C.S. Lewis: A Christian Objectivist—His Pursuit and Participation in Reality (Summary)

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The following is a summary of “C. S. Lewis: A Christian Objectivist—His Pursuit and Participation in Reality,” which is a dissertation submitted in June 2005 to the faculty of the department of English and American Literature of Gakushuin University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy.

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Preface

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) remains one of the most popular and influential Christian authors and lay advocates in this century in England. He taught English as a fellow at Oxford University and later became the first Professor of Medieval and English Literature at Cambridge. His academic works are highly valued. Yet more importantly, he is now well known for his many Christian apologetic works, children’s literature, science fiction, and a novel. His writings have been translated into French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and other languages, and new translations and anthologies are still being published every year. In 1998, to commemorate Lewis’s centenary, many C. S. Lewis societies in and outside England and the United States held special events. The movie, Shadowlands, originally a television play (BBC on 22 December 1985), closely based on Lewis’s marriage to Joy Davidman, made Lewis, the man, popular even among those who do not read him. Although there are those who see his apologetics as already obsolete, his influence is still strong. His novels and stories are read more and more widely both in and outside of the Christian countries. His appeal, then, must not be only because of his Christian character. How can we understand such popularity of his? In this thesis, I want to show that Lewis’s intrinsic appeal lies in the fact that he is concerned not only with Christianity but also with the whole objective Reality and that he perceives, participates in, and communicates that Reality with all his reason, moral consciousness and, above all, conspicuously strong imagination. His firm belief in the objective Reality, and his imaginative way to approach that Reality,
marks his whole achievement most significantly.

Introduction

Lewis believes in God as the supernatural, absolute Reality, a being who transcends our spatio-temporal world. He also believes in heaven as the world of objective reality, or the Real World. The world of Reality is, for Lewis, the world of meanings and therefore important. He is an objectivist and in all his writings, we can see he is assuming the logos and intelligibility of the universe. This assumption is in fact a belief in the rationality of both man and the universe, since it assumes not only the logos of the universe but also the validity of human reason as a means of logically knowing that logos. This belief was one of the most important fundamental presuppositions in Western philosophy until modern times, and Lewis regards himself to belong to that "Old Western" traditions.

He sees the twentieth century as an age of relativism, and shows his misgivings as he finds that even in the field of ethics, where there used to be a belief in objective standards of good and evil, many people now only find some relative standards. Against that relativism, he argues for Christianity not because he finds it good but because he finds it objectively true. He argues for the moral law and other standards of values as well because he believes they are also objective reality. In literary criticism, he insists on the value of allegory and myth which he regards as objective expressions of reality.

Though he finds that God is supernatural and transcends our world of ordinary experience, he believes that God reveals Himself as well as ultimate Reality through our imagination, reason and moral consciousness.

What is especially characteristic of Lewis is the fact that he not only believes in the world of objective reality but also loves it, yearns for it, and thinks that human beings can actually attain that reality in heaven as Real men or women, becoming a part of the reality. This attainment of Reality is always his first concern.

Part 1

Chapter 1  Imagination

Lewis regards himself to be intrinsically an imaginative man. The imagination he sees in himself means a lot more than "creativity" that we expect of good writers and artists. For Lewis, it is also a power of intuition into the metaphysical reality of this world and heaven, and a power of communication of that reality. It perceives the meaning of the world, expresses that meaning, and enables us to participate in the metaphysical Reality.

He attributes such intuitive power to the human imagination because what convinced him of the existence of heaven is mainly his recurrent aesthetic experiences that he calls "Joy" that he tells us in his autobiography Surprised by Joy. Since he was a child, he had occasionally been struck
by an aesthetic sensation which seemed extremely meaningful. It was a sensation of an extraordinary, indescribable longing caused by quite ordinary things in life. It is numinous, too.

He says, "Joy" has always been "unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction." The main characteristics of "Joy" can be summarised as follows: 1) that it is a sensation of keen desire; 2) that one cannot know or control when and where it comes or vanishes away; 3) that it suggests some incalculable importance especially when remembered afterwards; 4) that the object of the desire is other than the immediate cause of it and can never be specified by anything on earth; 5) that the desire is never satisfied; and 6) that the desire itself turns out to be the object of the desire. It becomes "a longing for the longing."

The pursuit of Joy became such a special significance for the young Lewis that, he distinguishes his inner life which is concerned with "Joy" from every other aspect of life and calls it the "imaginative life." In his imaginative life, he was always seeking for the source and satisfaction of "Joy". He believed that if he found something that satisfied the desire, it must be the real object of "Joy". He tried one thing after another, calling the process the "dialectic of Desire." False objects, when experienced, turn out to be false, even if at first it seemed to be the real object of "Joy". This "dialectic of Desire" is, as the dialectic is usually expected to be, logical, though proofs that are employed in it are empirical and may make it seem nonlogical. For, although the faculty in a man which feels "Joy" and acquires the empirical proofs to use as data is not reason but imagination, the dialectic process itself, in which Lewis eliminates wrong objects one by one, is systematic and, in that sense, quite logical. The important fact here is that Lewis thinks that imagination as well as reason has the capacity to examine the truth.

By that dialectic process, Lewis realized that neither sexual pleasure nor occultism nor even "Joy" itself was the object of "Joy". After that, mainly by rational thinking, he came to believe in an Absolute existence. And then, he had God's revelation where God demanded him a total surrender. That moment, he came to believe in the Christian God who is the Creator and Lord of the world. And after that, he came to believe in Jesus. Strangely, then, after his conversion, "Joy" has lost nearly all interest for him; and he somehow finds this to be a proof that, after all, "Joy" has been a pointer to heaven. Now that he has started walking on the right way to the destination, the pointer, "Joy", is naturally of little importance. Then, he came to regard "Joy" also as a foretaste of pleasures to be enjoyed in heaven. For Lewis, thus, imagination is, first of all, a faculty that leads man to God through the ever unsatisfied desire.

