, the place of brightest hearths and strongest drink, of courtesy, merriment, news, and friendship."[34]

The epic has come down to Milton's time with some of its early associations which have "strange transformations and enrichments". It is this particular aspect or quality that moderns find difficult to understand. But it can be understood by anyone who understands the Middle English word *solempne*. Lewis explains the term as follows:

> Like solemn it implies the opposite of what is familiar, free and easy or ordinary. But unlike solemn it does not suggest gloom, oppression, or austerity. The ball in the first act of Romeo and Juliet was a 'solemnity'. The feast at

> the beginning of "Gawain and the Green Knight" is very much of a solemnity ... Feasts are, in this sense, more solemn than fasts. Easter is *solempne*, Good Friday is not. The *solempne* is the festal which is also stately, ceremonial, the proper occasion for pomp ... a court ball, a coronation, or a victory march, as these things appear to people who enjoy them.[35]

Thus the epic is oral, *solempne*, aristocratic, festive, public and ceremonial, and attains its intended effect on the audience through the use of certain techniques. We shall consider the techniques one by one. As epic poetry is oral, one of the most prominent techniques is the use of stock language.

> The most obvious characteristic of an oral technique is its continual use of stock words, phrases, or even whole lines. It is important to realize at the outset that these are not a second-best on which the poets fall back when inspiration fails them: they are as frequent in the great passages as in the low ones. In 103 lines of the parting between Hector and Adromache (justly regarded as one of the peaks of European poetry) phrases, or whole lines, which occur again and again in Homer are twenty eight times employed.[36]

This phenomenon is often explained from the poet's point of view. To quote Mr. Nilson, "These repetitions are a great aid for the singer for whilst reciting them mechanically he is subconsciously forming the next verse."[37] But Lewis counters this argument by saying that it is not for

the poet's convenience but because of the audience's benefit, and then he explains what actually it does to the audience.

> It is a prime necessity of oral poetry that the hearer should not be surprised too often, or too much. The unexpected tires us: it also takes us longer to understand and enjoy than the expected. A line which gives the listener praise is a disaster in oral poetry because it makes him lose the next line. And even if he does not lose the next, the rare and ebullient line is not worth making. In the sweep of recitation no individual line is going to count for very much ... It is not built up of isolated effects; the poetry is in the paragraph, or the whole episode to look for single 'good' lines is like looking for single 'good' stones in a cathedral.[38]

Another technique in oral poetry is the use of a special diction. It should be familiar in the sense of being unexpected but not in the sense of being colloquial or common place. We moderns may like poetry which may be hardly distinguishable from utterances made *ex tempore*. But "Our ancestors did not. They like a dance which was a dance, and fine clothes which no one could mistake for ordinary clothes, and feasts that no one could mistake for ordinary dinners, and poetry that unblushingly proclaimed itself to be poetry."[39] Thus poetic diction has to be "a language which is familiar because it is used in every part of every poem, but unfamiliar because it is not used outside poetry". Lewis compares epic diction to turkey and plum pudding dinner at Christmas. "None is surprised at the menu but every one

recognizes, that it is not ordinary fare". A few examples of Homer remarkable diction are wine-dark sea, rosy-fringed dawn, holy brine and Poseidon shaker of earth. They "emphasize the unchanging human environment. They express a feeling very profound and very frequent in real life, but elsewhere ill represented in literature".[40] The diction also produces unwearing splendour and ruthless pregnancy. But we must not get the impression that the effects were calculated by Homer line by line as a modern poet might do, because

> Once the diction has been established it works itself. Almost anything the poet wants to say, has only to be turned into this orthodox and ready-made diction and it becomes poetry ... The conscious artistry of the poet is thus set free to devote itself wholly to the large-scale problems — construction, character drawing, invention; his verbal poetics have become a habit like grammar or articulation.[41]

Then Lewis turns his attention to the subject of the primary epic. He says that a primary epic does not have to be on a subject of national or cosmic importance, and all it requires is a heroic story. To support this theory he gives the examples of Homer's Odyssey which is only an adventure story and it has got nothing to do with national interest. And he says to some extent that same thing can be said of The Iliad. Here a great war is involved between two nations — the Greeks and Trojans. But the Trojan war provides only the background for the story. Homer does not even tell directly

the climax of the war — the fall of Troy. Moreover, it is neither a clash between East and West, as traditionally believed, nor is it a story of the battle of the All-Greeks against the barbarians of Asia. It is merely the background to a purely personal story — that of Achilles' wrath, suffering, repentance, and killing of Hector. In Homer even if one surveys the whole poem one will find that the Trojans are nowhere treated as being better nor worse than the Greeks. Besides, there is no anti-Trojan feeling in the story. In fact "The noblest character is a Trojan, and nearly all the atrocities are on the Greek side".[42]

Thus if The Iliad became a great epic at war not because it was on a national subject but "its greatness lies in the human and personal tragedy built up against this background of meaningless flux. It is all the more tragic because there hangs over the heroic world a certain futility as Achilles says to Priam, 'And here I sit in Troy ... afflicting you and your children, not protecting Greece, not even winning glory, not called by any vocation to afflict Priam, but just doing it because that is the way things have come about".[43] Parallels can be drawn from other epics as well to show that a primary epic does not have to be based on a national subject. Professor Chadwick has remarked about the German epics saying, "how singularly free the poems are from anything in the nature of national interest or sentiment'.[44]

The greatest hero of Icelandic poetry is a Burgundian. In Beowulf, Professor Chadwick's statement is very well illustrated. The poem is English. The scene is at first laid in Zealand, and the hero comes from Sweden. Hengest who ought to have been the Aeneas of our epic if the poet had had Virgil's notion of an epic subject, is mentioned only parenthetically".[45]

Lewis also discusses the subject of the secondary epic. The subject of the secondary epic was invented by Virgil. He was interested in writing an epic to rival Homer, and he decided upon a national subject to satisfy the Roman spirit. Two earlier poets had written epics on national themes but both of them were unsuccessful because the themes were too vast and they became clumsy and monotonous and ended up as mere metrical chronicles. But Virgil found a solution to this problem by narrowing down his theme to a single national legend and handling it with great skill. Lewis remarks that surmounting this problem made a landmark in the history of poetry, and also proves Virgil as a poet *par excellence*.

> His solution of the problem — one of the most important revolutions in the history of poetry — was to take one single national legend and treat it in such a way that we feel the vaster theme to be somehow implicit in it. He has to tell a comparatively short story and give us the illusion of having lived through a great space of time. He has to deal with a limited number of personages and make us feel as if national or almost cosmic, issues are involved. He must locate his

> action in a legendary past and yet make us feel the present, and the intervening centuries, already foreshadowed.[46]

After Virgil, the above procedure seems quite obvious, but it has become obvious only because "a great poet, faced with an all but insoluble problem, discovered this answer and with it discovered new possibilities for poetry itself." So any further development of the secondary epic is from Virgil, and Milton's Paradise Lost is a supreme example of such development. Though the themes are different, Milton also employed the techniques Virgil had employed. Through their style they achieved the solemnity required of an epic though the external aids available to Homer such as a robed and garlanded priest, an altar or a feast in a hall were all lacking. In a way a secondary epic, to be effective, has to achieve even greater solemnity than a primary one as it is meant to be read by a person in his armchair in the privacy of his study who should be made to feel that he is participating at an august ritual. So "To blame it for being ritualistic or incantatory, for lacking intimacy or the speaking voice is to blame it for being just what it intends to be."[47]

Lewis deals further with the technique of the secondary epic. In general this solemn effect is achieved by the grandeur or elevation of style. In Paradise Lost for example the grandeur is produced mainly by three things: (1) The use

of slightly unfamiliar words and constructions; (2) The use of proper names which are suggestions of the splendid, remote, terrible, voluptuous or celebrated things. The purpose is "to encourage a sweep of the reader's eye over the richness and variety of the world"; (3) Continued allusion to what heightens our sense experience such as light, darkness, storm, flowers, jewels and sexual love; and all these are "managed with an air of magnanimous austerity". The effect is a feeling of excitement without surrender or relaxation, a soothing and yet rich quality of experience.

This kind of experience also may be obtained from reading other poems but the main difference is that there is an unremitting manipulation of his readers to make him feel that he is attending an actual recitation. "It is common to speak of Milton's style as organ music. It might be more helpful to regard the reader as the organ and Milton as the organist" playing on his readers. Now let us consider the opening paragraph. When we read it, it gives us the feeling that something great is about to begin. And he succeeds in conveying the feeling by using the following techniques. Firstly, the quality of weight is produced by ending his lines with long, heavy mono-syllables. Secondly, there is the suggestion that he is undertaking deep spiritual preparation for the task by saying, "O spirit who dost prefer before all else a pure heart, what in me is dark illumine". Thirdly, he

reinforces the idea that something great is about to happen by alluding to the creation of the world itself. This also gives us the impression that the epic is going to span the whole of human history. Then a series of images used by Milton in the description of creation is listed.

> But notice how cunningly this direct suggestion of great beginning is reinforced by allusion to the creation of the world itself (Dove-like sat'st brooding), and then by images of rising and lifting (With no middle flight intents to soar ... raise and support — Height of this great argument) and then again how creation and rising come potently together when we are reminded that Heaven and Earth rose out of Chaos and how in addition to this we have that brisk, morning promise of good things to come, borrowed from Ariosto (things unattempted yet), and how till one greater Man makes us feel we are about to read an epic that spans over the whole of history with its arch.[48]

The images used above have emotional connections but not necessarily logical connections. "Milton's technique is very like that of some moderns. He throws ideas together because of these emotional relations which they have in the very recesses of our consciousness. But unlike the moderns he always provides a facade of logical connections as well. The effect of this is that it lulls our logical faculty to sleep and enables us to accept what we are given without question".[49] This manipulation of images is found in the use of similes, but the similes does not illustrate what they pretend to illustrate. Let us look at a few examples. Fiends

are compared to elves. Here the only point of resemblance is smallness. But it serves a good purpose, as in contrast with the fairies, the Seraphs and Cherubs, who sit in secret conclave grow very huge and lordly. The dwarfish stature of the fiends also has an effect on the hugeness of Pandemonium. Some other images have subterranean connections. Paradise is compared to the field of Enna. Here one beautiful place is compared to another. But what is not explicitly stated is that in both the places "the young and beautiful while gathering flowers was ravished by a dark power risen up from the underworld". Next, Eden is compared to Nysician isle and to Mount Amara. Both these were hiding places, and the names were used to heighten in us the consciousness of Paradise in which things infinitely precious are hidden, guarded and locked up.

Manipulation is not confined to similes alone. It is also extended to sources of heightened interest in our sensual experience especially heat and brightness. But not satisfied with mere description Milton goes beyond them: towards the end of Book III, Milton took Satan to the sun. First of all we have "the picture of the sun gently warming the universe, and a hint of the enormous distance to which this virtue penetrates". Secondly, there is an allusion to sun spots which had been recently discovered by Galileo. Thirdly, we plunge into alchemy and through a mirror made of

gold the properties of the sun are viewed. Next Milton makes us realise the marvels of a shadowless world. Lastly, we meet Uriel who belongs to a category of spirits believed to be God's eyes. "This is not of course, the sun of modern science; but almost everything which the sun had meant to man up till Milton's day has been gathered together and the whole passage in his own phrase 'runs potable gold'".[50] A good deal of what looks like pedantry in Milton is in reality evocation. The numerous similes and allusions from his immense learning are not displayed here for the sake of display but employed in order to guide our imaginations to the right channel.

Another essential quality in the epic style is continuity. "If the mere printed pages is to affect us like the voice of a bard chanting in a hall, then the chant must go on — smoothly, irresistibly, upborne with indefatigable wings'. Thus at the end of each sentence we must not be allowed to settle down, and even a fuller pause at the end of a paragraph must feel like a pause in a piece of music. Even between one Book and the next the momentum should be kept and "we must not wholly wake from the enchantment nor quite put off our festal clothes".[51]

In general Milton avoids discontinuity by avoiding the simple sentence. He uses throughout the poem quite complicated syntax. But "compensates for the complexity of

his syntax by the simplicity of the broad imaginative effects beneath it and the perfect rightness of their sequence".[52] So as you read him you should try to listen to a chanting voice rather than a talking voice. Then the sequences come very well. Let us take one example.

> If thou best be — but O how fall'n! how chang'd
> From him in the happy Realms of Light
> Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst outshine
> Myriads though bright. If he whom mutual league.
> United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
> And hazard in the Glorious Enterprise,
> Joynd with me once, now misery hath joynd
> In equal ruin: into what Pit thou siest
> From what highth fal'n.[52]

This is a very complicated sentence but despite its length and complexity, if you forget about the syntax, and simply listen to the chant the sequence falls into a natural order: "the lost glories of heaven, the first plotting and planning, the hopes and hazards of the actual war, and then the misery, the ruin and the pit".[53] Besides, it helps preserve the onward flow of the poem with enormous pressure.

Lewis advances additional arguments in defence of the epic style. First he takes up manipulation. Manipulation is a common feature should by both rhetoric and poetry. And Lewis thinks that no civilization ever considers the art of the rhetorician necessarily vile. In itself it is noble though like other arts it also can be misused. "Rhetoric and Poetry are [not] distinguished by manipulation of an audience in the one and, in the other, a pure self-expression, regarded as

its own end, and indifferent to any audience".[54] Because both aim at doing something to the audiences and both use language to control what already exists in our minds". The differentia of Rhetoric is that it calls the passions to support reason to produce some practical resolve in our minds. It becomes vile only when passions are called to support unreason and knows that it is unreason. But when rightly practiced it is lawful and necessary as Aristotle points out that the intellect itself moves nothing, and "the transition from thinking to doing needs to be assisted by appropriate states of feeling".[55] But what poetry aims to produce is "something more like vision than it is like action. But vision, in this sense, includes passions". And poetry plays a role in awakening and moulding the audience's passions or emotions. Lewis elaborates more the role of poetry in rousing emotions.

> When we try to rouse some one's hate of toothache in order to persuade him to ring up the dentist, this is rhetoric; but even if there were not practical issues involved, even if we only wanted to convey the reality of toothache for some speculative purpose or for its own sake, we should still have failed if the idea produced in our friend's mind did not include the hatefulness of toothache. Toothache, with that one left out, is an abstraction. Hence the awakening and moulding of the reader's or hearer's emotions is a necessary element in that vision of concrete reality which poetry hopes to produce. Very roughly, we might almost say that in Rhetoric imagination is present for the sake of passion (and, therefore, in the long run, for the sake

> of action), while in poetry passion is present for the sake of imagination, and therefore, in the long run, for the sake of wisdom or spiritual health — the rightness and richness of a man's total response to the world.[56]

However, man's response to the world involves right attitudes if he is to be in wholesome equilibrium and "Poetry certainly aims at making the reader's mind what it was not before. The idea of a poetry which exists only for the poet — a poetry which the public rather overhears than hears — is a foolish novelty in criticism."[57]

Lewis, next, discusses the use of stock response. He agrees with Dr. I.A. Richard's that a stock response is "a deliberately organized attitude which is substituted for the direct free play of experience". And he believes that responses such as constancy in love and friendship or loyalty in political life or perseverance in general are necessary in life and one of the main functions of art is to assist it. However, he fears that there has been a deterioration of stock response in modern men which is good neither for safety nor happiness nor human dignity. He assigns the following reasons for the decay.

1) The decay of Logic, resulting in the assumption that the particular is real but the universal is not.

2) A romantic primitivism which prefers the merely natural to the elaborated, the unwilled to the willed. So a

loss of conviction in the former universal belief that an experience is not renewable in itself but it has to be mastered and shaped by the will.

3) A confusion between the organisation of a response and the pretence of a response. To illustrate the point he gives the example of Von Higel who says, "'I kiss my son not only because I love him, but in order that I may love him.' This is organisation, and good. But you may also kiss children in order to make it appear that you love them. That is pretence, and bad".[58]

4) A belief that certain elementary rectitude of human response is given by nature which may be taken for granted as a basis by poets to teach us finer discriminations. Lewis believes that this is dangerous delusion and to illustrate his contention he gives the following examples:

a) Children like dabbling in dirt unless they are taught the stock response to it.

b) Normal sexuality instead of being a datum is achieved only through a delicate process of suggestion and adjustment.

5) The stock response to Pride which Milton took for granted has been decaying since the Romantic movement began. Pride was at that time one of the deadly sins.

6) The stock response to treachery has become uncertain. It has become justifiable even if somebody makes a living through treachery.

7) The stock response to death has become uncertain. It is now even treated as something amusing.

8) The stock response to pain has become uncertain. Lewis finds Eliot's comparison of evening to a patient on an operation table to be in rather poor taste.

Thus stock responses are not given by nature. Rather "it is a delicate balance of trained habits, laboriously acquired and easily lost, on the maintenance of which depends both our virtues and our pleasures and even perhaps the survival of our species. For though the human heart is not unchanging ... the laws of causation are. When poison becomes fashionable it does not cease to kill".[59] In the light of this discovery concerning stock response there is no need to apologise for Milton or any other pre-Romantic poets who have used stock responses in poetry. In fact by using stock response the older poets have rendered valuable service to mankind not only by delighting us with art but also by instructing us in values.

> The older poetry, by continually insisting on certain stock themes — as that love is sweet, death bitter, virtue lovely, and children or garden delightful — was performing a service not only of moral and civil, but even biological importance. Once again, the old critics were quite right when they said that

> poetry instructed by delighting, for poetry was formerly one of the chief means whereby each new generation learned, not to copy, but by copying to make, the good stock responses. Since poetry has abandoned that office the world has not bettered.[60]

Regarding the question of calculated grandiosity in Paradise Lost, Lewis admits that there is calculated grandiosity in the poem. But he claims that, that is the way an epic poem should be as it is a ritual style. However, it is not a deception to hide lack of spontaneity. A ritual style is made different from ordinary style by being somewhat stilted, elaborate and grand. So if it is grand, it is out of necessity to meet a requirement, and Milton's style is true to the epic tradition. So "The grandeur which the poet assumes in his poetic capacity should not arouse hostile reactions. It is for our benefit. He makes his epic a rite so that we may share it; the more ritual it becomes, the more we are elevated to the rank of participants".[61]

After the discussion on form Lewis turns his attention to subject-matter. In reading a poem like Paradise Lost, because of the gulf between the ages, one is immediately confronted with the problem of understanding an archaic language and the cultural values they convey; and this problem hinders proper understanding and appreciation of the poem. So some critics have advanced a theory to bridge the gulf between the ages, namely, the doctrine of the unchanging

heart. According to this doctrine the things which separate one age from another are superficial. "Just as, if we strip the armour off a medieval knight or lace off a Caroline courtier, we should find beneath them an anatomy identical with our own, so, it is held, if we strip off from Virgil his Roman imperialism, from Sidney his code of honour, from Lucretius his Epicurean philosophy, and from all who have it their religion, we shall find the Unchanging Human Heart, and on this we are to concentrate."[62]

However, the problem with this method is that when we attempt to find an 'LCM' in the poem, we begin to twist and distort the poem by forcing certain qualities of it into false prominence and hiding things which the poet intended to highlight. Moreover, if we remove from people what makes them different, nothing is left of them. And this is far from being an ideal way to understand and appreciate the works of the old writers as the spirit in which they wrote has been ignored.

