

## THE LONGING FOR A FORM



# *The Longing for a Form*

ESSAYS ON THE FICTION  
OF C. S. LEWIS

*edited by Peter J. Schakel*

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The Longing for a Form  
Essays on the Fiction of C. S. Lewis  
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## Series Foreword

C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) taught Medieval and Renaissance Language and Literature at Oxford and Cambridge Universities for almost four decades.

He wrote much for publication: literary criticism, poetry, theology, spirituality, science fiction, juvenile literature, novels, autobiography, but alas no plays. Over and above that, he kept up a fierce correspondence for decades; 3,228 letters of his compiled and edited by Walter Hooper have been published in three volumes (2000–2006).

Hooper, long the literary adviser to the Estate of C. S. Lewis, has done much of the primal research on Lewis, editing and seeing to publication perhaps a dozen collections of Lewis's shorter writings (essays, articles, addresses; literary criticism; diaries).

Most Lewis books are still in print in one way or another. But various studies of and commentaries on Lewisiana by others have not had the same longevity. Many are now out of print, but there is much research and review yet to be done.

To aid present and future scholars, Wipf and Stock Publishers has established a series devoted to worthy books on or about Lewis. Perhaps because I have done four books on or about Lewis, Wipf and Stock has asked me to be the general editor of the series.

William Griffin  
Series Editor for C. S. Lewis Studies  
2007



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## Editions of Frequently Used Texts

For the convenience of contributors and readers, the following American editions, usually paperback, have been employed uniformly throughout this book and will be cited by page number in brackets in the text.

### FICTION

- The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism* (1933; rpt. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958)
- Out of the Silent Planet* (1938; rpt. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965)
- Perelandra: A Novel* (1943; rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1965)
- That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (1945; rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1965)
- The Great Divorce* (New York: Macmillan, 1946)
- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950; rpt. New York: Collier Books, 1970)
- Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia* (1951; rpt. New York: Collier, 1970)
- The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* (1952; rpt. New York: Collier, 1970)
- The Silver Chair* (1953; rpt. New York: Collier, 1970)
- The Horse and His Boy* (1954; rpt. New York: Collier, 1970)
- The Magician's Nephew* (1955; rpt. New York: Collier, 1970)
- The Last Battle* (1956; New York: Collier, 1970)
- Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* (1956; rpt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966)

## NONFICTION

*The Problem of Pain* (1940; rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1962)

*Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1947)

*Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952)

*Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955)

*Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964)

*Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed. W. H. Lewis (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966)

## Preface

THIS book grew out of the need for a critical study of Lewis's works in fiction. Our aim was to make it sound literary scholarship, but in a style and manner suitable to general readers of Lewis. Three of the essays have been previously published and have been well received by students of Lewis. Several others have been presented at professional literary meetings: the essays by Professors Zogby, Hannay, Huttar, Cox, and Van Der Weele were used for various groups at conventions of the Modern Language Association of America in 1974, 1975, and 1976. The essay by Professor Christopher was given before a meeting of the Southwest Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature. Each of the other authors has written a book or scholarly thesis on Lewis.

We are grateful to *The Hudson Review*, *Children's Literature*, and *Orcrist* for permission to reprint the essays by Professor Shumaker, Father Hooper, and Professor Kilby. We are grateful also to the Trustees of the Estate of C. S. Lewis for permission to quote from unpublished letters of Lewis, to the Marion E. Wade Collection at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, and the Bodleian Library, Oxford—each of which has a collection of Lewis manuscripts and copies of the originals held by the other—for approval to publish the quotations, and to the Executors of the Estate of W. H. Lewis and the Marion E. Wade Collection for permission and approval to quote from the Diary of W. H. Lewis.

I wish to thank Professor Kilby personally for encouragement and suggestions in the early stages of this project. I am grateful to Father Hooper for reading the typescript and indicating several needed corrections and possible improvements and to Maryam Komejan for typing, and often retyping, parts of the book and a

great deal of correspondence. I am grateful also to my wife, Karen, for reading several essays, checking the proofs, listening to problems, and proposing solutions. Finally, thanks to my colleague, Charles Huttar, who offered suggestions and read several manuscripts as the essays were being collected, and suffered throughout the project as involuntary consultant on large and small editorial matters: the editorial task would have been longer, and the result less satisfactory, without his willing help.