What is also important is the fact that Lewis finds "Joy" to be not merely a pointer to heaven but also as a sort of proof of its existence. For, he infers, if nothing on earth seemed to satisfy "Joy", then it must be because it is the desire for something beyond this natural world, that is, for heaven, and therefore heaven must exist.

Experiences similar to Lewis's "Joy" are common to many English Romantics. However, it is probably most similar to the madeleine experience in Proust's *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. In both cases, the sensation is one of strong joy, coming very suddenly without any warning as if it were from another world. In both cases it is incomprehensible and evasive. And though the sensation has lasted only a moment it leaves such a strong impression of profound meaning on the
mind that the pursuit of its meaning becomes the greatest concern afterwards. Among English poets and novelists, Wordsworth’s “spots of time”, Coleridge’s “Joy”, and James Joyce’s “epiphany” are similar to Lewis’s experience. However, the important difference is that though in all four writers, Proust, Wordsworth, Joyce, and Lewis, the moment of revelation of hidden meaning becomes a matter of greatest importance—it is Lewis alone that has come to interpret the sense of revelation as something that is given by the supernatural God to lead man to Christianity. Their ideas are man-centred, while Lewis’s idea of “Joy” is God-centred. Here, Lewis is nearer to Eliot in *Four Quartets* or to St. Augustine in *The Confessions*.

Lewis’s theory of imagination can be classified as Romantic also because it has a lot in common with Coleridge’s, which is a representative of English Romantic theory of imagination in the 19th century. Lewis’s idea of imagination as intuitive power is similar to Coleridge’s idea of “primary imagination,” though there are also differences between them: Coleridge sees *imago Dei* even in man’s perceptive imagination, which he thinks to be active and creative, while for Lewis the intuitive imagination is not God’s image, but rather the passive medium through which God reveals Himself to man. This lack of the idea of *imago Dei* in Lewis comes from his consciousness of radical difference between man’s life and divine life. Then, Lewis and Coleridge are different also in their idea of relation between reason and imagination. In Coleridge’s system, imagination does not perceive the spiritual truth directly but receives it through reason, while Lewis thinks that imagination itself has direct access to divine revelation. Lewis’s imagination is not opposite of reason nor in a lower position than it, but works side by side with reason, showing God’s reality to man. Then, Lewis’s idea of imagination as creative power is similar to Coleridge’s idea of the “secondary imagination” which is mimetic and inferior to God’s creativity.

Lewis calls the imagination to be the organ of meaning. In his “Joy” experience, he finds our imagination to be a faculty to show us Reality. Then, he finds aesthetic experiences to be initiations to Christian life, teaching us adoration and disinterested self-abandonment. Then he also finds that Nature shows him the meaning of “glory” through imagination. His appreciation of northern mythology, which was long a catalyst of “Joy”, has also made it easier for him to accept Christian myth. And above all, aesthetic pleasures are, for him, a concrete objectivity which comes from God and shows us His magnificence through our sensibility. Though Kant, who uses the word “ästhetisch”, holds aesthetic perception to be a matter of subjectivity, Lewis holds that aesthetic sensation is given directly from God, and therefore it has an objectivity derived from the real objectivity of its source.

Then Lewis calls imagination “the organ of meaning” also as a means of communication of Reality. This is based on his view that metaphor, which is attained by imagination, are fundamental to all linguistic activities without which even no logical thinking can stand. In this he is under the influence of Owen Barfield, and with him he is also conscious of the limitation of pure reason even in the field of logic. Reason draws conclusions from already acquired data, but it does not obtain the data by itself. It is our empirical senses and intuitive imagination or some trustworthy authorities that gain the data for reason to work on.

Lewis sees that religious matters especially need imaginative language. For instance, because
man cannot know God as He really is, who is beyond the human senses, all that man can do is imagine by analogies what God is like. Though today, the general validity of metaphor as an objective expression of reality is not a universally accepted truth, Lewis's belief in the validity of metaphor is important for him as a literary man.

He believes the validity and truth of allegory, literary symbols and myth, holding allegory as an attempt to express something immaterial in the form of personification, and symbolism as an attempt to grasp and express things beyond our sensual experiences. Allegory aims at revealing the reality of things indescribable otherwise, and allegorical figures are not arbitrary. What is expressed by allegory is the reality and essence of things and feelings, which are, in a sense, given to the author. And myth is, for him, something above allegory. Though allegory is basically some expression of what the author knows, the meanings of myth are totally out of the author's control.

Lewis saw his contemporary 20th century as an age that was dominated by a scientific way of thinking, where ordinary people tended to believe that everything that exists can be proved by science. Yet, he points out, while admitting that science is important and useful as a means to grasp physical facts about the world, the comprehensive reality is to be approached not only with science but also with metaphysics and theology. In that sense, Medieval mythical model of the universe has a truth in it, expressing the meaning of the universe, though not physically true. And even in pagan mythology, Lewis recognizes some significant truth foreshadowing Christianity.

In An Experiment in Criticism, Lewis defines myths by their effect on the reader. According to Lewis, a myth is first of all “extra-literary”; Secondly, it introduces the reader to a permanent object of contemplation. Thirdly, the story is to be preternatural, and the reader never projects himself into the characters. Finally, reading a myth is always a grave and awe-inspiring and numinous experience. He says that the same story may be a myth to one man and not to another because the effect of the same book is various on different readers.