So Lewis suggests another method. In this method instead of stripping the knight of his armour or lace one puts on them and see how one would feel with them. In other words, instead of stripping a man of his honour, or royalism or beliefs and trying to see how he would look without them one situates oneself in his position and see how one would feel with them. Then one can enrich one's experience by re-

living the past but if one cuts oneself off from the past one unjustly disinherits oneself. Therefore Lewis advises:

> You must, so far as in you lies, become an Achaen chief while reading Homer, a medieval knight while reading Malory, and an eighteenth century Londoner while reading Johnson. Only thus will you be able to judge to work in the spirit that its author write and to avail chimerical criticism. It is better to study the changes in which the being of Human Heart largely consists than to amuse ourselves with fiction about its immutability.[63]

Lewis has dealt with yet one more problem in Milton criticism: the Satan hero theory. Though the theory has been prevailing since the time of William Blake in Milton criticism, Lewis is of the view that it is due to a misunderstanding of a series of things such as the epic form, the intention of Milton in making the character magnificent and the theological position concerning Satan at the time of Milton. It is a very old critical discovery that the imitation in art of unpleasing objects may be a pleasing imitation". In the light of this discovery, the proposition that Milton's Satan is a magnificent character can also be interpreted in two ways. It can mean that Milton's depiction is a magnificent poetical achievement which excites the admiration of the reader. It also can mean that Satan as a real being ought to be an object of admiration and sympathy for the poet or his readers or both. The former was never

denied tell modern times and the latter was never affirmed before the time of Blake and Shelley.

Milton has treated the Satanic predicament in the epic form and thus the absurdity of Satan is subordinated to his misery. Moreover, the portrait of Satan is the best drawn in the poem as it is the easiest to draw a character worse than oneself: one simply releases the bad passions which are straining at the leash in real life. On the other hand, it is also easy to receive Satan well by reader because one has some affinity with Satan: a fallen man is very much like a fallen angel. So a magnificent Satan with great power of appeal emerges.

However, Milton also has made abundantly clear the absurdity of Satan. Satan is the cause of his own predicament. He develops a sense of injured merit often the Messiah was made the head of the angels. He refuses to acknowledge that the Messiah, by virtue of his superior divine nature and also by virtue of merit as the creator of the angels, has every right to head the angels. As Satan is a mere creature his very being is derived from God and his rebellion is analogous to the scent trying to destroy the flower. He deludes himself into thinking that he is at war with God though the war is only between him and Michael. He begins by fighting for liberty but sinks into fighting for honour, dominion and glory. He has become so degraded that

when he comes to the world he turns into a peeping Tom spying on Adam and Eve.

The progression from hero to general, from general to politician, from politician to secret agent is mistaken as making Satan more glorious than intended and then attempting to rectify it. But undoubtedly, it was Milton's intention to show the devil at his height and then trace what becomes of such self-intoxication when confronted with reality. In doing this, there were hardly any chance of being misunderstood when Milton wrote it. Because at that time people believed that there was such a person as Satan and that he was a liar and the father of falsehood. So his speeches were not accepted as gospel truth when he made public speeches to his troops.

To admire Satan is to vote for a world of misery, lies, wishful thinking and incessant autobiography. But Lewis grants that the choice is possible. For "Hardly a day passes without some slight movement towards it in each of us."[64] But Lewis finds it difficult to believe how so systematic and well organised a man like Milton would gravely deceive himself to commit the error. And evidence is certainly stronger that Satan was made magnificent to meet the requirements of an artistic form rather than to be made an object of admiration and sympathy.

From Paradise Lost let us turn our attention to Lewis' views on the use of psycho-analysis and anthropology as tools of literary criticism. We shall begin with his essay, "Psycho-analysis and Literary Criticism". He begins the essay by trying to "to contribute to the solution of some frontier problems between psycho-analysis and literary criticism". One of these is a pseudo-problem in which some countries make "use of psycho-analysis to infer the pathology of a poet from his work". But the product of this endeavour becomes a contribution not to literary criticism but to pathology or pathological biography. And when the supposed finding is applied to literary criticism it produces unfortunate confusions. For instance, when the proposition "This poem is an inevitable outcome, and an illuminating symptom of the poet's repression, is somehow treated as an answer to the proposition, "This poem is rubbish". Here the critic has allowed himself to be diverted from the genuinely critical question, "why and how should we read this?" to the historical question. "Why did he write it?" The first question is asking for the Final Cause and it will have some literary importance but asking for the Efficient Cause has none.

After having disposed of this pseudo-problem, Lewis launches into his discussion on two Freudian propositions: fantasy and symbolism. The first is to be found in the

twenty-third lecture of the Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis in which he says that all work of art is to be traced to the fantasies of the artist, that is, his day-dreams or wishfulfilments.

> The artist wants 'honour, power, riches, fame and the love of women', but being unable to get these in the real world, he has to do the best he can by imagining or pretending that he has got them. So far, according to Freud, he does not differ from the rest of us. What makes him an artist in the curious faculty he possesses of! elaborating his day-dreams, so that they lose that personal note which grater upon strange ears and become enjoyable to others'. As we others also like a good wishfulfilment dream we are now ready to pay for the privilege of showing his. Thus, for the artist, as Freud says, there is a path through fantasy back to reality: by publishing his mere dreams of honour, power, riches, fame, and the love of women in reality.[65]

Regarding the above theory, Lewis observes, "If Freud had been content to say that all work of art could be casually traced to Fantasy in the artist, he would be merely stating an efficient cause which we might find difficult to disprove."[66] But the limitation of his theory became severe when Freud went to the extent of considering "all day-dreaming to be of a single kind — that kind in which the dreamer pretends he is a famous man, or a millionaire, or an irresistible lady-killer, while in reality, he is no such thing".[67] Because Lewis believes that there are two kinds of day-dreams: in the first the self is present as the hero, but

in the second the self is absent and there is no personal fulfilment. So Lewis wants to make the following emendations:

> There are two activities of the imagination, one free, and the other enslaved to the wishes of its owner for whom it has to provide imaginary gratifications. Both may be the starting point for works of art. The former or 'free activity' continues in the works it produces and passes from the status of dream to that of art by a process which may legitimately be called 'elaboration': inconveniences are tidied up, banalities removed, private values and associations replaced, proportion, relief, and temperance are introduced". But the other (or servile kind is not 'elaborated' into a work of art: it is a motive power which starts the activity and is withdrawn when once the engine is running, or a scaffolding which is knocked away when the building is complete. Finally, the characteristic products of free imagination belong to what may be called the fantastic, or mythical, or improbable type of literature: those of fantasy of the wisfulfilling imagination, to what may, in very loose sense, be called the realistic type. I say 'characteristic products' because the principle doubtless admits of innumerable exceptions.[69]

Next Lewis discusses Freudian doctrines of symbolism as stated in Freud's tenth lecture. According to the doctrine there are certain images whether they appear in dreams or literature which bear a constant meaning. "These images with constant meaning, he calls symbols — the words, so to speak, of universal image - language. He gives us a few specimens. A house signifies the human body; Kings and Queens, father and mother; journey, death; small animals, one's brothers and

sisters; Fruits, Landscapes, Gardens, Blossoms, the female body or various parts of it."[69]

Lewis has no desire to dispute with Freud concerning the facts stated above as it requires specialised professional knowledge to prove them right or wrong. And Lewis grants three things: that infantile sexual experience is common to all human beings; that latent thoughts utilise the images given above; and that whenever such images occur either in dream or literature or imagination they are unconsciously present in the mind of the man concerned. "Lewis grants all these because even if they were all true they would have no literary relevance. Because all sorts of irrelevant unconscious thoughts may occur while reading a book. So he adds, "If latent thought of an erotic character is present in the same way whenever I read about a garden, I have, as a critic, no objection". But he feels that Freud has gone too far in his interpretation of symbols, and raises serious objection to his interpretation of the following symbols.

> Freud says, "Does it not begin to dawn upon us that the many fairy tales which begin with the words" once upon a time there were a king and a queen" simply means "once upon a time there was a father and mother"? simply mean is the crucial expression. They do not 'mean' this inter alia; they 'simply' mean this, this is all that they mean, they mean neither more nor less, nor other, than this.[70]

Lewis feels that Freud is implicitly making the following claims in the statement.

> (1) That the whole of the excitement, pleasure, or interest, occasioned by the image, whenever it occurs, is due to the latent erotic thought.
> (2) That the image, as opposed to the latent thought, effects nothing at all except disguise: or, in other words, that if our inhibitions allowed it to become conscious without shock, the latent thought would give us the same kind and degree of satisfaction as the image now does.[71]

If Freud doesn't mean this, Lewis has nothing to say. But at least this is what many of Freud's followers believe and this kind of interpretation brings psycho-analytic symbolism into contact with literary values. And for Lewis the contact is not a happy one as he says,

> We do not mind being told that when we enjoy Milton's description of Eden some latent sexual interest is, as a matter of fact, and along with it a thousand other things present in our unconscious. Our quarrel is with the man who says 'you know why you're really enjoying this'? It all comes from so and so. What we resent, in fact, is not so much the suggestion that we have interest in the female body as the suggestion that we have no interest in gardens: not what the wiseacre would force upon us, but what he threatens to take away. If it is true that all our enjoyment of the images, without remainder, can be explained in terms of infantile sexuality, then I confess, our literary judgements are in ruins. But I don't believe it is true.[72]

Lewis further asserts that the Freudism interpretation is not borne out by experience; and he gives the example of

the interpretation that our interest in the garden is because it is a disguise for the female body. He contends that if it is really a disguise we have been looking for all along it should help us reach a climax but instead it rather becomes an interference and ends up in an anticlimax. And a careful examination of a poem like The Romance of the Rose will illustrate clearly why this is so. It seems at first that the poem is an ideal illustration of the Freudian symbolism as it has not only the garden but also the rosebud. But the trouble is that the whole process is the other way round. "The author, and his readers, start with a fully conscious attention to the exotic material and then deliberately express it in the symbols. The symbols do not conceal and are not intended to conceal: they exhibit ... the erotic experience, thus compared becomes somehow more interesting — that it is borrowing attractiveness from the flower, not they from it".[73] Thus instead of supporting the Freudian view it is a refutation of it. So Lewis asks, "If in the Romance of the Rose, the erotic thought owes much of its poetical charm to the garden, why should the garden in Paradise Lost owe its special charm to the erotic thoughts?"[74] Because in both the poems, criticism on the conscious level does not conceal but exhibits and takes its charm from another beautiful object in nature and the thing that decorates by lending its charm must be a beautiful thing in itself and for its own sake.

Therefore it is obvious that the delight in reading Paradise Lost Book-IV comes not exclusively from the latent erotic thought as the Freudian's claim but also from the garden which symbolises it and which enhances its attractiveness by lending its charm.

However, Lewis is not against psycho-analysis as such. It depends on the merit of the case and he finds Jung's ideas much more congenial than those of Freud's. Lewis is particularly attracted by Jung's primordial images or archetypal patterns. The doctrine can be briefly stated as follows:

> ... there exists, in addition to the individual unconsciousness, a collective conscious, a collective conscious which is common to the whole race and even, in some degree, the whole animal world. Being thus common, it contains the reactions of mind or psyche as such to the most universal situations. Being very primitive, it is prelogical and its reactions are expressed not in thought but in images. Myths, or at any rate the older and greater myths, are such images recovered from the collective conscious.[75]

Whether it is good or bad science, Lewis perceives at once that the theory is excellent poetry, and it has great emotional appeal. "Something dim and far removed — buried in the depths from immemorial time — stirring beneath the surface coming to life"[76] can very well be a siren call to anybody. Lewis responds to the call enthusiastically as he

exclaims, "I am with Schliemann digging up what he believed to be the very bones of Agamemnon, king of men: I am with Collingwood discovering behind the Arthurian stories some far-off echo of real happenings in the thick darkness of British history, with Asia in the fourth ~~set~~ Act of Prometheus following her dream down, down to the cave of Demogorgon: with Wordsworth, sinking deep and ascending to regions to which the heaven of heavens is but a veil ..."[77]

This strong appeal to the human mind leads to another question. Why are primordial images so exciting? Jung says that it is "because they are ancient, because in contemplating them, we are doing whatever pre-historic ancestors did." But Lewis does not agree with this view. Because neither the antiquity of a thing nor the contemplation of it provides adequate reasons for the emotional appeal of the images. Everything of antiquity is not exciting, and if something is to be exciting whether modern or ancient it has to have some intrinsic worth of its own, and Jung's suggestion does not touch the intrinsic worth of the images at all. So it cannot explain why a myth can appeal powerfully even to a man who is not at all conscious of its antiquity.

So far, thus, the potency of the primordial images remain a mystery. But Lewis feels "the mystery of primordial images is deeper, their origin move remote, their cane more

hidden, their frontier less accessible"[78] than suspected and the mystery continues to tantalize us. It may be called "the Recovery Pattern or the Veiled Isis, or the Locked Door or the Lost-and-Found. The Freudians will explain it in terms of infantile sexual curiosity ... but that need not bother us."[79] Whatever it may be, "It is, indeed, an image inevitably embodying certain absolutely universal features of our experience, religious, intellectual, aesthetic and sexual alike".[80] And the presence of such primordial images in psycho-analysis has proved to be an antidote to materialism itself.

> ... psycho-analysis heals some of the wound made by materialism. For the general effect of materialism is to give you, where expected indefinite depth of reality, a flat wall only a few inches away. Psycho-analysis offers you some kind of depth back again — lots of things hidden behind the wall. Hence those who have once tested it feel they are being robbed of something if we try to take it from them.[81]

If psycho-analysis has contributed the primordial images, now let us see what anthropology has to offer to literary criticism. There has been a wide spread belief that anthropology can help our understanding of literature. This belief is based on the assumption that the study of the mythical and ritual origins of medieval romances has thrown

new light on them. There is no doubt that literary texts are very useful to the anthropologists. But does it necessarily follow that anthropology can in return make a significant contribution to criticism? Lewis makes an attempt to answer that question in his essay "The Anthropological Approach."

First of all let us take up one by one the claims made by anthropologists concerning their new findings. One of them is the story of Gawain from "Gawain and the Green Knight". It is believed that "Gawain's property of growing stronger as the sun ascends can be explained as the last vestige of a myth about the sun god." But here we have to make sure first the sense in which the word "explain" is used. "We mean 'to account for causally' (as in 'we can easily explain his behavior by the fact that he was drunk). The word has a different meaning when we say that someone first explained to us the Deductions of the Categories or the beauties of the Virgilian hexameter. 'To explain' in this second sense is to open our eyes; to give us the power of receiving, or receiving more fully what Kant or Virgil intended to give us". But the explanation of Gawain's popularity above is a causal explanation and therefore it doesn't enlighten us in any way in the second sense and it is a complete irrelevance, because

> Nothing leads up to it; nothing of any importance depends on it. Apart from it there is nothing divine and nothing solar about Gawain. All that he does, suffers,

> or says elsewhere would have exactly the same value if this odd detail had been omitted. The anthropological explanation may be true and it may have an interest of its own; but it cannot increase our understanding or enjoyment of one single sentence in the Morte.[82]

Bercilak, another knight in "Gawain and the Green Knight" is supposed to have been derived from one *eniautos daimon*. The discovery is supposed to throw light on our understanding of Bercilak. But we will have to find out which of the two — *eniautos daimon* or Bercilak — is throwing light on the other. Bercilak is a very vivid and memorable character. "No one who has once read the poem forgets him. No one while reading it disbelieves in him."[83] But *eniautos daimon* is only a concept constructed from the religious practices of the ancient pagan world and all we can do is to make a guess as to what it was like. "As we have never participated in a pagan ritual we do not know what it felt like ... with its baffling mixture of agriculture, tragedy, obscenity, revelry and clowning, eludes us in all but its externals".[84] Therefore, to expect *eniautos daimon* to throw light on Bercilak becomes absurd as only the known can throw light on the unknown. Bercilak is a wholly lovely and noble knight and literature has preserved for me in this figure what anthropology can never penetrate. It has given me knowledge by acquaintance (*connaître*) whereas anthropology could give me at best only knowledge - about (*savoir*). "If

this is so, then our poetic experience has helped us as anthropologists, but our anthropology has not helped us to read poetry. When savage beliefs and practices inform a work of art, that work is not a puzzle to which those beliefs and practices are the clue. The savage origins are the puzzle; the surviving works of art is the only clue by which we can hope to penetrate the inwardness of the origins. It is art, or nowhere, that the dry to bones are made to live again".[85]

However, Mr. Speirs maintains that knowing such origins is of literary relevance; because it affects the poet and also the reader. He gives the example of a poet's reaction to the perilous fountain in "Gawain and Gawain", and he connects it conjecturally with a rain-making ritual. Then he asks what happens if the poet was ignorant about the rain-making ritual? He replies that it doesn't matter even if he didn't know about the origin as he had at least inherited the traditional attitude of reverence towards such episodes because of their sense of mystery. But Lewis counters that there is no conclusive proof that the rain-making ritual is what has moved the poet. While reading the poem the reader might have been deeply moved by the poem, but the author's reaction may not be identical with his. Or even if the author was moved there is no evidence that the ritual origins are the only or commonest source of such feeling as even an unexplained magic fountain might have equally awed and

mystified that poet. So Lewis disapproves of this kind of criticism.

> This type of criticism which always takes us away from the actual poem and the individual poet to seek the sources of their power in something earlier and less known — which, in fact, finds the secret of poetic pleasure anywhere rather than in talent and art — has lately received a dolorous stroke from Professor Vinaver. He has cured us, if we can be cured, of the bad habit which regards the finished romances as mere rubble left over from some statelier, non existent building. This is the reverse of the truth. The romance is the Cathedral; the anthropological material is the rubble that was used by the builders. He has shown as regards one particular story that every step away from the dark origin is an advance in coherence, in suggestion, in imaginative power.[85]

In the second part of his theory, Mr. Speirs explains how the ritual origins or the knowledge of them affects the reader. He says, for example, an awareness of the fact that the perilous fountain has something to do with rain-making makes us feel that it is more than a sport of fancy and thus cures us from taking it too easily. He also has asserted elsewhere that anthropological facts or even guesses make the readers of medieval romance move alert to things which they might otherwise have passed over unnoticed.