P.J.S.

## Introduction

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. By studying only the mother, criticism becomes one-sided. It is easy to forget that the man who writes a good love sonnet needs not only to be enamoured of a woman, but also to be enamoured of the Sonnet.<sup>1</sup>

IT is one of the minor ironies of fate that the criticism of Lewis's own artistic works should have become one-sided in just such a way. Many valuable studies of Lewis have appeared in recent years,<sup>2</sup> but the emphasis, even in books and articles on his fiction, has been on the ideas; comparatively little attention has been given to Lewis as creative artist. This volume is intended as a step toward rectifying that imbalance. It seeks to lay a foundation for further analyses of Lewis's craftsmanship by focusing attention on "Form," in the two senses in which Lewis uses the word in his own criticism.

The first implication Form carries for Lewis is literary "kind," almost "genre," as in the opening quotation above. For Lewis, both as artist and critic, Form in this sense is of vital importance. As a critic he devotes over a third of his book on Milton to the epic, because "the biography of the literary kind will help our reading of *Paradise Lost* at least as much as the biography of the poet" [*A Preface to Paradise Lost*, p. 8]. And he uses the opening chapters of *The Allegory of Love* to trace "the rise both of the sentiment called 'Courtly Love' and of the allegorical method" because "the allegorical love poetry of the Middle Ages is apt to repel the modern reader both by its form and by its matter."<sup>3</sup> As an artist

he carefully specifies on the title pages that *Perelandra* is "A Novel" and *That Hideous Strength* is "A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups," with the assumption, apparently, that these distinctions will be meaningful and important to the reader. And, in the note he prepared for the dust jacket of the first edition of *Till We Have Faces*, he comments on the significance of Form in the creative process itself: "This reinterpretation of an old story has lived in the author's mind . . . since he was an undergraduate. . . . Recently, what seemed to be the right form presented itself and themes suddenly interlocked."

One must not be misled by Lewis's metaphors, however, into thinking of Form as some sort of Coleridgean "organic form," shaping itself from within, disclosing itself by intuition and the emotional fervor of composition. Lewis always refers to Form in the classical sense of traditional "types":

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. 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 pawing to get out. He longs to see that bubbling stuff pouring into that Form as the housewife longs to see the new jam pouring into the clean jam jar.<sup>4</sup>

The matter longs not for an innate Form but for a pre-existing Form, one which exists independently with characteristics already defined, as the simile of the jam jar brings out clearly. Despite Lewis's romantic leanings in other areas of life, his theory of creativity is based on the thoroughly classical premise that freedom is most fully achieved through restraint:

It would, in my opinion, be the greatest error to suppose that this fertilization of the poet's internal matter by the pre-existing Form impairs his originality. . . . *Materia appetit formam ut virum femina*. The matter inside the poet *wants* the Form: in submitting to the Form it 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; working to produce a given kind of poem which will present a given theme as justly, delightfully, and lucidly as possible, he is more likely to bring out all that was really in him, and much of which he himself had no suspicion. [*A Preface to Paradise Lost*, p. 3]

The metaphor here is organic: the union of Form and matter parallels the union of male and female. But note that *Form* is not "or-

ganic," growing and perfecting itself; rather the *work* as a whole can develop and deepen, can grow to fullest potential, from the union of matter with a pre-existing Form.

Similarly Lewis's thoughts on how an artist comes to use a certain Form always involve choice, thoughtful and calculated selection. Thus it was for Lewis himself as he worked with the mental pictures which became *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*:

Then came the Form. As these images sorted themselves into events (i.e., became a story) they seemed to demand no love interest and no close psychology. But the Form which excludes these things is the fairy tale. And the moment I thought of that I fell in love with the Form itself: its brevity, its severe restraints on description, its flexible traditionalism, its inflexible hostility to all analysis, digression, reflections and "gas." . . . I wrote fairy tales because the Fairy Tale seemed the ideal Form for the stuff I had to say. [*Of Other Worlds*, pp. 36-37]