Lewis's ideas of symbolism and sacramentalism are explained most clearly by the concept of what he calls “Transposition”. Lewis distinguishes symbolism and sacramentalism as this: when there is complete discontinuity between the things and the signs that denote them, it is symbolism, while when the thing signified is really in a certain mode present in the sign, it is sacramentalism. What Lewis calls Transposition as a mode of expression occurs whenever a thing in a richer system is expressed or translated in a poorer system: for example, when a three-dimensional world is drawn on a flat, two-dimensional sheet of paper, where one single shape in the poorer medium has to express more than two forms of the richer original: A triangle in a picture may represent an actual triangle or a dunce's cap. This idea of “Transposition”, together with the idea of sacramentalism, is theologically significant to Lewis, as it concerns man's capacity for perceiving Reality. Just as a person living in a two-dimensional world would not be able to understand our three-dimensional world correctly when he saw it drawn on the paper, it would be impossible for us to comprehend God or our spiritual life in heaven, because God and heaven must necessarily be in a higher dimension than the world we now live in. Then, he further
believes that this doctrine of Transposition gives us Hope: though we do not know what we shall be in heaven, we would be more, not less, than we were on earth. And with the idea of sacramentalism in the light of the idea of Transposition, he believes that our earthly life reflects our life in heaven by already holding a part of it.

Thus, Lewis finds imagination as a necessary means of grasping reality, apprehending its meaning and having glimpses of the Real world, or heaven.

Chapter 2 Reason

Lewis calls himself “a rationalist”. Reason serves Lewis in two important ways. First, it works as the organ of logic which is indispensable in the pursuit of the objective, comprehensive Reality. Secondly, its non-materiality is a datum from which he infers the objective existence of a God who is the supernatural absolute Reason. In this, Reason is, if not a direct insight into the Reality, another faculty in man which is directly connected to the Reality.

The faculty of intuition that provides man with a priori moral principles such as discussed by Kant in his Kritik der praktischen Vernunft is translated into English as “reason”, but Lewis does not refer to this faculty as reason but calls it “morality”. What Coleridge holds as “reason”, the power of direct insight into the religious reality, is for Lewis, a faculty of imagination.

In his argument for the existence of God and the probability of God’s miracles, Lewis first refutes “Naturalism”, which he defines as the belief “that nothing exists except Nature.” By reductio ad absurdum logic, he argues as follows: Materialism may see even man’s reason in terms of chemical reactions in his brains, but, if Materialism were right, it would be hard to believe that the materialistic theory itself, which has been attained by such chemical reactions, is right. And Naturalism is discredited for the same reason. (One may notice here that Lewis’s “Naturalism” is reductive, or strict Naturalism.)

He argues that if man’s reason is caused by some natural phenomenon and is fully explicable in naturalistic terms, namely, if reason is a part of material nature, it should be a non-rational phenomenon and would never be able to build a right theory about nature, even about itself. He also assumes that a part cannot comprehend and judge the whole and therefore man’s reason is not a part of Nature.

Then, from the non-natural character of man’s reason, he infers the existence of an absolute Reason: which is to be identified with God: One man’s reason has been led to see things by aid of another man’s reason, and is none the worse for that. That other Reason might conceivably be found to depend on a third, and so on. Then he says it is obvious that sooner or later one must admit a Reason which exists absolutely on its own. From the conclusion that there is a self-existent Reason, Lewis moves on to prove that it exists incessantly from eternity: for if anything else could make it begin to exist then it would not exist on its own but because of the other. It must also exist incessantly, because having once ceased to be, it obviously could not recall itself to existence, and if anything else recalled it it would then be a dependent being. He says human reason is “God-kindled” and “not God’s,” as he is conscious that man’s reason is different from God’s
Reason because it is affected by the physical condition and may make mistakes.

And then, he refutes some philosophies and religions which he thinks are the rivals of Christianity: Dualism, Pantheism, Life-Force philosophy and other mono-Theisms.

As to Dualism, Lewis uses the word "Dualism" to denote either the metaphysical Dualism of Nature and the supernatural God, or the ethical, or ethicoreligious Dualism of good and evil. In either case, Lewis remarks it is impossible for both of Nature and God, or good and evil to be absolute, all-inclusive system. If both exists side by side, then in fact neither of them are all-inclusive, but both are parts of a larger system. Secondly, there is what Lewis calls "unsymmetrical character of the frontier relations." Man's system works well when physical emotions and sensations are obeying rational judgments, and goes wrong when the reason submits to the emotion. He thinks the relation between Nature and the supernatural God should be the same as the relation between physical and the rational elements in each human mind. And from this, he concludes that it is reasonable to believe that God produced Nature.

As for the Dualism of good and evil, Lewis points out that the good and evil do not stand equal also because evil is judged to be bad from the standpoint of righteousness and good. Lewis follows St. Augustine in regarding evil as "privatio boni." Evil is nothing more than lack or perversion of good.

Then, Pantheism is insufficient because it does not tell us of such a strong personal God as he has once encountered with. He rejects any religion that holds impersonal or conceptual idea of a God, or gods, and Pantheism is found unacceptable. Besides, it is impossible for him to accept Pantheism as a sufficient religion also because it does not answer such ultimate metaphysical questions as concerning the ground and meaning of the existence of the world and of human beings. For although many philosophers today no longer believe that there is an answer for the meaning of the existence of the universe, Lewis the objectivist does, and believes it is religion's main concern to find that answer. Then, to Life-Force philosophy, too, Lewis's objection is that it does not understand God's vigorous personality and irresistible influence and power on man. He holds that if people ever believe some creative mind, as they do in Life-Force philosophy, they should know that it is in reality "God".