What Mr. Speirs has said above is typical of his age as for his generation of anthropologizing critics, "the garden of marvellous romance is — as it was not either for medieval or for nineteenth-century man — a walled and locked up

garden to which anthropology is the key. They become free of it only if they carry the golden bough. This awakens in them a sensibility they otherwise lack."[87]

If "anything helps one to read sensitively and attentively it is welcome". But helps can be of two kinds: those that have intrinsic connection with literature and those that don't have such connections. The first group "consists of knowledge or sympathies which enable the reader to enter more fully into the author's intentions". Some of such helps can be history, scholarship and experience. But there are other helps which only psychologically dispose us well towards a work of art but which have no intrinsic connections with the subject matter of the work. "They are accidents in the sense that their necessity varies from one reader to another, and for the same reader from time to time, and the best readers need them least. Health, quiet, on easy chair, a full, but not too full, stomach can all help in this way ... some approach a book receptively because it is recommended, others because it is forbidden ... One is attracted and another repelled by the knowledge that everyone is reading this."[88]

Helps of the first kind which have intrinsic connection with literature should be discovered, exhibited and supplied more as they are useful in the highest degree. But helps of the second kind which is the merely subjective kind under

which can also come anthropological conjectures have no critical value.

Lewis has elaborated further why anthropology can be dispensed with without any loss to literary enjoyment. Firstly, anthropology is not universally necessary. Now some readers claim they enjoy the romance well and deeply when they came to it via anthropology. But why this laborious and roundabout way? People were free to approach romances directly before and they have enjoyed them enormously. "The ferlies, simply for what they are shown to be in the texts, conquered us at once and have never released us. We stand amazed when juniors think to interest us in the Grail by connecting it with a cauldron of plenty or a pre-historic burning glass, for the Grail as Chretien or Malory presents it seems to us twenty times more interesting than the cauldron or the glass."[89] There is a generation of people whose direct response to literature is inhibited. Lewis is apparently referring to those who have been conditioned to see books only through the spectacles of others and particularly those of the established critical world. So they feel released from their inhibition whey they employ the anthropological approach. But this is only an artificial prop which humanity can dispense with and still enjoy romances.

Thus

> ... it merely restores to them powers which humanity often has without any such preliminary *askesis*. The insight into romance which it gives them is new to them, not to men in general. The fact that they needed such therapy is a fact about them, not about the literary quality of the romances. To regard their anthropological approach as a discovery in literary criticism is like regarding insulin as a discovery in gastronomy ... [though] it is a medical, not a gastronomic, discovery.[90]

Secondly, the therapeutic value of anthropological *askesis* does not depend on the fact of its ritual origins. "If a ritual origin worked that way, readers of the romances would receive its exciting effect without knowing its existence" in the way alcohol will intoxicate whether we are aware of having taken it or not. "If that were so, why should we need or learn of it before we can fully enjoy the Romances? And indeed Mr. Speirs does not think we need exactly 'learn' in the sense of 'coming to know'." The connection between the perilous fountain and the rain-making ritual is only conjectural. "Obviously what does the therapeutic work is not the fact that the mere idea of ritual origin; the idea, us an idea, not known to be true, not affirmed, but simply entertained. The case is not like that of a man who gets ... drunk from taking spirits. It is as if a suggestible person ... felt drunk simply at the idea of having done so."[91]

But those who use anthropology as a prop to read the romances fall into this delusion all the time. The romances create a joyous world full of mystery where nearly everything has a deeper meanings. It is a "a world of endless forest, quest, hint, prophecy ... The hero is a sort of intruder or trespasser; always unawares, stumbling on to forbidden ground. Hermits and voices explain just enough to let us know how completely he is out of his depth, but not to dispel the overall mystery".[92] Till a generation ago, readers accepted this world as the romancers noble and joyous invention. But now there are readers who cannot accept this world and build up a second romance which is a distortion of the first, "It also is a quest story, but it is he, not Perceval or Gawain that is on the quest" and the forests are not those of an enchanted land but that of anthropological theory. "It is he himself who quivers at the surmise that everything he meets may be more important ... than it seemed. It is to him that such hermits as Frazer and Miss Weston, dwelling in the heart of the forest, explain the signification of the ferlies ... And he has his reward" though he wins it in a roundabout way. He rejects the original fiction and re-embraces it mirrored in a second fiction which he mistakes as reality. Perhaps it is better than nothing. "But it might do a good deal of harm to literary and cultural history and even anthropology itself .paif it were taken as a serious contribution to any

of these disciplines. And to criticism it has already done some."[93]

The critical theories we have discussed so far in this chapter range from the personal heresy to Paradise Lost; and from theories on stories and science fiction to Lewis' views on psycho-analysis and anthropology. All these essays, except those on stories and science fiction, are polemical and also eclectic in nature, and they constitute some of his major views on theory and criticism.

In The Personal Heresy, Lewis attacks Tillyard's expressive theory and labels it as heresy. He contends that a poem is not the expression of the poet's personality because it is produced not by expressing his personality but by transcending it into a new mode of consciousness; and this consciousness is what the poet shares with us when we read a poem. However, this consciousness is only a heightened mode of consciousness and not his normal consciousness and thus it cannot be his personality. Moreover, on reading a poem we see with the poet rather than look at him as an object; and thus his personality is his starting point and limitation, it is analogous to the position of a window. A window is there not to study windows but to see a landscape through it.

In A Preface to Paradise Lost, Lewis begins with a discussion on the nature of epic poetry. He feels this is essential because modern readers have no idea that in a long

narrative poem the line is subordinated to the paragraph, and the paragraph to the book and the book to the whole. They read epic poetry in the way they read lyrics so in the process they get frustrated. Epic poetry is a species of the genus narrative poetry and Lewis divided it into primary epic and secondary epic. Primary epic is oral, solemn, aristocratic and ceremonial and attains its effect by using a special diction which is familiar and yet not colloquial. Secondary epic is written, solemn, and ritualistic and its effect is attained mainly by unremitting manipulation of the reader: he is made to feel that he is participating in an actual recitation. In A Preface, Lewis refutes two errors that have been prevailing for more than a century. The first is the doctrine of the unchanging human heart. According to this doctrine the differences between the ages are superficial and if we strip characters of one age of their traditions, we find the same unchanging heart. But Lewis contends that this is no solution to the problem because if we strip tradition from the characters we may be removing the very essence of the poem or play on which it exists. So Lewis suggests that we rather situate ourselves in their position by embracing their traditions and try to feel how they felt. The second error is the Satan-hero theory. Though Lewis acknowledges that Satan is a magnificent creation, he does not believe that Milton intended Satan to be the hero. As

Paradise Lost is an epic, Milton treated the satanic predicament in the epic form by subordinating his absurdity to his misery; and Satan is also drawn well. As a result a magnificent Satan emerges. But this is not all about Satan. Milton also made his absurdity very clear. Satan's revolt against God is a supreme act of folly. As he is only a creature his revolt is analogous to the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower. He comes to Eden as a spy but soon degrades into a snake. This progression from an angelic hero to a snake fits well into Milton's artistic design as he undoubtedly intended to show Satan at his height and then trace his downfall step by step when he encounters reality.

Lewis had a conservative temperament and his conservatism is reflected in his attitude towards the use of psycho-analysis and anthropology in literary criticism. He is sceptical about the use of psycho-analysis in literary criticism because some critics use psycho-analysis to infer the pathology of the poet instead of concentrating on his work and thus it becomes a digression from genuine criticism. Secondly, Lewis has serious doubts about the interpretation of certain symbols by Freud which are too farfetched to be of any contribution to literary criticism. Lewis also finds no merit in the employment of anthropology as a critical tool. Because anthropology's supposed contribution is the discovery of the mythical or ritual origin of the romances. But these

origins are only conjectural and they may or may not be true. Or even if they are true they have no literary relevance as they simply provide facts about the origin of a poem and do not reveal anything about the literary quality of the poem.

CHAPTER-V

AN EXPERIMENT IN CRITICISM

In An Experiment in Criticism, Lewis propounds a new system which is to be experimented in literary criticism. In the system, he proposes to judge literature by the way men read it, instead of judging men's taste by the things they read. This is possible because good literature can be read in a certain way and a bad one in another. Good literature is one that permits, invites and compels good reading but a bad one does the same for bad reading. Thus good reading or primary experience constitutes a key concept in the system as it is the test used to determine the worth of a book. But, then, what is good reading? According to Lewis, good reading consists in surrendering ourselves completely to a work of art by getting ourselves out of the way and by emptying ourselves, as it were, to make ourselves receptive to the work.

However, before launching into a detailed discussion about the system, Lewis first discusses the reading habits of the literary and unliterary, their response to myth, fantasy, realism and poetry as a preparatory measure. Let us first take up the reading habits of the literary and unliterary. Although there are many readers, all readers are not capable

of good reading. Only very few have the capacity to read and receive a profound literary experience. This special receptivity to literature is shown right from childhood. Though the same text book is prescribed for children the way they respond to it differs enormously. To categorise the two kinds of readers, Lewis uses the terms the "literary few" and the "unliterary majority or many", and each category has its special characteristics.

Firstly, the majority never read anything twice. Once a book is read they feel that it has been used and they cast it aside like yesterday's newspaper. But the few, who are readers of great works, may read a book ten or twenty or thirty times in the course of their life.

Secondly, the majority though they also read often, do not value reading much and turn to it only as a last source and abandon it with alacrity when another pastime turns up. Reading is kept for railway journeys, illnesses or moments of enforced solitude. Or read it while listening to the radio or while engaged in a desultory conversation. But the few read wholeheartedly and also seek solitude and leisure to do so; and feel impoverished if they are denied opportunity for such attentive and undisturbed reading even for a few days.

Thirdly, when the literary read a great work of art for the first time, it is so momentous an experience that "only experience of love, religion, or bereavement can furnish a

standard of comparison. Their whole consciousness is changed. They have become what they were not before."[1] But it is not so with the unliterary majority. When they read a story or novel it is only a marginal experience and nothing much happens to them.

Fourthly, what the few read is constantly and prominently present to them. They mouth over favourite lines or stanzas in solitude, discuss books at length with others, and scenes and characters from book provide them with standards to interpret or sum up their own experiences. But the unliterary seldom think or talk of their reading because what they read has no impact on them — transient or enduring.

Lewis enumerates some yet more characteristics of the unliterary:

1) The unliterary, uncompelled, read nothing except narrative. But it does not mean that they all read fiction. The most unliterary sticks to the news. He reads daily with great relish who has married, rescued, robbed, raped or murdered whom, in places unseen by him, under circumstances unclear to him. He is not very different from those who read the lowest kind of fiction as both are interested only in events. But there is a difference. Because, "like Shakespeare's Mopsa, he wants to 'be sure they are true'. This is because he is so very unliterary that he can hardly

think of invention as a legitimate, or even a possible activity (the history of criticism shows that it took centuries to get Europe as a whole over this stile).

2) The unliterary have no ears. They read exclusively by eye. There is no difference for them between horrible cacophonies and exquisite rhythm and vocalic melody.

3) They are unconscious of style and prefer books badly written. So if you give an unliterary twelve-year old a book like Treasure Island you will often be disappointed. It looks like the right kind of fare for him but the precise descriptions, the realistic dialogues and the vivid characters are what put him off and soon he will lay it aside.

4) They enjoy narratives in which the verbal element is reduced to the minimum just enough to extract the event as we find them in strip stories told in pictures or films with the least possible dialogue.

5) They demand swift-moving narratives. Anything that is slow on long-winded annoys them.

Lewis elaborates more why the above mentioned characteristics exist in the unliterary. He says the unliterary "reads only narrative because only there will he find an Event". He is deaf to the aural beauty of what he reads because rhythm and melody do not help him to discover the event as to who did what to whom. He likes strip

narratives because nothing stands between him and the event there. And he likes a swift story because it is all events. His preference of style is rather deplorable but it has a reason. This happens because he pays attention for extracting the event. The result is an unhappy one. It becomes impossible for him to conceive, imagine and feel as invited by the words, and thus it deprives him a full and profound experience of what he reads.

Good writing offends the unliterary. It is either too spare or too full for him. For example, in describing a garden, if an author gives a precise impression of the garden, he calls it padding. On the other hand if he makes only a laconic statement about a specific activity in the garden it becomes a vacuum which is too bare for his imagination to breathe in. Both the problems are related to his having a defective imagination. He lacks disciplined and attentive imagination to make full use of a scene or emotion, and also lacks the fertile imagination to build on bare facts. Because of this deficiency, the unliterary demands specific qualities from literature to satisfy his needs.

> What they therefore demand is a decent pretence of description and analysis, not to be read with care but sufficient to give them the feeling that the action is not going on in a vacuum — a few vague references to trees, shade and grass for a wood, or some allusion to popping corks and groaning tables for a banquet. For this purpose the more cliches the better.

> Such passages are to them what the backcloth is to most theatregoers.[2]

It has been said earlier that the unliterary wants nothing more in his reading than the event. But all events are not of the same nature, and some naturally appeal to him more than the others. They are of three main types. Firstly, it is the exciting event which consists of imminent dangers and narrow escapes. In this type of event pleasure is derived from the winding up and relaxing of anxiety. The sensation of fear is mixed up with a certain amount of pleasure as it is evident in the experiences of gamblers and mountain climbers. Secondly, they enjoy stories with a mystery element in them which arouses, prolongs, exasperates and then finally satisfies their inquisitiveness. Thirdly, they enjoy reading stories which give them vicarious pleasure or happiness. They may be stories of love or success or high or wealthy life.

The pleasure derived from the above three elements are universal and not confined to the unliterary alone. But what is uncommon is that "the unliterary are unliterary not because they enjoy stories in these ways, but because they enjoy them in no other."[3]

We find that even among the literary readers there are some who cannot be called without false characterisation, true readers or lovers of literature because no matter how much they read they do not read literature for its own sake

but read it either for personal or economic or social reasons.

The first among them are the mere professionals. We find this sort of people in some foreign universities where they cannot keep their jobs unless they keep on publishing articles "each of which must say, or even seem to say, something new about some literary work". Equally unfortunate are the reviewers. They have to read novel after novel as quickly as they can. So reading becomes mere work and the literature they read, no longer exists in its own right but becomes mere raw materials on which to prepare reviews. They might at one time have full response to literature but now professional pressure and overwork has destroyed genuine appreciation of literature.

Next comes the status seekers. In the way some families or circles are expected to take interest in hunting and sports they take it upon themselves as a social necessity o display some interest in the approved literature "especially the new and astonishing works, and those which have been banned or have become in some other way subjects of controversy."[5] Readers of this kind have no taste of their own and they faithfully and at times vulgarly approve or disapprove whatever current literary fashion dictates. "They are entirely dominated by fashion. They drop the Georgians and begin to admire Mr. Eliot, acknowledge the `dislodgement

of Milton, and discover Hopkins at exactly the right moment. They will not like your book if the dedication begins with *To* instead of *For*".[6]

The devotee of culture reads to improve himself to become a more complete man. He is sincere and may be a modest man. And his reading is not dictated by the prevailing fashion. In fact, he may restrict his reading too exclusively to the established authors of every age and nation. He remains content with few favourites and makes no experiments. But he is also not a true lover of literature. Because he is like a man who plays games only to improve his health. If a man plays solely for health, and not for its own sake, games become exercises and are no longer games.

This sort of laborious misreading is prevalent especially in our age among the literary Puritans. Making English literature a subject in the schools and universities has one sad result. The conscientious and submissive young people are indoctrinated in the early years that it is meritorious to study the great authors. They may be agnostics but they still have the Puritan conscience of their ancestors and they get into a very regrettable state of mind.

> The Puritan conscience works on without the Puritan theology — like millstones grinding nothing; like digestive juices working on an empty stomach and producing ulcers. The unhappy youth applies to literature all the scruples, the rigorism, the self-examination, the distrust of pleasure, which his forebears applied to

the spiritual life; and perhaps soon all the intolerance and self-righteousness.[7]

Literary Puritans makes solemn readers. But they are too serious as men to be receptive as readers. A serious or true reader reads according to what is intended by the author. "What is meant lightly he will take lightly, what is meant gravely, gravely."[8] But Puritans read everything so seriously that they fail miserably in seeing any humour even in authors like Jane Austen and Chaucer. To become true readers they will have to come to the work with an open mind without any preconceptions.

Over and above these, the literary also misread because of certain misconceptions about literature. The misconception arises from a confusion between life and art which does not allow for the existence of art at all. "Its cruelest form is pilloried in the old story of the backwoodsman in the gallery who shot the 'villain' on the stage".[9] The confusion has two levels. At the lowest level we have readers who want nothing but sensational narrative which they will accept only in the form of news. On a higher level there is a belief that literature gives us knowledge and teaches us truths about life. Dramatists and novelists are praised for theological and philosophical ideas in their works and the artistic inventions and designs are neglected. They are revered as teachers but not sufficiently appreciated as artists. In other words, literature of power is treated as a species

within the literature of knowledge. If a child has this habit it is less serious than that of an adult because it maybe transient. Between the ages of twelve to twenty we all get from novels a great deal of information and also misinformation about the world we live in but this use of fiction is abandoned as we grow older. We begin to seek information from more reliable sources, and that is why we have less inclination to take up a new novel to gather information than we had in youth.

The belief that art is an account of real life persists among the literary in a subtle form. For example, there is a belief that tragedy is worth reading because it teaches us the tragic view of life. Lewis found this belief very common among his pupils.

> This content is variously described, but in the most widely diffused version it seems to consist of two propositions: (1) That great miseries result from a flaw in the principal sufferer. (2) That these miseries, pushed to the extreme, reveal to us a certain splendour in man, or even in the universe. Though the anguish is great, it is at least not sordid, meaningless, or merely depressing.[10]

Lewis disagrees with this view of tragedy. Because though a flaw in character may cause miseries in life, it will be wishful thinking to conclude that flaw in character

is the typical or usual or ultimate cause of human misery so as to make tragedy a comment on life.