Perhaps, of course, this is hindsight, supplying a rationale after the fact. If so, however, the moment of inspiration would be, in Lewis's eyes, the product of the hours of reflection and the years of preparation that preceded it. The key process involves the mind, not emotions or inspiration. Thus it was for Milton also. Lewis spends five pages in *A Preface to Paradise Lost* [pp. 3-7] following the steps through which Milton eliminated alternative Forms and fixed upon the epic. Again the metaphor, in Lewis's summary statement, implies emotion, but the process being described is almost totally rational:

By observing how Milton subdivides the Epic into its sub-species, we are again brought face to face with the problem of Forms—with the virginal *materia* inside the poet hesitating, as it were, between different suitors. When he wrote the *Reason of Church Government* the different types of poem were all present to Milton's mind, all different, all attractive, each offering its own unique opportunities, but each also demanding peculiar sacrifices. His sentence about epic is really a short history of epic poetry. To know what he was talking about, to feel as he felt, and so, in the end, to know what he was really choosing when he finally chose and what kind of thing he was making when he acted on that final choice, we also must attend to epic. [*A Preface to Paradise Lost*, p. 8]

To Lewis, then, Form, in the sense of "literary kind," is a vital part of the artistic process. It is one of the two parents of a literary work, and by no means the less important of the two. Form, in the artist, is not spontaneous and self-determining, but is at least par-

tially subject to control. Because Lewis's comments on his own manner of composition frequently imply a large measure of spontaneity and inspiration, a closer analysis of his use of Form is necessary. To have written as voluminously as he did, much must have "come to him" when or before he sat down to write. But we must never forget that his writing was preceded by more reading, probably, than done by any other person of his time, that he had an enormously large stock of literary knowledge and literary Forms to draw upon. If Lewis was "inventing" material, it was in the eighteenth-century sense of making "a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory." A detailed formal analysis of his fiction, then, is needed and should be rewarded by new and fuller insights into his works and into Lewis himself as artist and thinker.

A sizeable portion of this book is devoted to Lewis's use of Form, in the sense discussed above. The essay by Scott Oury, by illustrating Lewis's attraction to "the object itself," to things (and thus Forms) which have objective, independent existence outside the perceiver or user, supplies a theoretical framework for the emphasis on Form as "literary types." The essays by Wayne Shumaker and Chad Walsh consider the "genre" of the Ransom trilogy, Lewis's adaptation of science fiction to his own purposes. Three essays discuss Form in the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Walter Hooper shows that the *Chronicles* are not "allegories," with characters and situations which "stand for" something else, but "extremely well-written adventure stories" whose success derives from their intrinsic "meaning." Charles Huttar views the *Chronicles* as "scripture," containing the same "grand design" as God incorporated in history and in the Bible. And Eliane Tixier explains how use of the Fairy Tale enabled Lewis to capture in the *Chronicles* his own experience with Holiness and to convey it in a nondogmatic way.

The second implication the term Form carries for Lewis is "shape," the internal arrangement and handling of material, including the degree to which that handling produces a unity of effect. Thus he says of tragedy and comedy that "both [Forms] were deliberate patterns or arrangements of possible . . . events chosen for their harmonious unity in variety, deliberately modified, contrasted, balanced in a fashion which real life never permits."<sup>5</sup> Much of Lewis's work as a critic redirected attention to this aspect of literature, as well as to its generic part. This, indeed, was the theme of the interchange between Lewis and E. M. W. Tillyard, which became *The Personal Heresy: A Controversy*. The crucial point for Lewis may be summed up in these lines:



Poetry is an art or skill—a trained habit of using certain instruments to certain ends. This platitude is no longer unnecessary; it has been becoming obscured ever since the great romantic critics diverted our attention from the fruitful question, "What kind of composition is a poem?" to the barren question, "What kind of a man is a poet?"<sup>6</sup>

Again and again Lewis's criticism focuses on the shaping and unity of a work: "A work of literary art . . . both *means* and *is*. It is both *Logos* (something said) and *Poiema* (something made). As *Logos* it tells a story, or expresses 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 *objet d'art*, a thing shaped so as to give great satisfaction."<sup>7</sup> Lewis's interest in the techniques which produce those shapes can be illustrated by the titles of five of the essays collected in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*: "What Chaucer really did to 'Il Filostrato,'" "The Fifteenth-Century Heroic Line," "Variation in Shakespeare and Others," "Dante's Similes," and "Imagery in the Last Eleven Cantos of Dante's 'Comedy.'"<sup>8</sup> The critical approaches range widely, from source studies to metrical analysis, but everywhere the method is close examination of the text, of the specific skills employed by the writer in achieving "something like a balance, but never a too perfect symmetry, so that the shape of the whole work will be felt as inevitable and satisfying" [*An Experiment in Criticism*, p. 83].