Life-Force philosophy and the similar and more popular Evolutionism are a belief in general progress of the world. Lewis is aware that the belief in such progress is now getting out of date but not yet completely dead. People still tend to regard that the newer things are better, ignoring the possibility of degradation.

While rejecting Naturalism, Dualism, Pantheism and Life-Force philosophy on one hand, Lewis points out three characteristics common to all developed religions: 1) the believer's experience of what Rudolf Otto calls "the Numinous"; 2) the morality that has an absolute standard which is given a priori; 3) the identification of the giver and guardian of the morality with the numinous power to which men feel awe. And besides these three characteristics, Lewis points out that Christianity has another and unique characteristic: namely, the historicity of Jesus Christ. He finds that the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God must have been so shocking among the Jews, for whom, "God" means the absolute Creator who is transcendent of this world and infinitely dif-
ferent from any human being, that only three views of this man is possible: either he is a lunatic, or a devil, or else he is really the Son of God. Besides, Jesus’ claim that he has the authority to forgive other people’s sins is also preposterous unless he is really the Son. Because, though a man may rightly forgive those who have done offenses against himself, it would be wrong for a man to forgive offences to others regardless of the opinion of those who had actually suffered from those sins. Jesus’ attitude would have tremendously wrong unless he really was God whose laws are broken and whose love is wounded by every sin committed by His creatures. On this ground, too, Lewis argues that either Jesus was the Son of God as he himself said or else a lunatic, or a Devil of hell. Then he says it seems to him obvious that Jesus was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and so, “however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem”, he has “to accept the view that He was and is God.”

Now, Lewis presents us yet another logic with which he argues for the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is an analogy with music and literature: just as the main theme of a symphony or the central part of a novel illuminates all the other parts of the work, the doctrine of the Incarnation should necessarily illuminate the whole system of nature if it is true. Because, such an event of great importance as God’s Incarnation cannot be but the central theme of the whole creation. With this assumption, he finds four main characteristics of Nature which can be regarded to have their archetypes in God’s Incarnation: namely, “the composite nature of man, the pattern of descent and re-ascension, Selectiveness, and Vicariousness”. The composite nature of man refers to the rational activity in every human being, which is in a sense supernatural and yet united with a part of Nature, i.e. with a human body. The pattern of descent and re-ascent is the pattern of death and re-birth. Selectiveness can be found, for example, in the smallness of the portion that matter occupies in the space, the fewness of the planets that support organic life, and in the transmission of organic life, how few of the countless number of seeds and spermatozoa are selected for fertility. In Christianity, Abraham was first chosen to follow God; the Jewish people are “chosen” people; and Mary was selected to be the Man’s mother. The principle of Vicariousness that the Sinless Man suffers for the sinful, which is a deep-rooted principle in Christianity, is seen in interdependence and mutual sacrifice of things in the whole system of Nature.

Lewis is against Liberal Christianity which denies miracles and sees Jesus as a human moral teacher. He reminds us that in order to say that miracles never occur, we have first to assume absolute uniformity of Nature. This assumption in fact implies the belief that there is some design covering the whole system of the universe, which in fact assumes the existence of God the Legislator, though most people are not conscious of it. Lewis admits that the belief in miracles is not a corollary of the belief in the supernatural God, but he finds it necessary to choose between naturalism and Christianity, and in the alternative, takes Christianity to be more probable. And once having accepted Christianity, he believes the miracle of the Incarnation as the central doctrine, which he has found also as the central event or main theme of history.

Against the tendency of the contemporary age not to see myth and dogmas as rationally acceptable truth, Lewis not only believes in eschatological divine elements in the Christian myth
and dogmas but also thinks them compatible with reason. Reason is the faculty of logical thinking that infers truth from given data. The data, however, need not necessarily be scientific. They can be given either by experience or by authority, and can be metaphysical or theological. Lewis is conscious that science by nature has to neglect the religious or the supernatural since it exclusively deals with empirical natural facts. He thinks metaphysical or theological knowledge is supplied by myths and authorized dogmas in church. Myth is God’s revelation to man and it is no less true just because it cannot be logically explained, because knowledge by revelation is more like empirical than rational knowledge.

Chapter 3 Morality

Lewis’s argument from morality takes the form of inference of the absolute Moral Giver from moral conscience in individual human beings. This argument most clearly shows Lewis as the objectivist against the twentieth century relativism, for this is not only an argument for Christianity but for the objective reality of the moral law as well. He first argues that the moral law is universal and objective. He says it is beyond man’s control and it is even impossible for us to logically explain it away. He finds the moral law to be “a real law, which none of us made, but which we find pressing on us.” He then thinks there must be someone behind the law who has given it to us through our conscience. He admits that this law-giver may not necessarily be the God of Christianity. Yet, Lewis moves on to say, that law-giver at least must be an absolute good governor, whom heidentifies with God.

Lewis says, “God neither obeys nor creates the moral law,” because he believes that the moral standard is itself absolute and autonomous. Unlike Kant, Lewis believes in the objectivity of the moral law. Then about the problem that whether good is good because God wills it or God wills it because it is good, he answers that God’s will is good for the very reason that it is God’s will but at the same time good becomes God’s will because it is good. Since Lewis believes in the absolute autonomy and objectivity of the moral law while identifying God and the goodness, to him, the two propositions are not the alternatives but two sides of one and the same thing.

Lewis does not think that moral conscience and reason are mutually independent. He finds moral judgments can be rationally perceived. He is also conscious that although our ethical reactions are not merely a matter of feelings, emotion is also important because it influences our actual behaviours.