> Flaws in character do cause suffering; but bombs and bayonets, cancer or polio, dictators and roadhogs, fluctuation in the value of money or unemployment, and mere meaningless coincidence cause a great deal more. Tribulation falls on the integrated and well adjusted and prudent as readily as on anyone else. Nor do real miseries often end with a curtain and a roll of drums 'in calm of mind, all passion spent'. The dying seldom make magnificent last speeches .... There is no grandeur and no finality. Real sorrow ends neither with a bang nor a whisper.[11]

As the tragedian's concern is neither to give a faithful depiction of life nor teach a particular philosophy of life, what he does is simply select from reality what his art requires.

> The tragedian dare not present the totality of suffering as it usually is in its uncouth mixture of agony with littleness, all the indignities and (save for pity) the uninterestingness of grief. It would ruin his play. It would be merely dull and depressing. He selects from the reality just what his art needs, and what it needs is the exceptional.[12]

Secondly, it is equally unfounded and untrue that miseries reveal certain splendour in man when pushed to the extreme. Tragedians end their stories with "a sublime and satisfying finale" not because such a finale is characteristic of human misery, but because it is necessary to good drama."[13] But readers are deceived by these realistic

pretensions because of their belief that tragedy reflects true life and it conveys to us the tragic view of life. Lewis contends that in real life no tragic grandeur emerges from misery or sorrow. He identifies three types of sorrow. The first can be compared to Dante's spiritual journey through Purgatory. After having descended to the centre, he "ascended again terrace by terrace to the mountain of accepted pain" and finally rising to peace. The second can be compared to a puddle which "always grows wider, shallower, and more wholesome". The third gradually disappears just like any other mood. But there is no tragic grandeur in any one of these. And "to approach anyone in real sorrow with these ideas about tragic grandeur, to insinuate that he is now assuming that 'sceptred pall' would be worse than imbecile: it would be odious".[14]

There is yet one more erroneous belief that tragedy is truer to life than comedy. This seems to be wholly unfounded. Because "the raw materials are all around us ... It is selection, isolation and patterning"[15] that make a play a tragedy or a comedy; and none is truer to life than the other. They are just like two nosegays plucked from the same bush. It is rather odd that some people who consider comedy less true to life than tragedy regard farce as realistic. The confusion "arises from a failure to distinguish between realism of presentation and realism of content".[16] The

presence of realism of presentation can make a story quite realistic without realism of content. Thus Chaucer's Troilus appears more realistic and convincing than the Miller's Tale. The world of farce is a highly idealised world. "It is a paradise of jokes where the wildest coincidences are accepted and everything works together to produce laughter."[17]

All the three forms of art extract from life just what is suitable for their requirements, and when the raw materials are constructed into works of art and come to life in the hands of the artist their existence has no other design than to be works of art. Because,

> Tragedies omit the clumsy and apparently meaningless bludgeoning of much real misfortune and the prosaic littleness which usually rob real sorrows of their dignity. Comedies ignore the possibility that the marriage of lovers does not always lead to permanent, nor even to perfect happiness. Farce excludes pity for its butts in situations where, if they were real, they would deserve it. None of the three kinds is making a statement about life in general. They are all constructions: things made out of the stuff of real life; additions to life rather than comments on it."[18]

However, what has been said is not to suggest that there is no wisdom, knowledge and experience to be found in the work of a great artist. He impregnates his work throughout with the flavour or feel of that actual life has for him. And we may expect to find many psychological truths

and profound reflections. But of course "all this comes to us, and was very possibly called out of the poet, as the 'spirit' (using that word in a quasi-chemical sense) of a work of art, a play. To formulate it as a philosophy, even if it were a national philosophy, and regard the actual play as primarily a vehicle for that philosophy, is an outrage to the thing the poet has made for us".[19]

It is certainly an outrage to a work of art but the matter does not end there. It is also a flagrant example of using instead of receiving it, and using inevitably impedes proper reception of the work itself. Because instead of immersing ourselves in it we may return to the work only to find out what it teaches and whether it confirms our beliefs. "The supreme objection to this is that which lies against the popular use of all the arts. We are so busy doing things with the work that we give it too little chance to work on us. Thus increasingly we meet only ourselves."[20]

In fact, in reading literature, instead of meeting ourselves, we should go beyond ourselves and encounter other persons and enter into their feelings and worlds which may move and affect us profoundly.

> ... one of the chief operations of art is to remove our gaze from the mirrored face, to deliver us from that solitude. When we read the literature of knowledge we hope, as a result, to think more correctly and clearly. In reading imaginative work, I suggest, we should be much less concerned with altering our own

> opinions — though this of course is sometimes their effect — than with entering fully into the opinions, and therefore also the attitudes, feelings and total experience, of other men.[21]

In contrast to the above mentioned readers who misread by seeking extra-literary things in literature a good reader is guarded by the awareness that a good tragedy is not only *logos* (something said) but also *poiema* (something made). The same rule holds for a novel or a narrative poem. As "they are complex and carefully made objects" our attention should be directed to them, because

> One of the prime achievements in every good fiction has nothing to do with truth or philosophy or a *Weltanschauung* at all. It is the triumphant adjustment of two different kinds of order. On the one hand, the events (the mere plot) have their chronological and causal order, that which they would have in real life. On the other, all the scenes or the divisions of the work must be related to each other according to principles of design, like the masses in a picture or the passages in a symphony.[22]

While reading "our feelings and imaginations must be led through 'taste after taste', upheld with kindliest change. To achieve this, contrast will have to be maintained between light and darkness, swift and slow, and simple and complex with natural symmetry "so that the shape of the whole work will be felt as inevitable and satisfying."[23] Moreover, none of the parts "should exist solely for the sake of

others". "Every episode, explanation, description, dialogue- ideally every sentence — must be pleasurable and interesting for its own sake."[24]

This is the kind of pleasure a good reader derives from his reading of literature because apart from getting totally immersed in the thoughts, attitudes and feelings of the artist, he also experiences as fully as possible the complex and rare delights of whatever a work of art has to provide for the reader. Whereas a literary misreader seeks a good thing in the wrong place and ends up using literature instead of receiving it.

Lewis regrets that the kind of misreading he is protesting against is encouraged in the universities by making English literature an increasingly important academic discipline. Many talented, ingenious and diligent persons with no real literary interest are forced to talk incessantly about books and they have to make books, things they can talk about. "Hence literature becomes for them a religion, a philosophy, a school of ethics, a psychotherapy, a sociology — anything rather than a collection of works of art."[25]

Lewis next launches into his discussion on myth. He begins with the nature of myth and then discusses how the literary and unliterary responds to myth. Concerning the nature of myth Lewis enumerates the following characteristics:

1) It is extra-literary. Its effect on the reader does not depend on narrative elements or stylistic devices.

2) It has a sense of inevitability. It strikes us as a permanent object of contemplation rather than as a narration and captures us with its flavour on quality.

3) It has only minimal human sympathy. We do not project ourselves too strongly into the characters as the characters are like shadows in another world.

4) It is fatalistic as it deals with the impossible and preternaturals.

5) It may be sad or joyful but it is always grave.

6) It is awe-inspiring in nature and we feel numinous or mysterious feelings. We feel that something momentous has been communicated to us. In our recurrent effort to conceptualise myth, humanity has a tendency to allegorise myths and get the myths emerge more important than the allegorizations.

Lewis is concerned only with how myth acts on the conscious imagination of the mind as this alone has literary relevance, and he is silent about the pre-history of myth either as primitive science or fossil remains of rituals or as fabrication of medicine men on outcropping from the individual or the collective conscious.

The literary and unliterary have some superficial similarities, but they react to myth differently. For both of

them words are mere information and literary merits or faults do not count. Both of them concentrate on the event. But for the lover of myth he is moved as long as he lives whereas for an unliterary as soon as the moment of excitement is over and his curiosity appeased he will forget the event forever. The myth lover's response to myth is extra-literary whereas the others is unliterary. The myth lover gets what is provided by the myth whereas the others do not get even one-tenth of what it provides.

The degree of mythicality of a certain book at times depends on who reads it. Two persons may read the same book and one may find it only an exciting yarn but it may convey a myth to another and be profoundly moved. Rider, Haggard is one of such ambiguous authors. While two boys are reading his romances the unliterary will find only excitement and danger. But the literary will find the aweful "which is quite immeasurable with mere excitement. The unliterary boy's response to the story is "Will the hero escape?" But the myth lover boy's response will be "I shall never escape this. This will never escape me. These images have struck roots far below the surface of my mind".

Another difference between the literary and unliterary is that though some literary may have no taste for myth, there are no unliterary who have taste for myth. Because the unliterary, would not accept the impossible and

preternaturals. They can fantasize but they hate the fantastic. So Lewis next turns his attention to fantasy and describes how it appeals to different kinds of readers.

Fantasy is a term used both in psychology and literature. In literature it means any narrative that deals with the impossible and preternaturals. A few examples are "The Ancient Mariner", Gulliver and The Wind in the Willows. In psychology, the term fantasy can mean the following things:

First, it is an imaginative construction in which what is imagined is taken as reality by the patient. In this state of mind, "The commonest events are twisted, often not without ingenuity, into evidence for the treasured belief". "A man [may] believe that he is the long-lost son of noble and wealthy parents and that he will soon be discovered, acknowledged, and overwhelmed with luxuries and honours".[26] This can be called Delusion.

Second, it is a pleasing imaginative construction entertained by the patient without the delusion that it is reality. In this kind of reverie, the dreamer indulges in "military or erotic triumphs, of power or grandeur, even of mere popularity ..." It becomes his prime consolation and realities become distasteful to him and thus he becomes incapable of making any efforts to achieve happiness in real life. The person who imagines himself to be a Don Juan will

take no initiative even in making himself agreeable to the women he meets. This can be called Morbid Castle-building.

Third, the nature of the activity is the same as above but it is indulged briefly and moderately and kept subordinated to other normal activities. This can be used even creatively as we can day-dream about or visualize the books we want to write. This can be called Normal Castle-building.

Normal castle-building can be of two types: the egoistic and the disinterested. In the first kind the dreamer makes himself the hero and everything is seen though his eyes, and all the achievements are his. He is the lover, the millionaire, the wit par excellence or the greatest living poet. In the second kind the dreamer is not the hero but is simply a spectator. Thus a person who may not have a chance in reality may day-dream about an Alpine holiday in Switzerland. But here the attention is not focused on himself but on the imagined mountains. In this kind of reverie some children may imagine and "feign a whole world and people it and remain outside it". This is the beginning of literary invention if the dreamer has any talent. It is true that there also can be a transition from egoistic to disinterested castle-building leading to creation of fiction.

As far as the reading of fantasy is concerned the unliterary prefer the egoistic castle-building type. They

project themselves into the most enviable characters of the story and take vicarious pleasures in their triumphs or love or wealth or distinction; and this provides materials for further day-dreaming.

However, the unliterary do not like literary fantasies or fantastic stories. They detest them and consider them fit only for children. They may like to read stories with "monstrous psychology and preposterous coincidences" but they demand at least superficial realism which bears plausible resemblance to reality. The reason is simple. Though they are not deceived by their castle-building to be reality, they want to feel that they might happen. The woman reader knows that she is not as attractive as the heroine in the book but she wants to feel that given money and opportunities she also might. The man reader knows that he is not rich and socially successful but if he could win a sweepstake or make a fortune without talent he might. As the hope of realising their dreams is not totally negated they keep themselves entertained in castle-building. But anything that hints the impossible and the unattainable ruins their pleasure.

> A story which introduces the marvellous, the fantastic, says to him by implication, I am merely a work of art. You must take me as such — must enjoy me for my suggestions, my beauty, my irony, my constructions, and so forth. There is no question of anything like this happening to you in the world."[27]

Thus egoistic castle-building marks the reading of the unliterary throughout. In this he can fantasize a great deal. But again he hates the fantastic and he has a total aversion to literary fantasy as it is too fantastic, too unattainable, or preternatural and out of the world for him to participate and indulge in vicariously. But this does not happen to the literary reader. Disinterestedness characterises his reading and he can remain a neutral observer. He is simply seeing with the author's eye and imagining or dreaming with his imagination, and thereby extending his being. Thus while "Disinterested castle-building may dream of nectar and ambrosia, of fairy bread and honey dew; the egoistic sort dreams rather of bacon and eggs or steak."[28]

Therefore, from observing the reader's response to fantasy, it is possible to tell whether a reader is literary or unliterary. They also respond to realism differently, but apart from readers response to realism, modern critics response to realism is equally significant. Now let us see what Lewis has to say about it.

Realism is a term in criticism to denote the form of literature in which life is represented as realistically as possible. There are two kinds of realisms: realism of presentation and realism of content. In realism of presentation the story has things to see, hear, taste or touch. It is "the art of bringing something close to us,

making it palpable and vivid, by sharply imagined detail. We may cite as examples the dragon 'sniffing along the stone' in Beowulf; ... Falstaff on his death-bed plucking at the sheet; Wordsworth's little streams heard at evening but inaudible by daylight."[29]

In realism of content the story is probable or true to life; and Lewis cite Constant's Adolphe as an example of such a story because though the story has great realism of content there is a total lack of realism of presentation.

> [In Adolphe] a passion, and the sort of passion that is not very rare in the real world, is pursued through all its windings to the death. There is no disbelief to be suspended. We never doubt that this is just what might happen. But while there is much to be felt and much to be analysed, there is nothing to be seen or heard or tasted or touched ... we do not know what anyone looked like or wore, or ate. Everyone speaks in the same style. There are almost no manners. I know very well what it would be like to be Oreste (or Adolphe); but I should not know either if I meet him, as I should certainly know Pickwick or Falstaff, and probably old Karamazov or Bercilak.[30]

The two kinds of realism are quite independent of one another.

> You can get that of presentation without that of content, as in medieval romance: or that of content without that of presentation, as in French (and in some Greek) tragedy; in both together, as in War and Peace; or neither, as in the Furioso or Rasselas or Candide ... all four ways of writing are good and master pieces can be produced in any of them.[31]

However, realism of content is the dominant taste at present. This is the influence of the great novels of the nineteenth century. But it will be dangerous and also disastrous to erect this historically conditioned preference into a critical principle. Yet some such assumption seems to lurk tacitly in the background or much criticism and literary discussion. "We feel it when books are praised for being 'comments on' or 'reflections' (or more deplorably 'slices') of Life. We notice also that 'truth to life' is held to have a claim on literature that overrides all other considerations".[32]

Another reason for the emergence and dominance of this undeclared literature principle could be "... the widespread neglect or disparagement of the romantic, the idyllic, and the fantastic, and the readiness to stigmatise instances of these as escapism."[33]

Now let us probe further into the proposition by the literary Puritans that literature should be true to life. First of all we must decide as to what sort of literature can be said to be true to life. A possibility is that if a book can convincingly demonstrate to a sensible reader that in its grim or empty or ironic description, it has depicted what life is like we say that it has this property. But again being true to life can mean two different things: the sort of

thing that might conceivably happen or the sort of thing which usually happens and is typical of human life. Oedipus belongs to the first and Middlemarch to the second. In the first one "such and such behaviour would be probable and characteristic of human life, given the situation". But the situation is most unlikely to occur. For example, "The chances against anyone's being exposed as an infant, then rescued, then adopted by a king, then by another coincidence killing his father, and then by another marrying his father's widow, are overwhelming."[34]

In the second one it is more probable, perfectly ordinary and so typical of human life. "These are the sort of things that might happen to anyone. Things like them have probably happened to thousand. These are such people as we might meet any day. We can say without reservation, 'This is what life is like."[35]

The two kinds of realism we have just discussed may be distinguished from literary fantasies like Furioso and "The Ancient Mariner" but they should also be distinguished from each other. And one will soon notice that till modern times most of the stories were of Oedipus type and not that of Middlemarch because the former type talk about the unusual and the exceptional which make the stories remarkable. But if the kind of events found in Middlemarch were to be narrated to people they would have said, "This is what happens

everyday. If these people and their fortunes were so unremarkable, why are you telling about them at all".[36] Because there has been a universal way of introducing stories in conversations since time immemorial by using expressions such as the following:

> Men begin, "The strangest sight I ever saw was —" or "I'll tell you something queerer even than that' or 'Here's *something you'll hardly believe*'. Such was the spirit of nearly all stories before the nineteenth century. The deeds of Achilles or Roland were told of because they were exceptionally and improbably heroic, the matricidal burden of Orestes, because it was an exceptional and improbable burden, the saint's life, because he was exceptionally and improbably holy ... The Reeve's Tale was told because what happens in it is unusually and all but impossibly funny.[37]

If we are so radical realists as to insist that all good fiction must be true to life there are only two possibilities open to us. One is to maintain that all good fiction must belong to the second type which is the family of Middlemarch. But that will put us in a rather absurd position. Because we shall be going against "the literary practice and experiences of nearly the whole human race"[38] which is a rather too formidable an antagonist. The second is to maintain that exceptional and atypical stories of Oedipus' type are also true to life. But that won't be a realistic position either. Because "if we are sufficiently determined, we can just — only just — brazen it out. We can maintain

that such stories are implicitly saying 'Life is such that even this is possible. A man might conceivably be raised to affluence by a grateful convict. A man might conceivably be as unlucky as Balim ... A city might conceivably be taken by a wooden horse. And we should have to maintain not only that they are saying this, but that they say it truly."[39]

Thus if we are to grant the argument it becomes necessary to take a good deal of swallowing, and it forces us into an entirely artificial position as we get quite close to thinking up something to defend a desperate thesis. Besides, it goes against our own experience and the experience of others in reading stories as that was not the message communicated to us by them. Because while reading them we did not get the impression that they were telling us any truth about life. Rather they seemed more like remote accidents. And neither the story tellers nor the readers were "thinking about any such generality as human life". "Attention is fixed on something concrete and individual; on the more than ordinary terror, splendour, wonder, pity, or absurdity of a particular case. These, not for any light they might throw hereafter on life of man, but for their own sake, are what matters."[40]

But if stories of this type are well done we get what is called hypothetical probability. In this kind of probability the story becomes probable if the initial

situation occurred. "But the situation is usually treated as if it were immune from criticism".[41] In the earlier ages it was accepted on the authority of the poet. But in the more sophisticated period the situation is accepted only as a postulate. We have to allow it to be granted that Lear divided his kingdom or that the 'riche gnof' in the Miller's Tale was gullible or that calumnies against one's own wife by the most suspicious characters would be believed. But the author is not saying that this is what happens in life. He is simply saying this:

> 'Suppose this happened, how interesting, how moving the consequences would be. Listen. It would be like this.' To question the postulate itself would show a misunderstanding, like asking why trumphs should be trumphs. It is the sort of thing 'Mopsa' does. That is not the point. The *raison d'ètre* of the story is that we shall weep, or shudder, or wonder, on laugh as we follow it.[42]

If that is the purpose of the story, it would be rather perverse to make any efforts to formulate a realistic theory of literature from such stories. Because they are never meant to be representations of life, nor valued for being so.

