Chapter Three

The Space Trilogy

Man can enjoy a receptive bonding with the environment when his eyes are opened to perceive nature's beauty. In the three science fiction novels Lewis invites readers to be filled with a sense of wonder and delight at "our place in the cosmos, including our relationships to other species, to the land we live on, and to what we do not yet know" (Dickerson, *Narnia* 158). By cultivating an attitude of appreciation to nature, man can be prevented from wanton destruction of forests and other natural landscape. Significantly, the views recommended in the trilogy are "to have relevance not only to a life beyond life but also to the situations in which men find themselves daily" (Shumaker 59).

Men like Ching-yuan, an early follower of the Zen school of Buddhism first took nature for granted, but later he felt a "humble openness to nature’s revelation" (Coupé 14). William Blake however believed that nature appears as a different object to different persons:

I feel that a Man may be happy in this world. And I know that this world is a world of imagination and vision. I see everything I paint in this world, but everybody does not see alike. To the eyes of a Miser a guinea is far more beautiful than the sun, and a bag worn with the use of money has more
beautiful proportions than a vine filled with grapes. The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a Green thing which stands in the way. Some see Nature all ridicule and deformity, and by these I shall not regulate my proportions; and some scarce see Nature at all. But to the eyes of the man of imagination, Nature is imagination itself. (16)

Coupé’s view is that when one begins to have a positive appreciation for nature, he will “learn from nature, to enter into its spirit, and to stop trying to impose upon it the arbitrary constraints which result from our belief in our own importance” (1).

Thus, while men of different generations have all praised and extolled the beneficial influence of the natural environment, Lewis, in the science fiction trilogy attempts to evoke in his readers, a positive expectation of nobler and more wonderful life forms, far surpassing human limitations and a stupendous variety of flora and fauna in other planets. He also takes a firm stand against the exploitation of nature, other species and all living things. Lewis goes all out to re-enchant his readers to a truer and nobler conception of their awesome environment in outer space that encompasses creatures great and small, known and unknown to man. Lewis realized that, “the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature” (Wordsworth, “Primary” 17) and by “reimagining the meaning and structure of the cosmos,” (Dickerson, Narnia 151) he raises eco-significance to the cosmic level of consciousness.
*Out of the Silent Planet*, the first of the science fiction trilogy, describes space travel and possible life in a different planet. The novel focuses on a space journey to a new planet for the purpose of scientific and material exploitation. Weston thinks human colonization in the new planet is possible. Devine wants to bring back gold for his own benefit. The two men have been to this planet Malacandra earlier and have now captured Ransom thinking that if they offer Ransom as a human sacrifice, they will be allowed to do as they like in this new planet. The story begins in a natural setting, with Ransom, the pedestrian out on a walking-tour, having taken temporary shelter under a large chestnut tree during the rain, stepping into the road when a “violet yellow sunset was pouring through a rift in the clouds to westward, but straight ahead over the hills the sky was the colour of dark slate. Every tree and blade of grass was dripping, and the road shone like a river” (*Planet 7*). The country he is travelling through doggedly, hoping to find a room for rent before nightfall, is “a desolate, featureless sort of country mainly devoted to cabbage and turnip, with poor hedges and few trees” (*Planet 8*). He bumps into a woman who seems to be crying. Her simple-minded son who works in *The Rise* close by has not returned home. He promises to find the boy and send him home. Ransom seeks out *The Rise* and though he manages to free the boy, he himself is drugged, captured, and taken on board the airship to the planet Malacandra. Weston had preferred to take the boy because he thought the boy, “‘incapable of serving humanity and only too likely to propagate idiocy. He was the sort of boy who in a civilised community would be
automatically handed over to a state laboratory for experimental purposes’”  
(Planet 21-22). However, Weston and Devine decide that Ransom will serve their purpose just as well.

As the spaceship travels, Ransom regains consciousness, and demands to know why he has been kidnapped. Weston’s answer is typical of the anthropocentric or egocentred man:

“We have learned how to jump off the speck of matter on which our species began; infinity, and therefore perhaps eternity, is being put into the hands of the human race. You cannot be so small-minded as to think that the rights or the life of an individual or of a million individuals are of the slightest importance in comparison with this.” (Planet 29-30)

In response, Ransom who had clearly announced his stand against vivisection even in college days now condemns Weston’s autocratic view as “raving lunacy” (Planet 30).