About the problem of evil, he knows that the existence of evil has been one of the greatest problems for the believers and advocates of the Divine Goodness: If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty, He would be able to do what He wished. But creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either goodness, or power, or both. To this problem, he takes St. Augustine’s so-called Free Will defence. God has given man free will so that he may voluntarily obey Him, for voluntary obedience is better than forced obedience; and man has misused this freedom to turn from God to himself, wishing to be his own master rather than obeying God. This is the original sin of man, and from this comes a lot of evil.
Though God is omnipotent, God's omnipotence cannot possibly prevent this fall because giving free will to man and binding him so as not to let him fall is logical incompatibility, and even nonsensical. God's omnipotence is the power to do anything logically possible, and not the sort of power to do anything nonsensical. Thus, Lewis insists that God is good and omnipotent although there is evil in the world. Furthermore, Lewis even holds that the fact we feel absurdity and cruelty of the world shows a standard with which we judge it absurd. And so the world is in fact not completely absurd.

Chapter 4 Lewis's Literary Theory

Lewis often shows quite an apparent antipathy against the modern literary tendency. He is critical about the tendency of man-centredness which he sees in the modern literature, seeing the modern movement in the history of the Western thought as a "movement of internalization," calling it the movement towards the "universal black-out." He does not think literature is to express personality of the author or man's real life. It exists to teach what is useful, to honour what deserves honour, to appreciate what is delightful. We read books to enlarge ourselves, to get out of ourselves. Myth, allegory and fairy tales are, then, valuable for Lewis also as literary defenses against the "Internalization", the process of promoting self-centredness of man. When we read, it is important to completely surrender to the book, and not to try to use the work. And although the author's intention is important, it is to be remembered that the meaning of the book is not necessarily the same as what author intended it to be. The criticism of books should be on the book, and not on the author.

Lewis's attitude towards the problem of originality is in sharp contrast with modern view. He holds that the true originality is "the prerogative of God alone" and the highest good of a creature must be creaturely, that is, derivative—good. He says that the older poetry, by continually insisting on certain Stock themes—as that love is sweet, death bitter, virtue lovely, and children or gardens delightful, "instructed by delighting" and shows misgivings about our abandoning such poetry.

Chapter 5 Some Criticisms of the works of Lewis and his style of rhetoric

Lewis's critics sometimes find some inconsistency, insufficiency, or logical flaws in his apologetic works. For example, G. E. M. Anscombe in 1948 criticizes him for the misleading ambiguity of some key words in his arguments in Miracles. Kathleen Nott in The Emperor's Clothes (1958) criticizes Lewis for his dogmatism. And John Beversluis in his C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion (1985) systematically attacks Lewis's case for Christianity by separately criticizing his argument from Desire (that is an argument based on Imagination), his argument from Reason and his argument from Morality, which are the three main strands in his apology. Some of the flaws that such critics find in Lewis come from careless mistakes on his part. However, Lewis often employs pseudo-logic or rhetoric which, though they are unacceptable in a strictly
logical argument, in fact come from Lewis's understanding of human nature as well as from his view of language. Such pseudo-logic and rhetoric should not be regarded as mere flaws if we consider his apology as a whole. Sometimes, his claims seem to lack sufficient proof, but then, they are often based on the traditional Western belief in the intelligibility and the rationality of the world, which is simply axiomatic to him. In his logical argument, Lewis often turns to dogmas or uses imaginative metaphors and analogies, but it is not because he is trying to evade the difficulty in argument. As he is conscious of the limitation of reason alone, dogmas and intuitive imagination are, for him, proper means of attaining truth and reality. Besides, he uses a lot of emotional terms in his argument, and it is because he knows man is not only rational but also emotional. His argument is directed to our whole personality, with both intellect and feelings. So, affected by his firm belief and imaginative appeal, the reader will not only intellectually accept his argument for the Real world, but also feel it really exist, and come to hope to enter that world someday. This cannot be done by such purely logical arguments as Beversluis and Knott appear to demand of him.

Part II

Chapter 1 Lewis’s Works of Fiction—Participation in Reality

In all his writings, not only apologetics but literary criticisms and fiction as well, his main concern is the absolute and eternal Reality. Writing stories and fantasies is, for him, a positive way to participate in Reality.

The most conspicuous characteristics of Lewis’s stories are, first of all, their moral character and pleasure-giving quality which co-exist harmoniously. Secondly, the theme of Lewis's fiction is always the conflict or contrast between good and evil, which involves the theme of salvation. Thirdly, except for The Screwtape Letters, all his fiction is written in a mythopoeic form, taking place in another world or in the world of metaphysical reality. These characteristics all come from his desire to express Reality, since, in Lewis’s opinion, Christianity, the moral standards of good and evil, and myth are all concerned with the ultimate metaphysical reality. Lewis says that every man enjoys the world picture which he accepts. The Christian mythical view of the world is a literary stimulus for Lewis. He enjoys writing about it. This is why Lewis's stories are so much concerned with morality, that is, with the good and evil, and yet are not boringly nor strictly didactic at all. Morality is for him greatly attractive as a part of the Real World of God for which he has been yearning. He says his writing always begins with mental pictures, without any moral in it. But soon the moral comes in. He says he wants his story both pleasant and profitable, just as he wants his food to be nourishing as well as palatable.