> The strange events are not clothed with hypothetical probability in order to increase our knowledge of real life by showing how it would react to this improbable test. It is the other way round. The hypothetical probability is brought in to make the strange events more fully imaginable. Hamlet is not faced with a ghost in order that his

> reaction may tell us more about his nature and therefore about human nature in general; he is shown reacting naturally in order that we may accept the ghost.[43]

Thus it is obvious that a certain amount of realism of content is definitely desirable. It makes the strange, the unexpected and the mysterious acceptable to the readers. However, it becomes entirely another matter when we start demanding that all literature should have realism.

> The demand that all literature should have realism of content cannot be maintained. Most of the great literature so far produced in the world has not. But there is a quite different demand which we can properly make; not that all book should be realistic in content, but that every book should have as much of this realism as it pretends to have.[44]

But this principle is not always understood. Literature is very often treated as an aid to something for which it was neither meant nor designed. "There are earnest people who recommend realistic reading for everyone because they say, it prepares us for a real life, and who would, if they could, forbid fairy-tales for children and romances for adults because these 'give a false picture of life' — in other words, deceive their readers".[45]

This is a clear misconception about literature. Because literature is primarily a work of art and it is neither meant to prepare us for life nor mislead us with false ideas or philosophies. And literature does not deceive us if we read

according to how it was meant to be read by the author. Only the egoistic castle-builders are deceived by an apparent or superficial realism in what they read because they wish to be so deceived. But an apparent realism would not deceive the literary reader at all. (He requires "a much more subtler and closer resemblance to real life). Nor are we deceived by the Odyssey or Beowulf. Nor any novel deceives the best type of readers. "He never mistakes art either for life or for philosophy. He can enter, while he reads, into each other's point of view without either accepting or rejecting it, suspending where necessary his disbelief and (what is harder) his belief."[47]

Finally, while discussing realism it will be proper to look into the charge of escapism in reading literature. In one sense every kind of reading is an escape as "it involves a temporary transference of the mind from our actual surroundings to things merely imagined or conceived. This happens when we read history or science no less than when we read literature. But the question is what we escape into." Because people can escape into all kinds of things. Some can escape into egoistic castle-building. This can be either harmless or brutal or prurient or megalomaniac. Some others escape into divertissements, a good example of which is The Midsummer Night Dream. Others escape into disinterested castle-building aided by works like the Arcadia or the

Ancient Mariner. And yet others escape into realistic fiction as every fiction is a construct and offers a complete escape from the reader's immediate distress.

Thus escape itself is neither good nor bad as it is common both to bad and good reading. But escapism has a derogatory sense as "we suggest, I suppose, a confirmed habit of escaping too often or for too long, or with the wrong things, or using escape as a substitute for action where action is appropriate, and thus neglecting real opportunities and evading real obligations.[49]

However, each kind of escapism has to be judged on its own merit. Before we proceed further we'd better clear up one point first. Fantasy itself does not lead one into escapism whether one writes it or read about it. So the Renaissance and the nineteenth century which were both periods prolific in literary fantasy were also periods of great energy and productivity.

Change of escapism against some very unrealistic fantasies are often associated with that of childish or infantilism. So it may be worthwhile to find out what sort of childishness is to be approved or disapproved. First, though we usually associate fantasy and childhood and consider childhood to be the right age for fantasy, this is not really so.

> Most of the great fantasies and fairy-tales were not addressed to children at all, but to every one. Professor Tolkien has described the real state of the case. Certain kinds of furniture gravitated to the nursery when they became unfashionable among the adults; the fairy-tale has done the same. To imagine any special affinity between childhood and stories of the marvellous is like imagining a special affinity between childhood and Victorian sofas. If few but children now read such stories, that is not because children as such have a special predilection for them, but because children are indifferent to literary fashions. What we see in them is not a specially childish taste, but simply a normal and perennial human taste, temporarily atrophied in their elders by a fashion.[50]

Secondly, when we used the word 'childishness' as a term of disapproval we should refer only to those considerable characteristics which can be improved by outgrowing them and not those sane people would like to retain. For example, in the physical level we have to outgrow the muscular weaknesses of childhood but would like to keep its energy and power of rapid recuperation. On another level, we may get rid of childhood qualities like fickle-mindedness, jealousy, ignorance, boastfulness and fearfulness but nobody in his right senses would not like to keep its tireless curiosity, imaginative intensity, the facility of suspending disbelief and the readiness to wonder, pity and admire.

> The power of growing up is to be valued for what we gain, not for what we lose. Not to acquire a taste for the realistic is childish in the bad sense; to have lost the taste for marvels and adventures is no more a matter for congratulation than losing our teeth, our hair, our palate, and finally our hopes.[51]

Therefore, having a taste for fantasy cannot be condemned as childish in the bad sense simply because the taste appeared in early age unless it has some intrinsic defects of its own. So also is a taste for the marvellous. And any criticism which instills a fear for sharing with the young any literary work without considering its intrinsic merit is unfair.

Lewis has another major concern - poetry. He first analyses the response of the literary and unliterary to poetry, and then gives some very clear statements on modern poetry. He says in general the unliterary hardly read poetry. He has heard a few women here and there repeating verse. These are usually gnomic and comments on life. But their feelings are not much engaged and their imagination, not at all; and they use them as their grandmothers would have used proverbs or biblical quotations. "This is the little trickle or puddle still left in the dry bed where ballad and nursery rhyme and proverbial jingle once flowed".[52] Even among the literary, now a growing number do not read poetry. And modern poetry is read by only very few people, apart from poets,

critics or teachers of literature; and there is a reason behind this decrease in the number of readers of poetry.

> These facts have a common significance. The arts, as they develop, grow further apart. Once, song, poetry, and dance were all parts of a single *dromenon*. Each has become what it is now by separation from the others, and this has involved great losses and great gains. Within the single art of literature, the same process has taken place. Poetry has differentiated itself more and more from prose.[53]

If we are to think in terms of diction, it may sound paradoxical that poetry has not differentiated itself further from prose. Because the language of poetry and prose has grown closer since the time of Wordsworth as the special vocabulary and syntax of poetry have been banished. But the approximation in only superficial as the same thing cannot be said about content. What Pope said in "The Rape of the Lock", or what Homer said in the Odyssey and Dante said in the Divine Comedy could have been said in prose as well. And most of the qualities Aristotle demanded of a tragedy could be found in a prose play. This was so because despite the differences in language, the content of poetry and prose overlapped or almost coincided. But we find the opposite in modern poetry.

> ... modern poetry, if it 'says' anything at all, if it aspires to 'mean' as well as to 'be', says what prose could not say in any fashion. to read the old poetry

> involved learning a slightly differen language; to read the new involves th unmaking of your mind, the abandonment o all the logical and narrative connection which you use in reading prose or i conversation. You must achieve a trance like condition in which images, associations, and sounds operate without these. Thus the common ground between poetry and any other use of words is reduced almost to zero. In that way poetry is now more quintessentially poetical than ever before; 'purer' in the negative sense. *It not only does (like* all good poetry) what prose can't do: it deliberately refrains from doing anything that prose can do.[54]

The natural and inevitable consequence of this is that the number of readers of poetry has steadily suffered diminution. Modern poetry has become too difficult for many to understand. If poetry confines itself to only what poetry can do it becomes so pure that "the art of reading poetry requires talents hardly less exalted than the art of writing it, readers cannot be much more numerous than poets. If you write a piece for the fiddle that only one performer in a hundred can play you must not expect to hear it very often performed."[55] And the less frequently it is performed the more meagre is the chance of extending its appreciation, enjoyment and admiration to a wider audience. The same thing is happening to modern poetry.

> For the moment, poetry's area in the map of reading has shrunk from that of a great empire to that of a tiny province - a province which, as it grows smaller, emphasises its difference from all other

> places more and more, till in the end this combination of exiguous size and local peculiarity suggests not so much a province as a 'reservation'.[56]

Modern poetry is of such an illusive nature cognoscenti can explicate the same piece in utterly different ways. We can no longer expect one explication to be right and all others to be wrong. "The poem, clearly, is like a score and the readings performances" and different renderings have become possible and admissible. So it is no longer a question of which rendering is right but which one is the best.

What is the future of such poetry? The hope that it may be simply a transient affair dies hard. And some hope that it will soon perish "asphyxiated in the vacuum of its own purity" yielding to a new form of poetry which is more congenial to the passions and interests of the laity. Others hope to raise people through culture till poetry could gain again a wide audience. But Lewis is haunted by a third possibility. As the teaching of Rhetoric in the ancient world lasted for more than a thousand years, it is not impossible that modern poetry has the same destiny.

> The explication of poetry is already well entrenched as a scholastic and academic exercise. The intention to keep it there, to make proficiency in it the indispensable qualification for white-collared jobs, and thus to secure for poets and their explicators a large and permanent (because a conscript) audience, is avowed. It may possibly succeed.

> Without coming home any more than it now does to the 'business and bosoms' of most men, poetry may, in the fashion, reign for a millennium; providing material for the explication which teachers will praise as an incomparable discipline and pupils will accept as a necessary *moyen de parvenir*.[57]

Now to return to the reading of poetry, Lewis says as far as modern poetry is concerned no unliterary read it. So it is difficult to differentiate the reading of the literary and unliterary. But the literary who read poetry these days often fall into the common mistake the literary often make in reading — using poetry instead of receiving it. And they insist on keeping their own understanding or experience of the poem ignoring what the author's intention is or how it was understood by his contemporaries. Concerning this problem Lewis offers the following suggestion.

> There seems to be two answers. One is that the poem in my head which I make from my mistranslations of Chaucer or misunderstandings of Donne may possibly not be so good as the work Chaucer or Donne actually made. Secondly, why not have both? After enjoying what I made of it, why not go back to the text, this time looking up the hard words, puzzling out the allusions, and discovering that some metrical delights in my first experience were due to my fortunate mispronunciations, and see whether I can enjoy the poet's poem, not necessarily instead of, but in addition to, my own one? If I am a man of genius and uninhibited by false modesty I may still

> think my poem the better of the two. But I could not have discovered this without knowing both.[58]

However, in reading some modern poems, the misreading just condemned may be the right technique to be used. Because the words in a poem permit various interpretations each of which may be as valid as the other.

> The words, perhaps, were never meant as anything but raw material for whatever each reader's sensibility may make o them, and there was no intention that one reader's experience should have anything in common with another's or with the poet's. If so, then no doubt this sort of reading would be proper for them. It is a pity if a glazed picture is so placed that you see in it only your own reflection; it is not a pity when a mirror is so placed.[59]

Another fault found in the reading of the literary is that though they pay enough attention to the words when they read poetry ignore the aural aspect of poetry. This is done deliberately even by professionals. He gives the example of a member of the English Faculty of his university whom he heard saying, "Whatever else matters in poetry, the sound doesn't". If faculty members ignore the sound in a cavalier manner, students often betray a total unconsciousness of metre through ignorance. Lewis attributes this astonishing state of affairs to two causes: 1) In some schools, in order to cure children of sing-song they are taught to report poetry not according to lines but speech groups. This is rather short-

sighted as sing-song in children is not a defect. It is the first form of rhythmic sensibility. All other variations and subtleties are developed later on the basis of this metronomic regularity. 2) It is possible that young people are exposed too early to *vers libre* before being trained on metrical poetry. This is something like trying to make children run before they learn to walk. And they grow up unconscious of the aural beauty of poetry.

Thus far Lewis has been taking preparatory steps to introduce his experiment in criticism by discussing good and bad reading. the reading habits of the literary and unliterary, the nature of myth, fantasy, realisms and poetry, and also readers' response to them.

In his experiment, Lewis wants to judge literature by the way men read it. This, he believes, can be done because good literature can be read in a certain way and a bad one in another way. But then what is good literature? Lewis defines good literature "that which permits, invites, or even compels good reading; and bad, as that which does the same for bad reading".[60] If good literature permits good reading, then it follows that good reading is the test used to determine the literary worth of a book. And according to Lewis, good reading is the kind of reading in which we surrender ourselves completely to a work of art by getting ourselves out of the say and by emptying ourselves to make ourselves

receptive to the work. And a book which can be passionately and constantly loved and reread by a person who really and truly reads it has to be good. However, Lewis frankly admits that to make distinction within the pale is more difficult than the location of the pale itself.

Then Lewis enumerates the advantages of his system. First, it fixes our attention on the act of reading. Books on the shelf are only potential literature and they become actual only when read. So also is literary taste. It is only a potentiality till we read literature. Both scholarship and criticism fulfill their role only if they aid reading as "their sole function is to multiply, prolong, and safeguard experiences of good reading". And thus a system that helps us to get away from abstractions by being centred in literature is what we need.

Secondly, the system "puts our feet on solid ground, whereas the usual one puts them on a quicksand". The usual one is risky because you begin to condemn somebody's taste on the strength of an inference. For example, suppose one discovers that I like Lamb. Being sure that Lamb is bad one condemns my taste as bad. But one's condemnation is based on either one's own isolated personal reaction, like my own, or the prevalent view of the literary world. If it is the former, as one hasn't heard my view it is one-sided judgement and one is never sure that one is right. So one's

condemnation of my taste is simply insolent. But if it is based on the prevalent view how long is it going to prevail. Because

> You know that Lamb would not have been a black mark against me fifty years ago. You know that Tennyson would have been a far blacker mark in the thirties than he is now: that dethronements and restorations are almost monthly events. You can trust none of them to be permanent. Pope came in, went out, come back. Milton hanged drawn and quartered by two or three influential critics - and their disciples all said Amen - seems to have survived. Kiplings stock, once very high, fell to the bottom of the market, and now there are signs of a faint rise. 'Taste' in this sense is mainly a chronological phenomenon ... All you can really say about my taste is that it is old fashioned; yours will soon be the same.[61]

But suppose one goes the other way round and observes the reading habit of men one will find oneself standing on firmer ground. For example, suppose one had encouraged me to talk about Lamb and discovered that I was ignoring things Lamb really has and reading into him a great deal that he doesn't have and also that I seldom read what I so praised and the very terms of praise revealed how completely it was for me a stimulant to wishful reveries of my own. And suppose one went around, and on testing others, one found the same kind of result, one has solid ground to believe that Lamb is

probably a bad author as the worst kind of reading is used by those who enjoy Lamb. Therefore,

> Observation of how men read is a strong basis for judgement on what they read, but judgements, in what they read is a flimsy, even a momentary, basis for judgement on their way of reading. For the accepted valuation of literary works varies with every change of fashion, but the distinction between attentive and *inattentive*, *obedient and wilful*, disinterested and egoistic, modes of reading is permanent; if ever valid, valid everywhere and always.[62]

Thirdly, it would make critical condemnation difficult. Lewis considers this an advantage as it is now too easy and thus easily abused with detrimental effects on sane criticism.

In criticism, whichever method we use, whether we judge books by their readers or vice versa, we always use double distinctions: we put some books beyond the pale and then find out the better from the worse within the pale. If we start with books, we draw a line between commercial trash, thrillers and pornography and serious literature. If we judge readers we do the same. We make a broad and hardly disputable division between those who read seldom, hastily, hazily, forgetfully, only to kill time, and those to whom reading is an arduous and important activity. But then, within the latter class, we distinguish 'good' from 'bad' taste."[63]

In the present system, in drawing the pale, a critic claims that he is judging books. But in fact, the books he puts beyond the pale may be books he has never read. So the only guide he has are the low prices of these books and the lurid pictures on the cover. If a book judged by a *cognoscenti* like him to be merely commercial trash now and it turns out to be classic after some generations he will certainly cut a poor figure indeed in the eye of posterity. But Lewis' system works in the open. If we can observe the reading habit of people we can assign those habits to the literary and unliterary. If we find that a book is read only in one way and no other we have a *prima facie* case that the book is bad. But on the other hand if a cheap looking book is a life-long delight even of a single reader, whatever the opinion of friends or foes may be, we should not dare to put it beyond the pale.

The current method can be risky. For example, the works of critics on science fiction betrayed great ignorance. They treated it like a genre though in the literary sense it is not at all a genre. There is nothing common to them except the use of a particular machine. The first category of writers, which belongs to Jules Verne's family, primarily interested in technology. The second category uses the machine to produce *Märchen* or myth. The third category uses it for satire. This became the favourite form of satire once

in America to attack the American way of life and not using it was denounced as unAmerican. In the last category, the great mass of hacks simply wrote "to cash in on the boom in science fiction" and used remote planets and even galaxies as the backcloth for their spy-stories and love-stories which seemed to have no real reason why should occur there instead of here in any town or city on earth. Perhaps you can class all of these categories together if you want to. But "it is as perceptive as classing the works of Ballantyne, Conrad and W.W. Jacobs together as "sea story" and then criticising that".[64]

Lewis' system has sharp differences with the current system for books within the pale. In the established system "the differences between distinctions within the pale and that primary distinction which draws the pale itself, can only be one of the degree. Milton is bad and Patience Strong is worse, Dickens (most of him) is bad and Edgar Wallace is worse. My taste is bad because I like Scott and Stevenson; the taste of those who like E.R. Burroughs is worse."[65]

But in Lewis' system he draws a distinction not of degree but of kind between readings. Because "the judgement that someone is, unliterary is like the judgement 'This man is not in love', whereas the judgement that my taste is bad is more like 'This man is in love, but with a frightful woman".[66] Thus even a book considered to be bad is not

rejected outright but an approach which combines criticism with optimism is favoured because where is the impossibility that the frightful woman with whom you are in love has hidden qualities and virtues which yield only to considerate and patient search?