The spaceship in which Ransom is travelling is surrounded by the natural beauty of the throbbing universe. He observes the fantastic setting of the magnificent planets and splendid constellations. Ransom gazes at the breath-taking environment:

. . . the stars, thick as daisies on an uncut lawn, reigned perpetually, with no cloud, no moon, no sunrise to dispute their sway. There were planets of unbelievable majesty, and constellations undreamed of: there were celestial sapphires,
rubies, emeralds and pin-pricks of burning gold; far out on the left of the picture hung a comet, tiny and remote: and between all and behind all, far more emphatic and palpable than it showed on Earth, the undimensioned, enigmatic blackness.

(Planet 34-35)

Ransom senses the softest rays of the sun passing into the chamber through the skylight where he is seated. Instantly he feels the gentle stroke of the warmth produced by the rays. This arouses in him a deep feeling of enthusiasm and regeneration of the spirit. Ransom relates this experience, which is remarkable and very new:

The light was paler than any light of comparable intensity that he had ever seen; it was not pure white but the palest of all imaginable golds, and it cast shadows as sharp as a floodlight. The heat, utterly free from moisture, seemed to knead and stroke the skin like a gigantic masseur: it produced no tendency to drowsiness: rather, intense alacrity. His headache was gone: he felt vigilant, courageous and magnanimous as he had seldom felt on Earth. Gradually he dared to raise his eyes to the skylight. Steel shutters were drawn across all but a chink of the glass, and that chink was covered with blinds of some heavy and dark material; but still it was too bright to look at.

(Planet 32)
In these lines, the creative artist attempts to describe the brilliance of the unfiltered rays of the solar radiation. Lewis re-envisions eternity where days and nights are not differentiated. Ransom feels delighted to see an endless night on one side of the ship and an endless day on the other. He gives his readers a new vantage point, for he considered space stories “an ideal vehicle to help us arrive at a new place to stand and see our own world” (Dickerson, *Narnia* 153). While space is generally thought to be cold and unfriendly, Lewis enchants his readers with new perceptions:

The adventure was too high, its circumstance too solemn, for any emotion save a severe delight. But the days – that is, the hours spent in the sunward hemisphere of their microcosm – were the best of all. Often he rose after only a few hours’ sleep to return, drawn by an irresistible attraction to the regions of light; he could not cease to wonder at the noon which always awaited you, however early you went to seek it. There, totally immersed in a bath of pure ethereal colour and of unrelenting though unwounding brightness, stretched his full length and with eyes half closed in the strange chariot that bore them, faintly quivering, through depth after depth of tranquillity far above the reach of night, he felt his body and mind daily rubbed and scoured and filled with new vitality. (*Planet* 35)

Thus Ransom is enthralled by the indescribable loveliness of outer space. In order to have a continuous look at it he spends only a few hours for sleeping.
Frequently he wakes up to gaze at the enticing regions of light in amazement. In this tranquil and peaceful environment Ransom feels his body and mind being filled with a new vigour and vitality.

Falsely imagined ideas of outer space as an unfriendly and fearful place are replaced by a new reality. In fact, the traveller and the readers are re-educated:

A nightmare long engendered in the modern mind by the mythology that follows in the wake of science, was falling off him. He had read of ‘Space’: at the back of his thinking for years had lurked the dismal fancy of the black, cold vacuity, the utter deadness, which was supposed to separate the worlds. He had not known how much it affected him till now – now that the very name ‘Space’ seemed a blasphemous libel for this empyrean ocean of radiance in which they swam. He could not call it ‘dead’; he felt life pouring into him from it every moment. (Planet 36)

Earlier Ransom assumed outer space to be a world of complete darkness and emptiness. He now recognizes that outer space is exciting and lively. Through the eyes of Ransom, readers of the novel are enabled to understand something fresh about the Earth, space, other planets, and man’s position in relationship to his total environment, which they would not perceive otherwise. For Lewis, science fiction stories became an ideal vehicle to re-enchant his
readers by bringing them to a different means for envisioning earth and the universe.