His fiction, without preaching or exhorting makes the readers naturally long to be good. This is because he is convinced that the reality is ultimately good and the good is pleasant and stronger than evil and transmits that conviction to them through imagination. The readers are given some foretaste of the world of reality, or of heaven, so as to share Lewis’s hope and longing for it.
Chapter 2  The Great Divorce (1946)

This is a narrative story written in a form of dream literature, in which, some ghosts take an omnibus from Purgatory to the outermost part of heaven. There, Lewis, the narrator, witnesses several encounters of other Ghosts with bright Spirits from heaven, who have come down from deeper heaven to see the Ghost of his or her life-time acquaintance, to tell the Ghost to join the people in heaven. However, for some reason or another, most of the Ghosts would rather go back to the grey town than go to heaven.

In this story, Lewis shows the importance of immediate cutting off of one's wrong part, and of choosing heaven instead of hell. He especially shows us that the choice between heaven and hell is not necessarily between any categorically definite virtue and vice, but often between God and natural objects which in themselves are nothing bad. Everything in Nature is in itself neither good or evil, but becomes good or evil in relation to God. One thing always evil is self-conceit, or pride. But such a thing, as love and pursuit of theology, which is generally regarded as good, turns out to be obstacle to heaven when it is considered more important than God himself. These are shown to be essential for salvation: desire for heaven, surrender of the self with all earthly love and attachment, repentance, and prayers for God's mercy.

In The Great Divorce, Lewis also expresses his image of heaven and hell. "Heaven is reality itself." It is strong, weighty, solid, bright, large, and full of peace and happiness, while hell is weak, shadowy, almost non-existently small and full of misery and complaint. The Ghosts' shadow does not darken or weaken the Spirits' brightness and strength but rather shows them off. The readers are impressed much more by the gloriously regenerated Ghost or by the blessed Spirit than by any of the Ghosts who are damned. Lewis's stress in this book is not on man's sins and damnation but on the importance of choosing heaven which is open to all those who sincerely hope to go there.

Chapter 3  The Screwtape Letters (1942)

This is a book of imaginary epistles from a veteran devil Screwtape, to his nephew Wormwood, giving advice how to tempt man into hell. It has some form similar to medieval morality play, with the difference that there is no guardian angel who gives advice to the patient. Yet because of that lack the reader is forced to take the role of that angel and participate in the story actively.

In this story, Lewis illustrates man's nature and weakness seen through the devil's eye, betraying at the same time what the devil sees and what he does not, showing what it is like to be a devil. Sometimes Screwtape tells Wormwood about devils' characteristic weaknesses, which he has to hide from man. The relation between devils is also revealed: for example, Screwtape's words show that love in hell is literally "devouring" love.

In all the books by Lewis, what strikes us about the nature of evil is perversion and ultimate powerlessness before God. This is also true in The Screwtape Letters. Screwtape cannot do any
positive harm on man. All he could do is to pervert or hide the good which God made and to cut man away from God. He cannot even understand good.

About man, Lewis in this book reveals ambivalence of human nature which has potentiality of participating in God’s Reality in heaven while also having possibility of becoming hellish. Reason, imagination and morality are three important faculties that enable man to perceive Reality, but they are also fallible and can be perverted so that it might work adversely to keep man away from heaven. For example, when imagination is in the wrong condition, man may have some wrong image of church people and upon meeting them feel disappointed and then feel disappointed about Christianity as a whole. Also, in modern people’s imagination, miracles can easily be felt improbable, and can hinder them from believing in God’s Incarnation. Modern relativism is one thing which can pervert man’s reason and hinder him from attaining salvation. Morality and love between men can be perverted, especially by self-centredness, self-conceit, or pride, which is the essence of man’s original sin. The best defense against pride is the sense of humour. It protects a man from being proud because it enables him to see himself in a detached manner and laugh at his own pride as absurdity. If he can so laugh at his pride, he is no longer proud but rather humble.

“Screwtape Proposes a Toast” (1960) is the sequel to *The Screwtape Letters*, where Screwtape addresses to young devils at the Tempters’ Training College. In it he especially draws the audience’s attention to those faults of modern democracy which are favourable to the devils. In terms of content, then, this is Lewis’s criticism on the modern democratic society. Democracy is properly the name of a political system, even a system of voting, with the political ideal that men should be equally treated. Yet, this ideal is now transformed into a factual belief that all men are equal, which, Lewis finds, leads to approve jealousy of those who are superior. Especially, Lewis expresses his anxiety about the loss of individuality in modern society. That loss is serious. Screwtape says, “the real end is the destruction of individuals. For only individuals can be saved or damned.”

In *The Screwtape Letters* and “Screwtape Proposes a Toast,” Lewis thus criticizes such modern tendencies as relativism, materialism, and false democracy. Yet these are not at all mere works of didacticism. Wormwood’s patient after all goes through the devil’s fingers and is saved by God. Then Screwtape, condemning Wormwood, betrays that man is essentially made for heaven and that the blessings prepared for man cannot be understood by those in hell.

**Chapter 5 Science-fiction Trilogy (1938-1946): The Battle between Good and Evil**

I **Introduction**

*Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1944), and *That Hideous Strength* (1946) are a science-fiction series which is usually referred to as Lewis’s S. F. trilogy or the Ransom trilogy after the name of its protagonist Elwin Ransom.

The central theme of this trilogy is mythopoetic struggle between metaphysical good and evil.
As the trilogy moves from Out of the Silent Planet to That Hideous Strength the intrinsic nature of good and evil becomes more and more clear. At the same time the salvation theme, or the theme of each individual’s attaining Reality also becomes more and more manifest.