> ... the very fact that people, or even any one person, can well and truly read, and love for a lifetime, a book we had thought bad, will raise the suspicion that it cannot be as bad as we thought.
> ...
> Always, there may be something in it that we can't see. The *prima facie* probability that anything which has ever been truly and obstinately loved by any reader has some virtue in it is overwhelming. To condemn such a book is, therefore, on my system, a very serious matter. Our condemnation is never quite final. The question could always be without absurdity reopened.[67]

Lewis says that his system is more realistic because it takes into account the fact that distinction within the pale are more difficult to determine than the location of the pale itself; and even after having determined them they are more precarious and reversible. "So there can be no question of finally debunking or exposing any author who has been well inside the pale. We start from the assumption that whatever has been found good by those who really and truly read probably is good. All probability is against those who attack".[68]

One result of the system would be to silence those critics who have condemned all the great names in English literature except half a dozen protected by the current critical establishment. And if the system can effect the desired result, certainly criticism will see happier days again. Because, "these dethronements are a great waste of energy. Their acrimony produces heat at the expense of light. They do not improve anyone's capacity for good reading. The real way of mending a man's taste is not to denigrate his present favourites but to teach him how to enjoy something better."[64]

So far Lewis has been talking about the system working under ideal conditions. But the system has admittedly some snags. The most obvious objection is that the same book may be read in different ways. For example, some passages in fiction or poetry can be used by some schoolboys as pornography. Thus, "what damns a book is not the existence of bad readings but the absence of good ones. Ideally, we should like to define a good book as one which 'permits', 'invites', or even compels 'good reading'.[70] There are some books which permit good reading but resist bad reading. "If you took up Samson Agonistes, Rasselas or Urn Burial to pass the time, or for excitement or as an aid to egoistic castle-building you would soon put it down."[71] As far as invite is concerned, it comes into our conception of a good book, because good

reading is not forced attentive and disciplined reading. Instead of leaving us to do all the work a good author demonstrates through "his writing that it deserves, because it rewards, alert and disciplined reading". But 'permit' is the final test of a book. "The ideally bad book is the one which a good reading is impossible. the words in which it exists will not bear close attention, and what they communicate offers you nothing unless you are prepared either for mere thrills or for flattering day-dreams."[72]

Secondly, it may be objected that taking a stand on readings rather than books is turning from the known to unknown. But this objection is not as formidable as it seems. We can put some readers outside the pale as unliterary and then distinguish the better from the worse within the pale. In the case of the unliterary it is perfectly easy to get some external evidence. They do not talk about reading and if they do they are inarticulate. Reading plays a very small part in their life and every book is tossed aside like an old newspaper after it has been used. Thus the unliterary can be diagnosed with certainty. And with certainty you can also discover the existence of a good book if the reading habit is the opposite of how an unliterary reads a book. If "there is passionate and constant love of a book and re-reading, then, however bad we think the book and however immature or uneducated the reader, it cannot."[73]

In determining the taste of the literary, test by external evidence fails us. But to compensate for that there is something we find useful: we are dealing with articulate people and they provide us with external evidence. They talk and write about their favourite books. And from their conversation we can find out whether they need a particular author for the right reason. For example, a person may love Dante as a poet and another may love him as a Thomist. The person who reads him as a Thomist can ignore completely his literary merits and therefore, he is not a good reader of literature.

Even the literary are exposed to some hazard of being prejudiced when they read on "author who is at present under a cloud" such as Shelley or Chesterton or Milton as we tend to confirm the bad opinions we already had of him. The result is a foregone conclusion."[74] And this is no longer perceptive reading. To correct this, the reader must possess a positive attitude towards the book. "We can find a book bad only by reading it as if it might, after all, be very good. We must empty our minds and lay ourselves open. There is no work in which holes can't be picked; no work that can succeed without preliminary act of good will on the part of the reader."[75]

Lewis' system is basically an attempt to find an alternative to excessive evaluative criticism. He is sceptical of the necessity of strictly evaluative criticism

because it neither seems to help better understanding and appreciation of literature nor help in multiplying, safeguarding and prolonging good reading and it has become rather harmful by becoming excessively condemnatory in the pronouncements. He prefers Arnold's view of criticism as it is a saner and more objective way of criticism as knowledge is pursued for its own sake. Secondly, in his criticism, evaluation plays only a very minor part. As "Criticism is for him 'essentially' the exercise of curiosity, which he defines as the 'disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects for its own sake'. The important thing is 'to see the object as in itself it really is'."[76]

The critic, then, has to show to other the nature of the work by describing its character and leave it to them to respond to it. It is his function to press his evaluations in others. "The great art of criticism is to get oneself out of the way and to let humanity to decide".[77] Besides, the critic is warned not to adopt a policy of ruthless perfectionism. He may have his idea of perfection but at the same time he should be willingly accessible to the second best as well. In other words, like MacDonald's God he has to be "easy to please, but hard to satisfy".

Lewis believes that criticism as conceived by Arnold is a very useful activity. But he finds hardly any value in the present firm of evaluative criticism which consists in

pronouncing judgements on the merits or demerits of books for the supposed benefit of readers. Because apart from his dislike for condemnations he considers evaluative criticism to be of only secondary importance and sees it only as an aid to good reading. He says, "for me it stands or falls by its *power to multiply, safeguard or prolong those moments when* a good reader is reading well a good book and the value of literature thus exists in actu."[78]

He is doubtful whether, in his experience, any evaluative criticism has ever helped him understand or appreciate better any great work of literature. He finds some other critics more useful and he ranks them according to their usefulness as the editors, textual critics, commentators, lexicographers, literary historians and then the emotive critics, and evaluative critics rank after all of them in usefulness.

Among the evaluative critics he is particularly critical of the Vigilant school of critics because of their exaggerated zeal.

> To them criticism is a form of social and ethical hygiene. They see all clear thinking, all sense of reality, and all fineness of feeling, threatened on every side by propaganda, by advertisement, by film and television. The hosts of Midian 'prowl and prowl around'. But they prowl most dangerously in the printed word".[74]

In their zeal the Vigilants have attacked authors not only outside the pale but those who were well within the pale, such as Milton, Shelley, Lamb, Dickens, Meredith, Kipling and De La Mare. They have become the watch dog against whatever is thought to be "vulgarity, superficiality, and false sentiment" and are determined to seek them out and expose them wherever they lie hidden.

It is difficult to determine whether the Vigilants help or hinder criticism. Because there is no common ground on which we can judge the merit of their criticism as they use extra-literary views to evaluate literature. "They labour to promote the sort of literary experience that they think good; but their conceptions of what is good in literature makes a seamless whole with their total conception of the good life. Their whole scheme of values, though never, I believe, set out *en regle*, is engaged in every critical act."[80]

It is to be admitted that all criticism is in one way or another influenced by "the critic's views on matters other than literature". But aesthetic considerations usually moderate one's judgement and help one to suspend disbelief or belief or repugnances. But for the Vigilants they combat the views or attitudes anti-thetical to them so fiercely that they do not allow this liberty to mitigate their pronouncements.

> Nothing is for them a matter of taste. They admit no such realism of experience as the aesthetic. There is for them no specifically literary good. A work, or a single passage, cannot for them be good in any sense unless it is good simply, unless it reveals attitudes which are essential elements in the good life. You must therefore accept their (implied) conception of the good life if you are to accept their criticism. That is, you can admire them as critics only if you revere them as sages. ... run round in a circle, *accepting them as sages because they* are good critics and believing them good critics because they are sages.[81]

The harm this school can do has become quite clear. We have seen in the political sphere the havoc wrought by committees of public safety which become as dangerous as those they are formed to combat. The same thing is now going on in criticism.

> The use of the guillotine becomes an addiction. Thus under Vigilant criticism a new head falls nearly every month. The list of approved authors grow absurdly small. No one is safe. If the Vigilant philosophy of life should happen to be wrong, Vigilance must already have prevented many, happy unions of a good reader with a good book. Even if it is right we may doubt whether such caution, so fully armed a determination not to be taken in, not to yield to any possibly meretricious appeal - such 'dragon watch with unenchanted eye' - is consistent with the surrender needed for the reception of good work. You cannot be armed to the teeth and surrendered at the same moment.[82]

Besides, apart from being unfavourable for the proper reception of a good work, such a belligerent attitude runs another risk. In the attempt to save yourself from a bad author it may "blind and deafen you to the shy and elusive merits — especially if they are unfashionable — of a good one". But there is yet a greater danger — a surfeit of criticism has been posing a cultural threat to the young people, especially in the universities.

> Everyone who sees the work of Honours students in English at a university has noticed with distress their increasing tendency to see books wholly through the spectacles of other books. On every play, poem, or novel, they produce the view of some eminent critic. An amazing knowledge of Chaucerian or Shakespearian criticism sometimes co-exists with a very inadequate knowledge of Chaucer or Shakespeare. Less and less do we meet the individual response. The all important conjunction (Reader Meets Text) never seems to have been allowed to occur of itself and develop spontaneously. Here, plainly, are young people drenched, dizzied, and bedeviled by criticism to a point at which primary literary experience is no longer possible. This state of affairs seems to me a far greater threat to our culture than any of those from which the Vigilants would protect us".[83]

Lewis concludes An Experiment in Criticism with an exposition of his views on literary good. He opens his exposition by trying to answer the question why we read literature. He says that we read literature because we do not

contain in ourselves the sources of "all the information, entertainment, advice, rebuke and merriment". Then he differentiates two levels of literature: literature of knowledge and literature of power. Literature of knowledge is concerned with instruction and literature of power is concerned with giving pleasure.

Furthermore, literature of power can be divided into two components: *Logos* (something said) and *Poiema* (something made). And their distinguishing functions are described as follows:

> As *Logos* it tells a story, or express an emotion, or exhorts or pleads or describes or rebukes or excites laughter. As Poiema, by its aural beauties and also by the balance and contrast and the unified multiplicity of its successive parts it is an *object d'art*, a thing shaped so as to give great satisfaction ... these two characters in the work of literary art are separated by an abstraction, and the better the work is, the more violent the abstraction is felt to be.[84]

Out experience of the *Poiema* gives us keen pleasure. This is what attracts people to literature to seek again and again the pleasure experienced in it. But pleasure is an extremely vague abstraction. "It denotes too many things and connotes too little". We are no longer sure "whether it is more like revenge, or buttered toast, or success, or adoration or relief from danger or a good scratch". But in

the case of literature it has to be that pleasure which gives particular pleasure proper to it.

We can say that the shape of the *Poiema* gives us pleasure though this is not a very precise expression. Because when we read or listen to music the parts succeed one another in time and when the word 'shape' is applied to the whole we are using only a metaphor. This becomes clear when we compare it to the shape of a vase or a house. We don't participate in the shape of a vase when we look at it but it is otherwise when we read a story as we do participate in the story.

> The parts of the Poiema, are things we ourselves do; we entertain various imaginations, imagined feelings and thoughts in an order, and at a tempo, prescribed by the poet. One of the reasons why a very exciting story can hardly elicit the best reading is that greedy curiosity tempts us to take some passages more quickly than the author intends. This is less like looking at a vase than like 'doing exercises' under an expert's direction or taking part in a choice dance invented by a good choreographer ... And if the *Poiema*, or the exercises, or the dance is devised by a master, the rests and movements, the quickenings and slowings, the easier and the more arduous passages, will come exactly as we need them; we shall be deliciously surprised by the satisfaction of wants we were not aware of till they were satisfied ... Looking back on the whole performance we have been led through a pattern or arrangement of activities which our nature cried out for.[85]

The satisfaction derived from the experience tells us that it is good for us. But the impact of the performance is "not good as a means to some end beyond the *Poiema*, the dance or the exercises" but it is felt immediately and is good for us here and now.

> The relaxation, the slight (agreeable) weariness, the banishment of our fidgets, at the close of a great work all proclaim that it has done us good. That is the truth behind Aristotle's doctrine of *Katharsis* and Dr. I.A. Richard's theory that the 'calm of mind' we feel after a great tragedy really means 'All's well with the nervous system here and now.[86]

But, Lewis accepts neither Aristotle's nor Richard's doctrine in toto. He cannot accept Aristotle's because the world has not agreed yet on what it means, and he cannot accept Richard's because it comes perilously close to sanctioning the lowest and most debilitating form of egoistic castle-building. "Tragedy, for him enables us to combine, at the incipient or imaginal level, impulses which would clash in explicit action — the impulse to approach, and the impulse to shun the terrible".[87] But Lewis illustrates the absurdity of this argument by pointing out that it is not possible for Pickwick to combine at the incipient level his wish to give money and also his wish to keep it. Thus the incipient level becomes "a place where you can eat your cake

and have it, where you can be heroic without danger and generous without expense".[88]

However, despite his disagreement with Aristotle and Richards, Lewis admits that these are the right kind of theories to stand against those who find the value of literature in views and comments on life or philosophies of life. Because both of them place the value of literature in what it does to us here and now instead of placing it in remote and improbable consequences.

The *Logos* also forms an integral part of the *Poiema* and by being so it becomes a work of art. But this is not to de-emphasise its importance as without *Logos*, *Poiema* cannot even exist.

> ... the imaginations, emotions, and thoughts out of which the *Poiema* builds its harmony are aroused in us by, and directed towards, the *Logos* and would have no existence without it. We visualise Lear in the storm, we share his rage, we regard his whole story with pity and terror. What we thus react to is something, in itself, non-literary and non-verbal. The literature of affairs lies in the words that present the storm, the rage, the whole story, so as to arouse these reactions, and in ordering the reactions into the pattern of the 'dance' or 'exercise' ... The pattern gives it finality and a sort of grace.[89]

In reading literature, unlike reading science, we don't have to believe or approve the *Logos*. Most of us neither believe that Dante's, universe is real nor Donne's

"Apparition" sensible and edifying nor Kipling's views the wisest. Then what good is there in occupying our mind with stories that never happened and entering vicariously into the feelings we would like to avoid in our persons or fixing our inner eye on things that can never exist such as the Mariner's skeleton ship or Dante's earthly paradise. Lewis has this to say on the matter.

> The nearest I have yet got to an answer is that we seek an enlargement of our being. We meant to be more than ourselves. Each of us by nature sees the whole world from one point of view with a perspective and a selectiveness peculiar to himself ... We want to see with other eyes, to imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts, as well as with our own. We are not content. We demand windows. Literature as *Logos* is a series of windows, even of doors. One of the things we feel often reading a great work is 'I have got out' or from another point of view, 'I have got in', pierced the shell of some other monad and discovered what it is like inside.[90]

Therefore, good reading has something in common with love, moral action and intellectual activity. In love we escape from ourselves into others. In moral action, in every act of justice or charity, we place ourselves into the place of others transcending our own competitive particularity. In the pursuit of knowledge we have to reject "the fact as they are for us in favour of the facts as they are". This happens

because there are two contrary impulses ever at a tussle in our nature.

> The primary impulse of each is to maintain and aggrandise himself. The secondary impulse is to go out of the self, to correct its provincialism and heal its loneliness. In love, in virtue, in the pursuit of knowledge, and in the reception of the arts, we are doing this. Obviously this process can be described either as an enlargement or as a temporary annihilation of the self. But that is an old paradox; he that 'loseth his life shall save it.'[91]

Finally, Lewis concisely and eloquently reiterates the main thrust of his argument concerning literary good.

> Literature enlarges our being by admitting us to experiences not our own. They may be beautiful, terrible, awe-inspiring, exhilarating, pathetic, comic or merely piquant. Literature gives the *entree to them all. Those of us who* have been true readers all our life seldom realize the enormous extention of our being that we owe to authors. We realize it best when we talk with an unliterary friend. He may be full of goodness and good sense but he inhabits a tiny world. In it, we should be suffocated. My own eyes are not enough for me. Even the eyes of all humanity are not enough. Very gladly would I learn what face things present to a mouse or a bee.
>
> In reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself. Like the night sky in a Greek poem, I see with a thousand eyes, but it is still I who see. Here as in worship, in love, in moral action, in knowing, I transcend myself and am never more myself than when I do.[92]

Then, in conclusion, let us sum up the main points once more. In An Experiment one observes that Lewis wants good reading to form the basis of judgement of literature. According to him, good reading is total immersion into a work of art to make ourselves receptive to the work. But there are two kinds of readers; the literary and unliterary, and only the literary few are capable of good reading and receiving a profound literary experience. What they read remains constantly with them and they enjoy reciting them, discussing them, and using the characters to interpret their own experiences. But what the unliterary read does not affect them much. They also never read anything twice and they do not discuss their readings. They have no ears for aural beauty, are not conscious of style and they read only narrative.

However, all the literary are also not true readers. Some professionals in certain universities have to keep on publishing supposedly new findings on literature to retain their jobs. Reviewers also have to read book after book to write reviews. The pressure of work in these professionals and reviewers destroys the genuine appreciation of literature. For the status, seeker, reading what they literary fashion dictates is a social necessity and thus approves or condemns whatever the fashion dictates and thus has no taste of his own. The devotee of culture is no true

lover of literature either, because he reads literature only to improve himself to become a more complete man. Thus he is too serious a man to be perceptive as a reader.

In addition to these, the literary also misread because of certain misconceptions about literature. This misconception involves a confusion between life and art which does not allow art to have an existence of its own. The confusion has two levels: at a lower level there are readers who want sensational narrative in the form of news, and at a higher level there are readers who read literature because it teaches them knowledge and truths about life. And writers are revered more as teachers than appreciated as artists. Thus literature of power is treated as a species within literature of knowledge. This habit is found among children who read novels for information and persists among adults as well in a subtle form who believe that the value of tragedy lies in teaching us the tragic view of life. This view consists of two propositions: (1) that great miseries result from a flaw in the principal sufferer; (2) that these miseries when pushed to the extreme reveal certain splendour in men. But Lewis disagrees with these views of tragedy because though a flaw in character may cause miseries in life there are so many other things as well which inflict miseries on mankind, and that flaw cannot be called the typical or usual or ultimate cause of human misery to make tragedy a comment on

life. Moreover, it is the tragedians concern neither to give a faithful depiction of life nor teach a particular philosophy of life, and what he does is simply select from reality what his art requires.

Secondly, it is equally unfounded that miseries reveal certain splendours in man when pushed to the extreme. Lewis contends that the tragedians end their stories in a satisfying and sublime finale not because such finale is characteristic of human misery but because it is required by good drama.

There is yet one more erroneous belief that tragedy is truer to life than comedy. This seems to be totally unfounded as the materials for both tragedy and comedy are extracted from life around us, and it is the selection and patterning that makes one comedy and the other tragedy and none is truer to life than the other. Therefore, the only sensible thing for a true reader is not to look for a philosophy in tragedy but to wholly immerse oneself in the work and experience as fully as possible the rare delights provided by the work.

As background to his experiment, Lewis also has discussed myth, fantasy, realism and poetry. Concerning myth he describes it as a story with the following characteristics. It is extra-literary and its effect does not depend either on the narrative elements or stylistic devices. It has a sense of inevitability. It is fatalistic as it deals

with the impossibles and preternaturals. It may be sad or joyful but it is always grave. It is awe-inspiring in nature and we get mysterious or ominous feelings. It has only minimal human sympathy and we do not project ourselves too strongly into the characters.