Nowhere is his attention to the details which compose the Form in this second sense more impressive than in a series of unpublished letters to Ruth Pittar. In some letters he writes about her poems; his comments are so detailed, sensitive, and perceptive as to make her declare, in her remarks on his letters, "Here is someone who really read the poems." In other letters he discusses the poems of others:

Have you read Andrew Young's *Into Hades*, and what do you think of it. I found the content absorbing and the images, like all his, simply enchanting (There's a bit about reflected water-drops from a raised oar rushing to meet the real water drops—lovely!) but my *ear* was a bit unsatisfied. I believe "Blank Verse," unrhymed five footers, is not a metre to be written loosely. I think the unrhymed Alexandrine, written without a break at the 6<sup>th</sup> syllable wd. be far better: e.g.

I know far less of spiders than that poetess

Who (like the lady in *Comus* in the perilous wood)

Can study nature's infamies with secure heart . . .

The third line is here the best: one wants plenty of trisyllables to leap across the threatened medial pause. Try a few.<sup>9</sup>

And in still others he asks for her responses to his own poems. But he has already considered his poems himself, with concern for the same qualities he looks for in others' works: "Get clear what the question is. I know (or think) that some of these contain important thought and v. great metrical ingenuity. That isn't what I'm worrying about. But are they real poems or do the content and the form remain separable—fitted together only by force?" [24 July 1946]. Much evidence suggests that Lewis was a careful, thoughtful craftsman in fiction as well as verse. And the kind of detailed analysis Lewis did of his own poems should be equally justified and valuable for his fiction. The remainder of this book, therefore, deals with this implication of Form, as various essays examine the techniques by which Lewis shaped and unified his novels as "objects of art," and how he achieved the beauty and significance apparent so often in them.

Edward Zogby, S.J., establishes the theoretical background for this endeavor by demonstrating that a pattern of triadic relationships, of opposites existing in tension with each other until they are resolved into a "third thing," appears throughout Lewis's life, thought, and art. Janice Neuleib extends this by showing how, for Lewis, the artist and the work of art become a model of Providence: the reader, by seeing and coming to understand the artist's relationship to the work he or she has created, can come to grasp more readily God's relationship to the work He has created. Chad Walsh, Richard Purtill, and Clyde Kilby show how a similar attention to pattern is valuable within individual novels: in the growth/education theme of *Out of the Silent Planet*, the contrasting pairings throughout *That Hideous Strength*, and the purposeful series of "witnessings" to Orual in *Till We Have Faces*. Several essays illuminate novels by analyzing how Lewis handled the sources from which he drew ideas or structures. Wayne Shumaker shows how Lewis gave renewed meaning to a prepared world view by incorporating that view into space fiction. Margaret Hannay illustrates how Lewis's criticism of Milton influenced the novel he was writing at the same time: "Those things which disappointed Lewis in *Paradise Lost* have been altered in . . . *Perelandra*; those elements which he most approved in Milton he has sought to emulate." John Cox examines a wide range of influences on and analogues to *The Silver Chair* and demonstrates the depths of this, the most philosophical of the Narnia books. Steve Van Der Weele supplies a detailed discussion of both small and sweeping changes Lewis made in the Apuleian myth he is retelling in *Till We Have Faces*. And J. R. Christopher shows how Lewis used a variety of literary allusions and analogues to establish the universal human patterns which give so much depth and power to *Till We Have Faces*.

The book will achieve its highest aim if it sends readers back to the novels, better enabled to "receive" the novels as Lewis wrote them:

A work of (whatever) art can be either "received" or "used." When we "receive" it we exert our senses and imagination and various other powers according to a pattern invented by the artist. When we "use" it we treat it as assistance for our own activities. . . . "Using" is inferior to "reception" because art, if used rather than received, merely facilitates, brightens, relieves or palliates our life, and does not add to it. [*An Experiment in Criticism*, p. 88]

For that reason the one-sided type of criticism mentioned in the opening quotation must be avoided. Too great an emphasis on Lewis's ideas, unbalanced by attention to what the works really *are* and how they really work upon an objective reader, can lead to sheer "use" of them, usually to reinforce a pre-existing world or life view. The focus upon Form in this book—on the kinds of novels these are, and on their shapes, their patterns, their total effects—should help readers to attain the chief end of imaginative writing, according to Lewis, that of "entering fully into the opinions, and therefore also the attitudes, feelings and total experience, of other men" [*An Experiment in Criticism*, p. 85].