II Out of the Silent Planet (1938)

In this story, Ransom is kidnapped and brought to Mars by his old classmate Devine and Devine’s companion Weston. On Mars, or “Malacandra” as it is called in this book, there are three rational species, or three kinds of “hnaun” in their language. Different from man on the earth, they are not fallen. In this work, Lewis, by putting man among the unfallen species on Mars, shows how much man is affected by the original sin of self-centredness. Even such philosophies and ways of thinking as humanism, which is generally regarded as good on the earth is shown to be evil. On Malacandra, no inhabitant has too much attachment for such desires as for power, possession or sexual pleasures, all of which are often inordinately strong on the earth. Attachment to one’s own desire is attachment to one’s self, and the absence of attachment to desire means the absence of self-attachment. Malacandrian people do not fear anything, even death. Man in this story aims at colonization of Mars from his humanistic hope for the preservation of human species. However, it is unthinkable on Malacandra that anyone should hope for eternal continuity of his own race. The people of Malacandra readily accept it as God’s way that a world is not made to last for ever.

Since Malacandra is a paradise without any evil, its inhabitants do not have even a word referring to “evil” or “bad”. The nearest equivalent they have for “bad” is “bent”. This shows that the “bent” relation with God is the essence of evil. And Lewis in this work also shows the absurdity of evil in a farce scene.

Throughout Out of the Silent Planet, thus, it is implied that the earth is now out of the heavenly region because general ideas on the earth are based on the principle of hell, though most people are not aware of it. At the same time, however, it is also implied that such dominance of the hellish principle will not last for ever.

III Perelandra (1944)

The second of Lewis’s space trilogy is Perelandra. This is a story of “Paradise protected” or “Paradise Lost prevented” based on the story of Satan’s temptation of Eve in Genesis and probably on Milton’s Paradise Lost. Ransom is now called from heaven and carried in a coffin to Venus, which is called Perelandra in this trilogy. This Perelandra is still a young planet, where he meets its first Queen who is to be the first mother. He then witnesses the first temptation on Perelandra. He fights the devil and finally succeeds in keeping the Queen from the fall.

In this story, through the strategy of the devil in his temptation, we are shown again the perversion of evil. The devil first tries to persuade the Queen by logical argument, and when he has failed in this, tries to move her through her imagination. (This is a reflection of Lewis’s convic-
tion that man consists of reason and imagination and is influenced by both elements.) And the devil’s temptation, either logical or imaginative, always consists of perversion of Reality. For example, he first pretends to accept God’s forbiddance to live a specific land and then says to make a story about living on the land is not forbidden. In the argument, he implies that the disobedience is a possibility and that the world is made up not only of what is but of what might be. He says then that God knows both and wants us to know both. His logic is a perversion half depending on a false proposition. After several perverted logic, he tries to tempt the Queen by stirring her pride through her imagination, to make her wish to be on her own, stimulating her sense of self-admiration. The temptation nearly succeeds. Yet, then Ransom stops the temptation through a physical battle, by killing him.

In this work, Lewis portrays evil as intrinsically miserable and ultimately weak before the good. He also denies the doctrine of Felix Culpa, insisting that though the good things may come from the bent things, things are not to be made to be bent. Moreover, in this book, Lewis attempts to answer the long discussed theological problem of the relationship between God’s will and free will of man as His moral agent. When Ransom feels unavoidable responsibility to protect Perelandra, he does not see the task as merely forced upon him. In the faith in God, his will is at one with His. Predestination and freedom are then identical.

IV That Hideous Strength (1946)

The last of the Ransom trilogy, That Hideous Strength, is a story of battle between evil that is trying to dominate the earth and God’s good force that tries to prevent it. The protagonist of this story is a young couple, Mark Studdock and his wife Jane. Though they are human, they are involved in the metaphysical battle between supernatural powers and, in spite of being a man and wife, join the opposite parties and respectively experience the evil and the good from within. The evil works through “the National Institute of Co-ordinate Experiment (ironically abbreviated as ‘N.I.C.E.’)” which claims to be aiming at scientific control of the mankind so as to efficiently improve the human race as a whole. Mark joins it, actually half entrapped, and Jane joins the opposite party, who work under Ransom, the head, at St. Anne’s. Through the battle, and with the final intervention of the heaven’s miraculous power, the N.I.C.E.’s organization is completely demolished, and the evil is lost. In this work, Lewis criticizes “scientism”, which is different from true science, showing it leads to reduce even human beings to mere objects, and so leads to “abolition of man.” The evil in this work is marked by its nature of hideousness, powerlessness before good, deception, the loss of “the taste for the other,” and self-centredness. The problem of suffering is also treated, especially reflecting belief in vicarious suffering.

V Myth

The trilogy reflects much of the medieval mythological world picture. Heaven in the trilogy is uncorrupted, and therefore, the estrangement between the spiritual world and Nature has never
occurred. It is still a mythical world, and Lewis is suggesting it is the original and proper state of the universe as is intended by God.

VI Conclusion

In this trilogy, Lewis especially stresses the perversion and powerlessness of evil. Lewis’s evil in the trilogy may appear too idealistic in that it does not show such powerful inexorability as it does in the actual world, but this weakness of evil must be a reflection of Lewis’s conviction that in Reality, on the metaphysical, mythical level in the world of God, evil is ultimately the loser and weaker than the good, being no more than its perversion.

Chapter 5 The Chronicles of Narnia (1950-1956)

I Introduction

From 1950 to 1956, Lewis published a series of fairy tales for children: The Chronicles of Narnia. This series consists of seven books of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (1950), Prince Caspian (1951), The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (1952), The Silver Chair (1953), The Horse and his Boy (1954), The Magician’s Nephew (1955), and The Last Battle (1956), describing the history of an imaginary country, Narnia, from its genesis to apocalypse. The Creator of the Narnian world is a lion named “Aslan”, who is said to be “the King of the world and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-sea.” He is not only the Creator but also the Lord, the Saviour, and the Judge at the last judgment at the end of Narnian world, being a counterpart of both the Father and the Son in the Holy Trinity. In this world the three “Theological” virtues of Christianity, Faith, Hope, and Charity are especially important.