By chance, Ransom overhears a conversation between Weston and Devine and comes to know that when they reach the planet Malacandra, Ransom is to be offered to the sorns or extra-terrestrials as a human sacrifice, in exchange for gold. This fills him with fear and dread and he tries to imagine what the sorns are:

He saw in imagination various incompatible monstrosities – bulbous eyes, grinning jaws, horns, stings, mandibles. Loathing of insects, loathing of snakes, loathing of things that squashed and squelched, all played their horrible symphonies over his nerves. But the reality would be worse: it would be an extra-terrestrial Otherness – something one had never thought of, never could have thought of. (*Planet 40*)

In these lines, Lewis depicts the common science fiction view of life forms in other planets. Extra-terrestrials are commonly depicted as monsters. Hence, fear of the unknown makes Ransom imagine the worst possible harm. When they land on the planet and Ransom looks around at his new surroundings, he learns differently that “Malacandra was beautiful; and he even reflected how odd it was that this possibility had never entered into his speculations about it” (*Planet 47*). Though strange planets are usually shown to have only rocks and network of machines Lewis’s Malacandra looks appealing with plants
and trees. Ransom sees strange upright shapes of whitish-green. It “looked like the top of a gigantic red cauliflower – or like a huge bowl of red soapsuds – and it was exquisitely beautiful in tint and shape” (Planet 48). The natural surroundings, which are unappealing to Weston and Devine, are vastly interesting to Ransom:

Suddenly his eyes mastered the object. The purple stuff was vegetation: more precisely it was vegetables, vegetables about twice the height of English elms, but apparently soft and flimsy. The stalks – one could hardly call them trunks – rose smooth and round, and surprisingly thin, for about forty feet: above that, the huge plants opened into a sheaf-like development, not of branches but of leaves, leaves large as lifeboats but nearly transparent. The whole thing corresponded roughly to his idea of a submarine forest: the plants, at once so large and so frail, seemed to need water to support them, and he wondered that they could hang in the air. Lower down, between the stems, he saw the vivid purple twilight, mottled with paler sunshine, which made up the internal scenery of the wood. (Planet 48-49)

Through the eyes of Lewis, the reader becomes virtually enchanted with the otherworldly environment in Malacandra. As a science fiction writer, Lewis presents his “imagined universes as the inevitable result of a particular development” and this illusion of inevitability helps readers to “suspend their
disbelief in the fictional world” (Haigh 9) and truly become involved in the narrative.

Just as Ransom is about to be handed over to the sorns, a monstrous beast speeding towards them in the water distracts Weston and as Weston shoots at the beast, Ransom makes good his escape. He runs from the sorns, into a forest of unknown vegetation, over steep ground, crossing gullies and ridges, until darkness falls.

The streams in this new planet are unusually warm, and Ransom spends the night beside one, to keep away the cold. When he awakes assuaged by thirst, delusions recur in his mind and he doubts his own sanity. However, he drinks from a stream of water, and feels refreshed. He also cuts off a piece of soft vegetable and chews it like bubble gum while searching for food, till he meets a black animal-like creature rising out of the water. Ransom has never seen such a creature and its appearance and behaviour is unusual:

. . . it splashed and wallowed to the shore and rose, steaming, on its hind legs – six or seven feet high and too thin for its height, like everything in Malacandra. It had a coat of thick black hair, lucid as seal-skin, very short legs with webbed feet, a broad beaver-like or fish-like tail, strong fore-limbs with webbed claws or fingers, and some complications half-way up the belly which Ransom took to be its genitals. It was something like a penguin, something like an otter, something
like a seal; the slenderness and flexibility of the body suggested a giant stoat. (*Planet 60-61*)

To Ransom’s great surprise, the creature opens its mouth and begins to make noises. It dawns upon Ransom, the philologist that these were articulate noises:

> The creature was *talking*. It had language. If you are not yourself a philologist, I am afraid you must take on trust the prodigious emotional consequences of this realisation in Ransom’s mind. A new world he had already seen – but a new, an extra-terrestrial, a non-human language was a different matter. (*Planet 61*)

Thus, the reader is called to look upon the strange life forms through the eyes of Ransom, to identify with his fears and anxiety and to partake in his curious contemplation of strange possibilities in this new planet. Lewis, like other science fiction writers seeks “to extrapolate logically a change from the world as we know it” (qtd. in Haigh 8) and hopes to gain an appreciation for these other worlds in outer space. Ransom’s curiosity overcomes his fear and he rises up to meet the creature. However, the creature leaps back and stands motionless. When Ransom holds out his hand, the creature retreats, but remains quiet and still:

> Neither dared let the other approach, yet each repeatedly felt the impulse to do so himself, and yielded to it. It was foolish, frightening, ecstatic and unbearable all in one moment. It was
more than curiosity. It was like a courtship – like the meeting of the first man and the first woman in the world; it was like something beyond that; so natural is the contact of sexes, so limited the strangeness, so shallow the reticence, so mild the repugnance to be overcome, compared with the first tingling intercourse of two different, but rational, species. (Planet 62)

Gradually Ransom learns to communicate with the strange extra-terrestrial creature and the creature offers him a drink, which he accepts and enjoys. Then, he follows the animal and it leads him to a boat. Thus a relationship between different species is formed.