The literary and unliterary respond to myth differently. Both of them may read the same myth and both may get some excitement. But for the literary who is a lover of myth is moved by the myth as long as he lives, whereas for the unliterary the excitement is over as soon as his curiousity is appeased. Two persons may read the same book and one may find it only an exciting yarn but it may convey a myth to another and be moved profoundly. Another difference in response between the literary and unliterary is that though some literary may have no taste for myth, there are no unliterary who have a taste for myth. Because the unliterary would not accept the impossibles and preternaturals as they can fantasize but hate the fantastic.

Next Lewis turns his attention to fantasy which is a term used both in psychology and literature. In literature fantasy means any narrative that deals with the impossibles and preternaturals. In psychology, fantasy can mean the following: (1) Any imaginative construction in which what is imagined is taken as reality. This can be called Delusion; (2) A pleasing imaginative construction entertained

incessantly by the patient without the delusion that it is reality. This can be called Morbid Castle-building; (3) A pleasing imaginative construction which is indulged in moderately and briefly and kept subordinated to other activities. This can be called Normal Castle-building. Normal Castle-building can be again divided into the egoistic and the disinterested. In the first kind the dreamer makes himself the hero and everything is seen through his eyes and all the achievements are his. It is possible that there can be a transition from egoistic to disinterested castle-building leading to literary creation.

As far as the reading of fantasy is concerned, the unliterary prefers the egoistic-castle-building type. Because in this type he can project himself into the most enviable character of the story and take vicarious pleasure in his triumphs, love, wealth or distinction. Thus egoistic castle-building marks the reading of the unliterary as he can fantasize a great deal in this, but he hates any fantasy which precludes self-indulging reverie. On the other hand, disinterestedness characterises the reading of the literary. He remains a neutral observer and sees with the author's eye, and allows his imagination to remain detached.

Readers respond to realism differently as well. Realism is a form of literature in which life is represented as realistically as possible. There are two kinds of realism:

realism of presentation and realism of content. In realism of presentation the story has things to see, hear, taste or touch. But in realism of content the story is probable or true to life. Realism of content is the dominant taste at present. This is the influence of the great novels of the last century. But it will be dangerous to erect this historically conditioned preference into a critical principle. Yet such an assumption seems to lurk tacitly in the background of much criticism. Because books are praised for being true to life or being comments on life. Another reason for the emergence of this undeclared critical principle is the widespread neglect and disparagement of the romantic, the fantastic and the idyllic which are stigmatised as escapism.

Lewis probes further into the preposition that literature should be true to life. Being true to life can mean two things: the sort of thing that might conceivably happen or the sort of thing which usually happens and is typical of human life. Oedipus belongs to the first and Middlemarch to the second. If we are to maintain that literature should be true to life, then we should either demand that all good fiction should belong to Middlemarch's family or that even stories of Oedipus type are true to life. The former puts us against the experience of the whole human

race; and the latter forces us into an indefensibly artificial position. Thus both of the positions are absurd.

Moreover, while reading these stories we don't get the impression that they are telling us any truth about life. Neither the writer nor the reader might be thinking about such a generality as human life as the attention is fixed on specific situations with their terror on splendour or pity or absurdity.

Then Lewis gives his views on poetry. He begins with a description of how the literary and unliterary respond to poetry, and follows up with a discussion on the condition of modern poetry. He says in general the unliterary do not read poetry and not all the literary read poetry. As far as modern poetry is concerned, apart from poets, critics and teachers of literature, only very few read it.

This has happened because poetry and prose have grown apart. Poetry has differentiated itself further and further from prose. As far as diction goes, poetry has come closer to prose since the time of Wordsworth after the abolition of the special diction for poetry. But the same thing cannot be said about content. Earlier there was hardly any difference between the content of poetry and that of prose. What Dante said in the Divine Comedy could have been said in prose as well; and a prose play could have satisfied the qualities Aristotle demanded of tragedy. But this is no longer the case

with the content of modern poetry. As modern poetry aspires to 'mean' and also to 'be' it says things which cannot be said in any fashion in prose. So in a way poetry has become purer. But this extreme differentiation from prose and this purity has generated problems of its own. Poetry has abandoned all logical and narrative connections and to read it one has to get into a trance-like condition to let sounds, images and associations to operate on their own. If reading old poetry requires learning a slightly different language, now reading modern poetry requires the unmaking of one's mind.

Modern poetry is of such illusive nature that the same poem can be interpreted in entirely different ways by the *cognoscenti*. So it is no longer a question as to which interpretation is right but which is the best. As the common ground between prose and poetry has been reduced almost to zero, modern poetry has become too difficult for many to understand it, and reading poetry requires no less exalted talent than writing it. As a result the number of readers of poetry has suffered diminution; and now poetry's area in the map of reading has shrunk from that of an empire to a tiny province.

What is the future of such poetry? A belief persists that it may be only a transient affair as it is bound to die asphyxiated in the vacuum of its own purity. Others hope to

raise people through culture till poetry could gain again a wide audience. But Lewis is haunted by a third possibility. As the teaching of Rhetoric in the ancient world lasted for a thousand years, the teaching of poetry also may have the same destiny and last as a scholastic exercise in the universities for a millennium.

In An Experiment in Criticism, Lewis proposes to judge literature by the way men read it instead of judging men's taste by the things they read. He says good literature permits, invites, and compels good reading. And good reading consists in surrendering ourselves completely to a work of art by getting ourselves out of the way and by emptying ourselves to make ourselves receptive to the work. If any book compels good reading and if one can read it again and again it has to be good. In distinguishing good books from bad books, Lewis uses double distinctions. He puts some books beyond the pale, and then finds out the better from the worse within the pale.

In addition, Lewis enumerates the advantages of the system. Firstly, it fixes our attention on the act of reading. The function of criticism is to multiply and safeguard experiences of good reading and the system fulfils this function. Secondly, the system puts our feet on solid ground. This is so because observation of how men read is a strong basis for judgement of what they read as the

distinction between attentive and inattentive mode of reading is permanent and if ever valid, valid everywhere. Thirdly, it would make critical condemnations difficult. Lewis considers this an advantage as condemnation has become too easy these days. In the established system, in judging books, a critic puts some books beyond the pale and some within. But often the books he puts beyond the pale may be books he has never read. However in Lewis' system it works in the open. Even an unimpressive book if it is a life-long delight of a single reader we dare not put it beyond the pale. Fourthly, the proposed system is more realistic. Because it is based on the assumption that whatever has been found good by those who truly read is to be good. So the question of totally debunking an author who has been well inside the pale for sometime does not arise.

One result of the system would be to silence those critics who have condemned all the great names in English literature except half a dozen protected by the current critical establishment. If the new system can produce the desired effect, criticism would certainly see happier days.

Lewis concludes An Experiment in Criticism with a discussion on literary good. He opens his discussion by trying to answer the question, why we read literature. He says that we read literature because we do not possess in ourselves sources that can supply all the information or

advice or entertainment we want. Then he analyses the components of literature by differentiating two levels of literature: literature of knowledge and literature of power. Literature of knowledge is concerned with instruction and literature of power is concerned with pleasure.

In Lewis' assessment literature of power can be divided into two components: *Logos* (something said) and *Poiema* (something made). As *Logos*, it tells us a story or expresses an emotion or pleads an argument or excites laughter. The *Logos* is an integral part of the *Poiema* and by being so it become a work of art. But the elements with which *Poiema* builds its harmony are directed towards the *Logos* and they cannot even exist without it. Thus the two are interdependent and complementary. As *Poiema* it gives us pleasure by its aural beauty, by balance and contrast, and by the unity and harmony of its successive parts. But *Poiema* can give us pleasure only when we participate in its various successive parts by using our imagination, thoughts and feelings at a tempo prescribed by the poet. The effect of such participation is a feeling of satisfaction or relaxation which shows that it is good for us here and now; and this is the truth behind Aristotle's catharsis. Therefore, literature is to be valued for its capacity to give us aesthetic pleasure and not for any comments it gives on life.

A special characteristic of literary reading is that, unlike scientific or other informative reading, we don't have to believe or approve the *Logos*. So believing in the authenticity of Dante's universe or the real existence of the Mariner's skeleton ship or the historicity of Thetis rising from the sea to comfort Achilles is not essential to enjoy the work. What good is there then in occupying our hearts with stories which never happened and things which didn't even exist? Lewis says we read literature because we want to enlarge ourselves by seeing with other eyes, imagining with other imaginations or feeling with other hearts. In reading, as in worship, love and moral action we transcend ourselves and by so doing we attain the highest self-realization.

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

In one's evaluation of Lewis as a critic it is imperative to begin with an assessment of the influence of romanticism on his criticism; because romanticism was *ingrained in him and he responded to literature* essentially as a romantic. Romanticism manifested itself quite early in his childhood in the form of *Sehnsucht* or longing. In fact, *Sehnsucht* constituted the centre of his romanticism and it moulded him as a man, as a creative writer and also as a critic. As a man his experience of joy through *Sehnsucht* helped him to go on searching for the ultimate reality or God till his return to the Christian faith. As a creative writer, it made him extraordinarily sensitive to the beauty of nature around him, and also made him keenly aware of the Neoplatonic transcendental realities. And as a critic, his *experience of Sehnsucht* helped him to evolve a theory of longing which was later transformed into a work of art - The Pilgrim's Regress. It also helped him to evolve critical concept on the perception and experience of transcendental realities through the power of a "baptized" imagination.

But despite the presence of these romantic traits in him, it is difficult to put him in any particular tradition

as a critic — romantic or otherwise. He had great independence of mind and eclecticism marks his approach in criticism throughout and though a romantic Lewis does not accept a number of romantic critical concepts. One of them is the expressive theory of art. He believes in the objectivity and impersonality of art and he makes a distinction between artistic emotion and the emotion of the poet. In The Personal Heresy, he says, "The character presented is that of a man in the grip of this or that emotion: the real poet is a man who has already escaped from that emotion sufficiently to see it objectively .... The man who cries out with pain is not the same as the man who vividly expresses to us that blood-curdling nature of the cry".[1] He believes that the expressive theory of art has generated an excessive interest in the study of the psychology and biography of authors which inevitably leads to poetolatry. For Lewis this is a deviation from true appreciation of literature as true appreciation should be concerned with concentration on the work itself to discover what it has to offer. A corollary to Lewis' rejection of the expressive theory of art is his rejection also of the intentionality of the poet, such as sincerity or insincerity, as a critical principle as it has nothing to do with the intrinsic worth of a work of art. A fourth romantic theory that Lewis rejects is the theory of genius, especially that of Coleridge which says that poetry is a product of the

action of reason, imagination and the will. In place of this theory, he espouses a theory of imitation with particular reference to the position of a Christian in the light of the New Testament. Lewis says, in the New Testament, life itself is an art of imitation and originality is the prerogative of God alone. And our destiny lies in humbling ourselves, reflecting a glory which is not our own, and being a fragrance which is borrowed. Lewis applies the same principle of reflection and derivation to literature as well and says that it should form the basis of all critical theory. So "an author should never conceive himself as bringing into existence beauty or wisdom which did not exist before, but simply and solely as trying to embody in terms of his own art some reflection of eternal Beauty and Wisdom".[2] But of course, Lewis does not mean here that a Christian writer cannot be original. He says that a Christian can be original. To illustrate his point he brings the analogy of Homer's Phemus who claims to be self-taught but also inspired at the same time. He says there is no contradiction in this because Phemus can learn his trade by himself without following the example of his predecessors, and the inspiration he receives can be treated as a part of himself as it is internal. Thus a Christian writer also can be truly original in the same sense. But of course one has to remember here that for a Neoplatonist like Lewis, inspiration and imitation or

contemplation of God — eternal Beauty and Wisdom — are the same. It may be noted here that in this particular theory, though Lewis rejects Coleridge's theory of the creative power of genius, he retains something of romanticism because he continues to echo Shelley's Neoplatonic belief that "poetic inspiration is to be identified with the blissful contemplation of the sempiternal Form".[3]

Lewis', eclecticism is shown on other issues as well. Though a romantic, he has affinity with T.S. Eliot on tradition and impersonality of art. Emphasising the value of tradition he says, "To study the past does indeed liberate us from the present",[4] and he also agrees with G.K. Chesterton that "any man who is cut off from the past ... is a man most unjustly disinherited."[5] Lewis further points out the need to conform to the traditional form in writing the epic. He says that by submitting to the traditional form the poem "becomes really original, really the origin of great work. The attempt to be oneself often brings out only the more conscious and superficial parts of a man's mind."[6] On the impersonality of art Lewis states in The Personal Heresy that in writing a poem the poet does not express his personality but transcends it. So when we read a poem we do not see the poet's personality, but only what he presents to us and his skill in presenting it. Lewis' similarity with Eliot, however, ends here. Lewis disagrees quite strongly with Eliot on the notion

that only poets can be judges of poetry. Eliot has specifically stated that to judge Paradise Lost "the best contemporary practicing poets are the only jury of judgement." But Lewis objects to this statement and points out the absurdity of the statement. To begin with it excludes all to judge Milton, including the greatest critics on Milton, except practicing poets who may or may not be good critics. Secondly, if we examine Eliot's statement logically, it is absurd as one has to assume that one is a poet though one cannot validly make that judgement because that is a critical judgement and it cannot be made before one can answer the question whether one is a poet. So this is an exposed *petitio* and logically fallacious. However, Lewis' difference with Eliot is not on this issue alone, their very approach to criticism is antithetical: Lewis is the antithesis of Eliot's judgemental and authoritative approach.

Lewis was a critic with a conservative temperament, and his conservatism shows in his attitude towards modern poetry, and the use of psycho-analysis and anthropology in literary criticism. Regarding modern poetry, Lewis is of the view that it neither enjoys a wide readership as poetry used to nor is there anything sure about its future. Because it has deviated so much from the traditional norm by differentiating itself so much from prose that it has become too difficult for the common people to understand. So now its readership is

confined mostly to poets and professionals. And when it comes to interpretation, it is doubtful again whether even these readers can come to any agreement as to what a particular poem means as entirely different interpretations have become possible for a poem. And the future for such poetry is bleak. Lewis is equally sceptical about the usefulness of the psycho-analytical approach in criticism. One reason why he opposes it is because some critics use psycho-analysis to find out the pathological condition of the poetry from his works. This is a digression from genuine criticism. Secondly, Lewis has serious doubts about the interpretation of certain symbols by Freud which are too farfetched to make any contribution to literary criticism. Lewis also has no faith in the use of anthropology as a critical tool. He feels that the extent of the contribution of anthropology is exaggerated. In fact it may not be contributing anything at all because though literary texts can be useful to the anthropologist it does not necessarily follow that anthropology can in turn make a significant contribution to literary criticism. The supposed contribution of anthropology is the discovery by the anthropologists of the mythical or ritual origins of the romances. But Lewis feels that these origins are only conjectural and they may or may not be true. Or even if they are true it does not matter much because they simply furnish facts about the origin of a poem which may

have nothing to do with the literary merit or demerit of the poem. Thus these facts have no critical relevance.

Lewis was a creative writer, and he drew on his experience as a creative writer to formulate new critical principle particularly on children's fiction. One of them is his approach to writing for children. He says there are two good ways and one bad one. The bad way is to treat children like a special department and giving them what the public wants. The other two good ways are to let the printed story grow out of a story told to a particular child; and writing children's story because a children's story is the best art form for something one has to say. While discussing children's fiction, Lewis also has advanced a theory of his own concerning fairy-tales universal appeal. He says we find fairy-tale appealing because characters in fairy-tales, such as giants, dwarfs, and talking animals act as hieroglyphs which depict human attitudes and personality much more effectively than novelistic presentations can do. In addition to this, Lewis also has described vividly and perceptively the actual process of writing stories. In his description he makes a distinction between the poet as poet and the poet as man and citizen. The author's mind bubbles every now and then with ideas. It is followed by the longing for a form. When the two things click, the author's impulse is complete. Then he longs to put the bubbling stuff into

form. The man then decides the advantage and disadvantages of writing the story considering it from different points of view.

Lewis was the first to classify science fiction into different categories. Science fiction is a broad term and under this term can come many varieties. After making a detailed analysis of all the existing varieties, Lewis classified them into five species. In this undertaking, Lewis did for science fiction what Aristotle had done for Greek tragedy. Apart from this classification Lewis also improved upon the classification of the epic. Traditionally, it was divided into primitive epic and artificial epic. But Lewis found the classification unsatisfactory and re-divided epics into primary epic and secondary epic. In the Preface, Lewis also has refuted two major errors in the interpretation of Paradise Lost. One of them is the doctrine of the unchanging human heart. According to this doctrine the things that separate one age from another are superficial and if we strip characters of one age of their traditions and beliefs we find the same unchanging human heart. But Lewis points out that this is not a solution to the problem as it distorts the meaning of the poem and he suggests that we rather situate ourselves in their position in order to feel what they felt. This, he says helps us to understand the poem better. The next error in the interpretation of Paradise Lost is the

Satan-hero theory. Lewis contends that this error, has occurred because certain things in Paradise Lost have been either ignored or misunderstood. Some of these are the epic form and the intention of Milton in making Satan magnificent and the theological position concerning Satan at the time of Milton. Concerning the first, Lewis says, Milton has to treat the Satanic predicament in the epic form which involves depicting Satan in a grand style by subordinating his absurdity to his misery. So a magnificent Satan emerges. But it is also true that Milton has made the absurdity of Satan abundantly clear: his self-delusion that he is at war with God, his hope to win the war, his initial proclamation to fight for liberty and then ending up fighting for his own glory, his degradation from a hero of the heavenly host to a peeping Tom in Eden. The progression of his degradation fits Milton's scheme well as it was undoubtedly his intention to show the devil at the height of his glory and then trace the consequences of such self-intoxication and exaltation. In trying this Milton was taking hardly any risk of being misunderstood as during his time people believed in the existence of a real Satan whom they knew to be the father of lies and whose public speeches they would not accept as gospel truth.

Lewis was essentially an appreciative critic rather than an evaluative one. He had an aversion to making literary

judgements, especially the condemnatory type, and he also had no interest in establishing hierarchies of excellence. Chad Walsh says this attitude might have stemmed from the unhappy experiences he had gone through in the early years when many of his poems were rejected by publishers. Whatever might be the origin of the attitude, it remained with him throughout his life. But as a certain measure of evaluation is inevitable for any critic, Lewis also engaged in evaluation when the situation demanded. Evaluation can be seen in all his major works like The Allegory of Love, A Preface to Paradise Lost and Prose and Poetry in the Sixteenth Century.

Lewis' methodology in criticism was essentially formalistic. He believed in a very close reading of the text as that is the best way to become a perceptive reader. In addition, for him, a work of art exists on its own right and what the text says counts, not what may be conjectured from the author's life. But his methodology in textual analysis is not as systematic or detailed as that of the New Critics. He is happy with no more than a very close reading of the text.