II Faith

In the Chronicles, faith in Aslan should be both belief in Aslan’s existence and authority as the Lord, and commitment of the self to him. Faith in the latter sense, that is “a trust, or confidence, in the God” involves an attitude of will. In Narnia, people are called to have will to believe, will to follow Aslan, and will to do according to Aslan’s will. It is also significant that the honest believer of another God is approved of his faith by Aslan.

III Charity

Lewis thinks Charity, or love for God involves the will to do God’s will, and so in Narnia, real faith in Aslan is accompanied by charity, and vice versa.
IV Hope—Into Narnia and to Aslan’s Country

The third of the theological virtues is Hope: that is, the hope for God’s kingdom and for a regenerated life. In Narnia, this hope takes the form of hope for Aslan’s country.

From the genesis in The Magician’s Nephew to the apocalypse in The Last Battle, we see a κατάκτησις under Aslan’s providence leading to the coming of his kingdom. In the anno domini eras of our world, people may know Aslan and come to live in faith, or they may drift away from him. Aslan opens a door which leads to another world from Narnia twice, that is, in Prince Caspian and in The Last Battle. Yet it is only in Prince Caspian that people are free to choose whether or not to go through the door. In The Last Battle, people are judged and some are forced to disappear into darkness beside the door. It is significant that the judgment is done not through inquiry and answer, but simply by meeting with Aslan face to face. There is no room for pretence or lying. But those who love Aslan and long for his Country are to be saved. Aslan’s country is the real home to His people and the doors to go there are to be found anywhere in every world, including ours.

V Disbelief

In Narnia, two kinds of disbelief are found: Open scepticism and closed scepticism.

The scepticism of Trumpkin in Prince Caspian, who is a dwarf and subject of Caspian, is open scepticism. Although at first he does not believe in Aslan, or miraculous help, when he has seen some substantial proof, he comes to believe, and when he later meets Aslan, he apprehends his authority and surrenders at once; while other dwarfs with closed scepticism would not accept Aslan, and by rejecting Aslan, lose the capacity of enjoying any good that comes from Aslan.

In the Chronicles, there is also the problem about scepticism about Aslan’s goodness, especially when people is conscious that he is not a “tame” lion. And it is shown that Lewis’s God is always awful as well as good.

VI Evil in The Chronicles of Narnia

The most conspicuous characteristic of evil in the Chronicles is pride and self-centredness. It is often illustrated together with the alienation from anything good, including good people. Then, evil one is marked not only by their self-alienation from anything good. Thirdly, evil ones are unable to distinguish the right from the wrong or to understand either of them while good people understand both. Evil is always weak than good. And another characteristic of evil as Lewis conceives of is the loss of speaking ability, since Lewis uses language as something which symbolizes the proper relation between the giver of the language, i.e. the Creator Aslan and the creatures who are given it.
VII The Problem of Suffering in Narnia

Lewis in *The Problem of Pain* interpretes man's suffering as God's "megaphone to rouse a deaf world," which calls men's attention back to God Himself, preventing man from settling in earthly happiness apart from Him. This is true in the case of Eustace in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Pain makes him reflect on his self-centredness and turns him good.

It is also significant that though Lewis follows St. Augustine in believing that the origin of evil and sufferings in this world is man's disobedience to God through misuse of free will, in the Chronicles, he takes in St. Irenaeus's view and uses the pain as a necessary tribulation for man's spiritual growth.

Chapter 6 *Till We Have Faces: A myth Retold* (1956)
-----Lewis's Last Fiction: Attainment of Reality

His last novel, *Till We Have Faces* (1956), is a retold version of the myth of Cupid and Psyche in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*. Instead of Psyche, Lewis has made Psyche's eldest sister the protagonist, whom he has named Orual. In this work, his main concern is the salvation of fairly good-minded ordinary people, who have both virtues and defects. As a mortal, Orual does not see the god's palace and forces Psyche to betray her husband, thinking Psyche's husband is some wicked man or a fiend who is making Psyche believe in an unreal palace. When Orual is revealed that the husband is a real god and that she has ruined Psyche's nuptial happiness, she feels the god is unjust to have hidden the truth from her and made her destroy Psyche, whom she has been loving deeply and disinterestedly. Yet, while she is accusing the god, as she refracts not only what the god did but also how she has been feeling to the god and to Psyche, she is forced to realize that her love for Psyche has been self-centred, possessive and jealous. Through this recognition and repentance, she is transformed into a Real woman. She is saved despite being hostile to the god, as she sincerely faces the god in her accusation. In the process of her salvation, Lewis especially strongly shows his belief both in God's justice and in His love that prevails over the justice.

Conclusion

Lewis assumes he is addressing the readers in the post-Christian era, in which the scientism is dominant. However, in fact, the world today is not so averse to Christianity as he supposes. Many people want a firm foothold in life and are ready to accept Christianity only if they are given sufficient grounds. Lewis reassures such readers showing that the world is not absurd but has much meanings and foretastes of heaven, which is the concrete Reality. And he appeals not only to Christians but to all those who are seeking ultimate Reality.

In both his apologetics and his fictions, he moves the readers by addressing all of their imagi-
nation, emotions, will and reason. The reader may not only intellectually accept his case for the Real world, but also feel it really exists, and comes to hope to enter it someday. The power of moving the reader so far as to the hope for heaven is one of the greatest reasons of Lewis’s success.