About three weeks after Ransom has landed in Malacandra, he feels comfortable enough to take a walk by himself and as the days pass, he learns to recognise a male from a female hross at sight, and finds the young cubs of the species entirely delightful:

Too young to trouble him with the baffling enigma of reason in an inhuman form, they solaced his loneliness, as if he had been allowed to bring a few dogs with him from the Earth. The cubs, on their part, felt the liveliest interest in the hairless goblin which had appeared among them. With them, and therefore indirectly with their dams, he was a brilliant success. (Planet 73-74)

Ransom becomes accustomed to their food and slowly learns more of their language. He learns that they depend on their natural environment for food
and shelter: “Their dwellings were beehive-shaped huts of stiff leaf and the villages – there were several in the neighbourhood – were always built beside rivers for warmth and well upstream towards the walls of the handramit where the water was hottest. They slept on the ground” (Planet 74).

The hross also cultivated farms. The community worked together in these food-producing areas. There was division of labour when cutting, manuring, drying, storing and transporting were all carried out. Ransom now realises that “success for population – both in nature and in human societies – was to be found in cooperation” (Randolph 141). Soon he begins to communicate more effectively with the different species of life forms in Malacandra and comes to a certain conclusion:

Ever since he had discovered the rationality of the hrossa he had been haunted by a conscientious scruple as to whether it might not be his duty to undertake their religious instruction; now, as a result of his tentative efforts, he found himself being treated as if he were the savage and being given a first sketch of civilised religion – a sort of hrossian equivalent of the shorter catechism. (Planet 77)

It initiates “a renewed relationship of man to himself, to other men, to society, to nature and to the land” (qtd. in Ambrosius 1). Ransom thus experiences ecological and cultural adaptation to his environment in course of time.

Ransom’s complete integration with the hrossa of Malacandra takes place when he joins them in the hunt of the hnakra and flings shaft after shaft
into the gaping brute as the brute is killed. He is not embarrassed by the hrossa and he does not find their breath offensive:

He was one with them. That difficulty which they, accustomed to more than one rational species, had perhaps never felt was now overcome. They were all hmau. They had stood shoulder to shoulder in the face of an enemy, and the shapes of their heads no longer mattered. And he, even Ransom, had come through it and not been disgraced. He had grown up. (Planet 91)

When Ransom receives orders from the eldil to meet Oyarsa and he sets out on the journey, he has fresh experiences of his environment. He has to walk long hours, sometimes downhill, through forests and valleys, streams and woods, eating from the ground weed when he is hungry till his chest aches and his lips are cracked and he breathes with difficulty. Finally, he reaches a cave and meets the sorn Augray who welcomes him and refreshes him with oxygen from a small cup-like instrument with a flexible tube.

Ransom’s travel on the shoulders of Augray the sorn brings him more knowledge of the Malacandrian environment. As they walk through long distances Ransom feels the beauty of the landscape wrapping itself around him for “he felt the old lift of the heart, the soaring solemnity, the sense, at once sober and ecstatic, of life and power offered in unmasked and unmeasured abundance” (Planet 112). They notice countless curves of the pale rose coloured gigantic cauliflowers which are of the size of cathedrals.
They walk through the old forests of Malacandra where huge birds had once dwelt, and the caves where the sorns lived. Ransom’s attitude towards the sorns undergoes a change when the angelic appearance of the sorns overcomes him:

They seemed to Ransom to be rather skating than walking. The lightness of their world and the perfect poise of their bodies allowed them to lean forward at right angles to the slope, and they came swiftly down like full-rigged ships before a fair wind. The grace of their movement, their lofty stature, and the softened glancing of the sunlight on their feathery sides, effected a final transformation in Ransom’s feelings towards their race. (Planet 114)

He had once thought these creatures to be ‘ogres’ but now they seem more like ‘Titans’ or even ‘Angels’. Ransom undergoes a transformation in his feelings towards the creatures of Malacandra. Not only Ransom but also the readers become appreciative of these other world creatures. From the reports of Weston and Devine, he had misunderstood the sorns’ demand for human sacrifice. Now he finds the sorns to be hospitable and friendly.