Lewis was a man gifted with great intelligence, imaginative power and dialectical skills, and he enjoyed taking polemical stands on literary issues. And most of his theoretical writings are the product of his involvement in polemics. If there were no opponents to debate with and no ideologies to battle against, perhaps, many of Lewis'

critical concepts would never have appeared in print. But the problem with his polemic habit is that he tends to push an argument to its extreme logical conclusion — often without much regard to the basic strength or weakness of his own position; and in the process he gets into rather unenviable positions. A good example is his controversy with Tillyard on the personal heresy. It is obvious that a work of art can be viewed not only from the point of view of the material but also from the point of view of the vision of the poet. But Lewis saw no merit in his opponent's case and started a long drawn controversy. So his own friend Owen Barfield commented that the controversy was slightly absurd. And "most reviewers agreed that the increasingly biographical approach to literature was regrettable, but most also pointed out that understanding something of an author's personality would be a pleasure".[7] Lewis gets into a very basic problem in An Experiment in Criticism as well. It was his intention, to replace evaluative criticism by his new system of criticism. But in the experiment, though many of his ideas are perceptive and insightful, he fails to overcome a very basic problem — the problem of distinguishing good books from better books as there are no char-cut, objective standards with which to determine the intrinsic worth of a book in his system.

Before we conclude we may briefly review here the impact of The Personal Heresy and An Experiment in Criticism on the academic scene in England and beyond. It is true that the publication of these two books drew immediate attention to certain excesses in academic criticism. But perhaps hardly anybody realised at that time that their impact would be more than ephemeral. But now they have proved to be of enduring value. To quote George Sayer, "the idea [The Personal Heresy] presents has had an important influence on the teaching of English literature. Henceforward, boys and girls who had hardly heard of C.S. Lewis were liable to be severely reprimanded if they served up biography in the guise of literary criticism".[8] Concerning An Experiment in Criticism, the same author says, "within five years it was referred to as a now classic broadside, ... it has attracted a considerable following, especially in America and is already useful in moderating the influence of academic literary criticism."[9]

Finally, one more question about Lewis remains: his position as a literary critic viewed from a historical context. His position can be ascertained from the role he has played as a critic. And as a critic one role towers above the others — his role as a reactionary. As one might have noticed from the preceding two chapters, his major works in literary theory — are all polemic in nature and there is a

good reason for this; Lewis was reacting against certain literary assumptions of his age. Bernard Bergonzi, in his book, Exploding English, calls the assumptions Arnold-Newbolt-Cambridge ideology.[10] The ideology was a continuation of the nineteenth-century optimism of saving civilization by the power of literature. And in this century F.R. Leavis was the chief exponent of this ideology. He feared that the old values were fast vanishing except those that persisted in great literature and those values had to be rediscovered and re-enacted in life through criticism. And as Mathew Arnold had tried to save civilization by poetry in the preceding century, Leavis also tried to save civilization through criticism. But Oxford wanted no part in the new ideology, and one of its most prominent dons who opposed the ideology was C.S. Lewis. His thought on literature which are set out in Rehabilitations, The Personal Heresy, and An Experiment in Criticism, are all in one way or other, antithetical to the conception that literature can save civilization. In Rehabilitations, in contrast to Scrutiny's claim that "there is an absolute distinction between 'good' books, which are literature, and 'bad' ones which were a threat to civilization". Lewis contends that books can be divided into two categories — high brows and low brows. High brows are meant for instruction, preaching, consoling, entertainment and making money and low brow books are

literature meant for providing pleasure and satisfaction. But it is possible that high brow books of one age can become low brow books of another age, and therefore there can be no absolute distinction between the two. In The Personal Heresy, Lewis takes a formalistic stand rather than a moral one. In An Experiment in Criticism he denies that literature is to be valued (a) for telling us truths about life, and (b) as an aid to culture. For Lewis the value of literature is aesthetics and not moral and therefore reading literature is an end in itself rather than a means to something else. Thus the main thrust of Lewis' theoretical writings is a critique of the Cambridge ideology with its cultural underpinnings.

Now this ideology is increasingly under attack and Lewis' views are gaining interest. To quote Bergonzi, "Leavism is now, I believe, part of history, it achieved a great deal but saving civilization by the power of literary criticism was beyond it ... In the present cultural context, it is Lewis' arguments and assumptions that seem to me more challenging, and to have something to contribute to contemporary debates notwithstanding its antique accent and idiom."[11]

If that is Lewis' position at present, one may wonder how he will fare with posterity. This is a difficult question to answer. But no doubt one can have an optimistic expectation of his continued influence. Human nature does not

change: every generation tends to go from one extreme to another. This can happen in literature as well as in life. It leads to confusion, bewilderment and loss of a sense of direction. But without a sense of direction no progress is possible in any human endeavour; and the solution lies in regaining one's balance and perspective. We believe Lewis has done just that in literary criticism for the present age by rectifying excesses in criticism by demolishing ephemeral assumptions and by reasserting the importance of aestheticism in literary criticism. This achievement is of significance not only to us but to posterity as well. So when posterity reads his books — some of which have become classics — no doubt they will see him as a critic who was not a slave to the spirit of the times but one who was bold and noble in spirit whose ideas restored sanity again in twentieth century literary criticism.

END NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. Roger L. Green and Walter Hooper, C.S. Lewis: A Biography (London, 1974), p.155.
2. Ibid., p.283.
3. C.S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (London, Oxford University Press, 1942), p.97.
4. C.S. Lewis, An Experiment in Criticism (Cambridge, 1961), p.107.
5. Ibid., p.105.
6. Ibid., p.106.

CHAPTER TWO

1. C.S. Lewis, Surprised by Joy (Glasgow, 1985), p.12.
2. Ibid., p.12.
3. C.S. Lewis, The Pilgrim's Regress (Glasgow, 1986), p.15.
4. Surprised by Joy, pp.18-19.
5. The Pilgrim's Regress, p.14.
6. Michael Christensen, C.S. Lewis on Scripture (London, 1979), p.110.
7. Ibid., p.110.
8. Walter Hooper, ed. They Stand Together (London, 1979), p.221.
9. Lewis' Letter to Leo Kingsley Baker, July, 1921.
10. The Stand Together, p.217.
11. C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (Glasgow, 1985), pp.118-19.

12. On Scripture, p.112.

13. C.S. Lewis, The Last Battle (Glasgow, 1985), p.162.

14. On Scripture, p.113.

15. Ibid., pp.108-9.

16. Ibid., p.54.

17. Ibid., p.109.

18. Walter Hooper, ed. C.S. Lewis, Christian Reflections (Glasgow, 1985), p.22.

19. Ibid, p.22.

20. Ibid, p.23.

21. Ibid., p.23.

22. The Recluse, Part I, Book I, II, pp.772-4.

23. Ibid, pp.829-30.

24. Christian Reflections, p.25.

25. Ibid., p.52.

26. C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce (Glasgow, 1987), p.73.

27. On Scripture, p.53.

28. The Great Divorce, p.74.

29. George Sayer, Jack/C.S. Lewis and His Times (London, 1988), p.50.

30. They Stand Together, p.70.

31. Ibid., p.112.

32. Ibid., p.154.

33. The Art of Enchantment, p.16.

34. Ibid., p.17.

35. Ibid., p.16.

36. They Stand Together, p.316.

37. The Art of Enchantment, p.12.

38. Ibid., p.12.

39. Ibid., p.13.

40. On Scripture, p.52.

CHAPTER THREE

1. C.S. Lewis, Of This and Other Worlds (Glasgow, 1982), p.26.

2. Ibid., p.26.

3. Ibid., p.27.

4. Ibid., p.28.

5. Ibid., pp.31-32.

6. Ibid., p.32.

7. Ibid., p.33.

8. Ibid., p.34.

9. Ibid., p.37.

10. Ibid., pp.41-42.

11. Ibid., pp.44-45.

12. Ibid., p.57.

13. Ibid., p.57.

14. Ibid., p.57.

15. Ibid., p.59.

16. Ibid., p.59.

17. Ibid., p.60.

18. Ibid., p.61.

19. Ibid., p.62.

20. Ibid., p.62.

21. Ibid., pp.63-64.

22. Ibid., p.64.

23. Ibid., p.66.

24. Ibid., p.67.

25. Ibid., p.69.

26. Ibid., p.69.

27. Ibid., p.69.

28. Ibid., pp.69-70.

29. Ibid., p.71.

30. Ibid., pp.72-72.

31. Ibid., p.82.

32. Ibid., p.84.

33. Ibid., p.85.

34. Ibid., p.85.

35. Ibid., p.86.

36. Ibid., p.87.

37. Ibid., p.87.

38. Ibid., p.88.

39. Ibid., p.88.

40. Ibid., p.90.

41. Ibid., p.91.

42. Ibid., p.92.

43. Ibid., p.93.

44. Ibid., p.93.

45. Ibid., p.95.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Vol.1, 19, 1934.

2. C.S. Lewis, Selected Literary Essays (Cambridge, 1969), p.137.

3. E.M.W. Tillyard, Milton (Cambridge, 1930), p.1.

4. Ibid., p.237.

5. George Sayer, Jack/C.S. Lewis and His Times (London, 1988), p.158.

6. E.M.W. Tillyard and C.S. Lewis, The Personal Heresy (London, 1939), p.4.

7. Ibid., p.4.

8. Ibid., p.11.

9. Ibid., p.11.

10. Ibid., pp.17-18.

11. Ibid., p.26.

12. Ibid., p.62.

13. Ibid., p.35.

14. Ibid., p.35.

15. Ibid., p.12.

16. Ibid., pp.68-9.

17. Ibid., p.107.

18. Ibid., p.108.

19. Ibid., p.109.

20. Ibid., p.111.

21. Ibid., p.112.

22. Ibid., p.112.

23. Ibid., p.116.

24. Ibid., p.119.

25. Ibid., p.120.

26. Ibid., p.116.

27. Ibid., p.125.

28. Jack/C.S. Lewis and His Times, p.158.

29. C.S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (London, 1942, p.2.

30. Ibid., p.3

31. Ibid., p.14.

32. Ibid., p.14.

33. Ibid., p.16.

34. Ibid., p.16.

35. Ibid., p.17.

36. Ibid., p.17.

37. Ibid., p.36.

38. Ibid., p.21.

39. Ibid., p.21.

40. Ibid., p.23.

41. Ibid., pp.24-25.

42. Ibid., pp.29.

43. Ibid., p.31.

44. Ibid., p.29.

45. Ibid., p.29.

46. Ibid., p.29.

47. Ibid., p.40.

48. Ibid., pp.41-42.

49. Ibid., pp.17-18.

50. Ibid., p.44.

51. Ibid., p.45.

52. Ibid., p.45.

53. Ibid., p.46.

54. Ibid., p.53.

55. Ibid., p.53.

56. Ibid., p.54.

57. Ibid., p.54.

58. Ibid., p.55.

59. Ibid., p.57.

60. Ibid., p.57.

61. Ibid., p.60.

62. Ibid., p.63.

63. Ibid., p.64.

64. Ibid., p.102.

65. C.S. Lewis, Selected Literary Essays (London, 1969), pp.286-7.

66. Ibid., p.287.

67. Ibid., p.287.

68. Ibid., p.290.

69. Ibid., p.291.

70. Ibid., p.292.

71. Ibid., p.292.

72. Ibid., p.293.

73. Ibid., p.295.

74. Ibid., p.296.

75. Ibid., p.297.

76. Ibid., p.298.

77. Ibid., p.298.

78. Ibid., p.300.

79. Ibid., p.300.

80. Ibid., p.299.

81. Ibid., p.299.

82. Ibid., p.301.

83. Ibid., p.304.

84. Ibid., p.304.

85. Ibid., p.305.

86. Ibid., p.306.

87. Ibid., p.307.

88. Ibid., p.307.

89. Ibid., p.308.

90. Ibid., p.308.

91. Ibid., p.308.

92. Ibid., p.310.

93. Ibid., p.310.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. C.S. Lewis, An Experiment in Criticism (Cambridge, 1961), p.3.
2. Ibid., p.34.
3. Ibid., p.38.
4. Ibid., p.7.
5. Ibid., p.8.
6. Ibid., p.8.
7. Ibid., p.10.
8. Ibid., p.11.
9. Ibid., p.74.
10. Ibid., p.77.
11. Ibid., p.78.
12. Ibid., p.79.
13. Ibid., p.80.
14. Ibid., p.79.
15. Ibid., p.80.
16. Ibid., p.80.
17. Ibid., p.81.
18. Ibid., p.81.
19. Ibid., p.82.
20. Ibid., p.85.
21. Ibid., p.85.
22. Ibid., p.83.

23. Ibid., p.83.

24. Ibid., p.84.

25. Ibid., p.86.

26. Ibid., p.50.

27. Ibid., p.56.

28. Ibid., p.56.

29. Ibid., p.58.

30. Ibid., p.59.

31. Ibid., pp.59-60.

32. Ibid., p.60.

33. Ibid., p.60.

34. Ibid., p.62.

35. Ibid., p.62.

36. Ibid., p.63.

37. Ibid., p.63.

38. Ibid., p.64.

39. Ibid., p.64.

40. Ibid., p.65.

41. Ibid., p.65.

42. Ibid., p.66.

43. Ibid., p.66.

44. Ibid., p.67.

45. Ibid., p.67.

46. Ibid., p.67.

47. Ibid., p.68.

48. Ibid., p.68.

49. Ibid., p.69.

50. Ibid., pp.70-71.

51. Ibid., p.72.

52. Ibid., p.95.

53. Ibid., p.96.

54. Ibid., p.97.

55. Ibid., p.98.

56. Ibid., pp.99-100.

57. Ibid., p.99.

58. Ibid., p.101.

59. Ibid., p.102.

60. Ibid., p.104.

61. Ibid., pp.105-6.

62. Ibid., p.106.

63. Ibid., p.107.

64. Ibid., p.109.

65. Ibid., p.110.

66. Ibid., p.110.

67. Ibid., p.110.

68. Ibid., p.112.

69. Ibid., p.112.

70. Ibid., p.113.

71. Ibid., p.113.

72. Ibid., p.114.

73. Ibid., pp.114-15.

74. Ibid., p.116.

75. Ibid., p.116.

76. Ibid., p.119.

77. Ibid., p.120.

78. Ibid., p.121.

79. Ibid., p.125.

80. Ibid., p.126.

81. Ibid., p.124.

82. Ibid., pp.127-8.

83. Ibid., p.129.

84. Ibid., p.132.

85. Ibid., pp.133-34.

86. Ibid., pp.134-35.

87. Ibid., p.135.

88. Ibid., p.135.

89. Ibid., p.136.

90. Ibid.,pp.137-38.

91. Ibid., p.138.

92. Ibid., pp.140-41.

CHAPTER SIX

1. C.S. Lewis and E.M.W. Tillyard, The Personal Heresy (London, 1939), p.9.

2. C.S. Lewis, Christian Reflections (Glasgow, 1981), p.22.

3. M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (London, 1953), p.192.

4. C.S. Lewis, Selected Literary Essays (London, 1969), p.12.

5. C.S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (London, 1942), p.64.

6. Ibid., p.3.

7. George Sayer. Jack/C.S. Lewis and His Times (London, 1988), p.158.

8. Ibid., p.158.

9. Ibid., p.244.

10. Bernard Bergonzi, Exploding English (Oxford, 1990), p.61.

11. Ibid., p.70.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES: Books by C.L. Lewis

Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

The Boxen Stories, Ed. Hooper, Walter. London: Harbrace J., 1985.

Christian Reflections. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1985.

The Discarded Image. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

An Experiment in Criticism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.

Fern-Seed and Elephants. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1984.

A Grief Observed. London: Faber and Faber, 1961.

Horse and His Boy. London: Armada Books, 1980.

Last Battle. London: Armada Books, 1980.

The Letters of C.S. Lewis. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1985.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. London: Fontana Lions, 1984.

Magician's Nephew. London: Fontana Lions, 1984.

Narrative Poems, London: Harbrace J., 1979.

Of This and Other Worlds. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1985.

Out of the Silent Planet. London: Macmillan, 1981.

Perelandra. London: Macmillan, 1983.

The Pilgrims Regress. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1986.

Poems. London: Harbrace J., 1979.

Prince Caspian. London: Fontana Lions, 1984.

A Preface to Paradise Lost. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Reflections on the Psalms. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1985.

The Screwtape Letters. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1985.

Screwtape Proposes a Toast and Other Stories. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1985.

The Personal Heresy, Co-authored with Tillyard, E.M.W., London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

Poetry and Prose in the Sixteenth Century. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

Selected Literary Essays, Ed. Hooper, Walter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

The Silver Chair. London: Fontana Lions, 1984.

Spencer's Image of Life. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Studies in Words. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Surprised by Joy. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1985.

Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

That Hideous Strength. London: Macmillan, 1983.

They Stand Together: the Letters of C.S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves. London: Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1985.

Till We Have Faces. London: Collin Fount Paperbacks, 1978.

Voyage of the Dawn Treader. London: Fontana Lions, 1984.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Bergonzi, Bernard. Exploding English. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Christensen, Michael. C.S. Lewis on Scripture. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979.

Derrick, Christopher. C.S. Lewis and the Church of Rome. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981.

Gibb, Joselyn, ed. Light on C.S. Lewis. New York: Harbrace J., 1976.

Gibson, Evan. C.S. Lewis: Spinner of Tales. Grand Rapids. Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980.

Cover, Donald. C.S. Lewis: The Art of Enchantment. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981.

Howard, Thomas. C.S. Lewis: Man of Letters: A Reading of His Fiction. Worthing: Chairman Publishing House, 1987.

Hooper & Green. Biography of C.S. Lewis. London: Souvenir Press, 1988.

Keefe, Carolyn. C.S. Lewis: Speaker and Teacher. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1974.

Willis, John Randolph. Pleasures Forever. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1983.

Schakel, Peter Jr., ed. The Longing for a Form: Essays on the Fiction of C.S. Lewis. Kent: Kent University Press, 1977.

Manlove. C.S. Lewis: His Literary Achievement. London: Macmillan, 1987.

Peters. C.S. Lewis: The Man and His Achievement. Crescent Exeter: Paternoster, 1985.

Sayer, George. Jack/C.S. Lewis and His Times. London: Macmillan, 1983.

Walsh, Chad. The Literary Legacy of C.S. Lewis. San Diego: Harbrace J., 1979.

Wilson, A.N. C.S. Lewis: A Biography. London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990.