## *I:* GENERAL STUDIES



## “The Thing Itself”: C. S. Lewis and the Value of Something Other

ANYONE who has read C. S. Lewis with the least bit of attention finds himself confronted with a set of difficult—even annoying—paradoxes. He stressed objectivity, but everywhere a strong personal bent seems to obtrude. He converted to Christianity and defended its doctrines, yet he evidenced an insatiable thirst for new worlds of experience and ideas:

Reality, even seen through the eyes of many, is not enough. I will see what others have invented. Even the eyes of all humanity are not enough. I regret that the brutes cannot write books.<sup>1</sup>

For one who professed such openness, he dismissed entire philosophies with something just short of contempt. Atheism and pantheism were for him “boys’ philosophies” [*Mere Christianity*, p. 33]. Yet he maintained an almost intolerable confidence in the main outlines of his own philosophy. His reputation as a great scholar seems to clash with his distrust of abstractions in almost any form: A “mere dexterous playing with counters” [*Letters*, p. 147]. And as a literary critic who by his own admission (not to mention the opinion of some of his critics) belonged to another age, he stirred some of the most heated literary controversies of his day. John Wain called him “England’s chief literary controversialist” after Orwell’s death.<sup>2</sup>

The paradoxes suggest that Lewis is difficult to understand from any single perspective, literary, theological, or personal. Read him for his theories of literature and you run sooner or later into theology. Read him for either his theology or his critical theories and the man himself seems to be facing you, that warm but un-

compromising tutor, friendly enemy, or partner in an intellectual game of chess.

Pull any strand and all the rest come along. And the smaller patterns of his life integrate with the whole tapestry. Those who knew him best agree. Owen Barfield suggests that Lewis was thoroughly committed in *practice* to his intellectual beliefs.<sup>3</sup> Chad Walsh, who wrote the first full-length book on him and to whom *The Four Loves* was dedicated, was frustrated in every attempt to find the *real* Lewis behind the literary personage; they seemed identical.<sup>4</sup> And Dabney Hart, who wrote a definitive study of Lewis's theory of mythopoeia, concludes that Lewis's theological and critical stances were thoroughly integrated.<sup>5</sup>

Out of these paradoxes and this unity the question arises: Where is the key? Where is the main strand, the strand that makes a pattern of the paradoxes and contributes most basically to the whole? Perhaps his Christianity. Orthodox, historical Christianity did become central and indispensable to every facet of his life and literature. But Lewis was thirty-one at the time of his conversion. Certainly he did not suddenly, or subsequently, become all that he was from that point on. Nor can the literary man be understood entirely from the perspective of his beliefs.

There is a strand more basic—though not more important in the final analysis—to an understanding of C. S. Lewis. It was, in fact, the thread that drew him to Christianity and became the dominant quality of his life work. This thread was his attention and commitment to the value of something other than himself, to "the object itself." None of the studies of C. S. Lewis that I am aware of treats this preoccupation with "the object itself." The purpose of this paper, therefore, will be to trace the occurrence of this preoccupation first in his life, then briefly in his nonfictional works and in his theories of literature, and finally in his major effort in adult fiction, the science-fiction trilogy.

At start a hesitation must be expressed. This is an attempt to shed some light, not to obscure. Yet one feels like a man with a candle attempting to illuminate a beacon. If he was anything, C. S. Lewis was the essence of clarity. Every attempt will be made to let him frequently speak for himself.

C. S. Lewis's conversion, first to theism and then to Christianity, was due in good part to his attention to "the object itself." The result was to confirm this habit of attention and establish it as a basis for his subsequent life and work.

Since the term "the object itself" (or "the object") is basic to this entire discussion, an attempt will be made to define Lewis's



use of it. An immediate qualification, however, is necessary. The very attempt to define "the object itself" abstracts it from its perceived completeness and from its proper setting. One inevitably endows "the object" with qualities out of one's own personal makeup. And one perceives "the object itself" in its wholeness as having these added qualities. Strictly speaking, "the object itself" can only be encountered and experienced, in the sense that one *undergoes* an experience. This is its proper setting.

To C. S. Lewis, the very idea of "the thing itself" assumed as its starting point something real *out there* with qualities that belong to it or inhere. "Certain things, if not seen as lovely or detestable, are not being correctly seen at all."<sup>6</sup> "The object itself" includes physical objects, persons and beings, their movements, and their communications. It excludes only those qualities that one encountering "the object" *adds* to it—in short, the projection of one's own makeup upon "the object." Lewis also viewed "the object" on a larger scale:

It is Nature, it is the Way, the Road . . . the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge, stillly and tranquilly, into space and time . . . the Way which every man should tread in imitation of that cosmic and supercosmic progression.<sup>7</sup>

And it is God, the "sheerly objective, . . . the naked Other" [*Surprised by Joy*, p. 221], "the most concrete of all Facts."<sup>8</sup>

As far as I am aware, Lewis never embarked upon an extended philosophical discussion of "the object itself"; it was defined for him concretely in the process of attending to it, or, as he puts it in the subtitle of his autobiography, in "The Shape of My Early Life." In the preface to *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis explains that his purpose is not general autobiography, but telling the story of his conversion, especially as it concerns the experience of "Joy." Recalling his late childhood, Lewis relates three experiences, all characterized by an element of intense desire, "an unsatisfied desire . . . itself more desirable than any other satisfaction," which he called "Joy."<sup>9</sup> This continuing experience of Joy became the most important experience of his life, though he did not become aware of its origin until much later. The essence of his involvement with Joy is summed up in the preface to *The Pilgrim's Regress*:

It appeared to me . . . that if a man diligently followed this desire, pursuing the false objects until their falsity appeared and then resolutely abandoning them, he must come out at last into the clear knowledge that the human soul was made to enjoy some object that is never fully given . . . in our present mode of . . . experience. [p. 10]

The desire, however, did not reappear until early adolescence (he had never been able to command it). But when it did appear, he immediately embraced what seemed to produce it: Norse mythology, or "Northernness." His attention to "the object itself" began to sharpen. In his involvement with Norse mythology there was a "quite disinterested self-abandonment to an object which securely claimed this by simply being the object it was" [p. 77]. The "Northernness" eventually began to fade; instead of drawing the conclusion that Joy was "further away, more external, less subjective," he concluded for a time that it was a mood or state within himself, and he attempted to produce it again, by sex [p. 68] and by magic [p. 176], only to be disappointed once more.

Then he picked up George MacDonald's *Phantastes* and all was changed: "It was as though the voice which had called to me from the world's end were now speaking at my side" [p. 180]. An important step occurred here in Lewis's search for the source of Joy. He had previously confused Joy with the objects that invited it and, as a result, the objects had quickly faded. With *Phantastes* the Joy was nearly inseparable from the story itself, yet it was a distinct element, *light*, that transformed not only the objects of the story but even the common things of his own life:

For I now perceived that while the air of the new region made all my erotic and magical perversions of Joy look like sordid trumpery, it had no such disenchanting power over the bread upon the table or the coals in the grate. [p. 181]

Evidently Joy was not to be found in any particular kind of experience, object, or imaginative construct. It was to be found, paradoxically, in something inseparably bound to the qualities of things, yet distinctly itself.

MacDonald's *Phantastes* was an early taste of what Lewis was to realize fully later. First came increased attention to "the qualities of things" through a friend at Oxford. He learned from Hamilton Jenkin to "attempt a total surrender to whatever atmosphere was offering itself at the moment, . . . to rub one's nose in the very quiddity of each thing, to rejoice in its being . . . what it was" [p. 199]. At the same time, however, he adopted a "New Look," which served to explain away all his previous experiences of Joy as merely aesthetic experience. Then, with the reading of Langland, Donne, Browne, and especially George Herbert, the New Look was shaken; Joy began to approach once more. Herbert conveyed to him "the very quality of life as we actually live it from moment to moment" [p. 214], an echo of his experience with *Phantastes*.