When Ransom reaches Malacandra, he finds the place to be quite unlike what he had imagined. This new handramit appears so beautiful that it takes his breath away. There is a huge lake, and in its midst a low and gently sloping pyramid, with a grove of trees such as man has never seen:
Their smooth columns had the gentle swell of the noblest beech-trees: but these were taller than a cathedral spire on earth, and at their tops, they broke rather into flower than foliage; into golden flower bright as tulip, still as rock, and huge as summer cloud. Flowers indeed they were, not trees, and far down among their roots he caught a pale hint of slab-like architecture. *(Planet 118)*

The whole scene appears classic and virginal with the “bright grove – lying so still, so secret, in its coloured valley soaring with inimitable grace so many hundred feet into the wintry sunlight” *(Planet 119)*. Ransom’s entry into the habitat of Meldilorn is marked by an acute awareness of the beauty of the place:

At every step of his descent the comparative warmth of the valley came up to him more deliciously. He looked above – the sky was turning to a pale blue. He looked below – and sweet and faint thin fragrance of the giant blooms came up to him. Distant crags were growing less sharp in outline, and surfaces less bright. Depth, dimness, softness and perspective were returning to the landscape. The lip or edge of rock from which they had started their descent was already far overhead; it seemed unlikely that they had really come from there. He was breathing freely. His toes, so long benumbed, could move delightfully inside his boots. He lifted the ear-flaps of his cap
and found his ears instantly filled with the sound of falling water. And now he was treading on soft ground-weed over level earth and the forest roof was above his head. (*Planet* 119)

Ransom is ferried by a hrossa in a boat to the Meldilorn and he finds the ground-weed unusually soft and rich so that his feet made no noise on it. He is told that the island is full of eldila. His first meeting with the pfifltriggi arouses strange feelings for it looked distinctly like a frog, or a dwarf. One morning, Oyarsa sends for Ransom and amidst a great gathering of Malacandrians and eldila the voice of Oyarsa calls out to Ransom: “‘What are you so afraid of, Ransom of Thulcandra?’” (*Planet* 135). Ransom replies: “tellers of tales in our world make us think that if there is any life beyond our own air, it is evil” (*Planet* 137). He has been “conditioned by contemporary fictional representations of creatures in other worlds” especially H.G. Wells’s science fiction which explains that “the inhabitants of space are grotesque, monstrous, and malevolent, invoking fear in human visitants” (Martindale 62). A long time later, the two prisoners Weston and Devine are brought there and questioned by Oyarsa. Weston performs many quaint tricks trying to impress Oyarsa so that he could get his freedom. However, his antics only produce a great deal of laughter. Weston’s “unchallenged high technology superpower with good intentions but a tendency to meddle blithely in other cultures” (Haigh 20) appears only as a ‘bent’ mind to Oyarsa. Weston is taken to be dipped several times in cold water to heal his ‘wounded brain’ but this does not succeed. Weston does not realise that all his talk of the future of
man’s loyalty to humanity” (Planet 157) only reveal his distorted thinking. Oyarsa’s words to Weston are seen as “indictments of contemporary modern Western society” (Rukeyser 23). Oyarsa states:

“I see now how the lord of the silent world has bent you. There are laws that all hnau know, of pity and straight dealing and shame and the like, and one of these is the love of kindred. He has taught you to break all of them except this one, which is not one of the greatest laws; this one he has bent till it becomes folly and has set it up, thus bent, to be a little, blind Oyarsa in your brain. And now you can do nothing but obey it, though if we ask you why it is a law you can give no other reason for it than for all the other and greater laws which it drives you to disobey. Do you know why he has done this?” (Planet 157)

Finally, Oyarsa decides to despatch the two men to earth in their spaceship and gives Ransom an option. He is given full liberty to remain in Malacandra. However, Ransom decides to return to earth. Oyarsa promises to provide eldila to protect Ransom’s life during the space journey, in case Weston and Devine try to kill him. He is also advised to be careful in the future:

“They may yet do much evil in, and beyond, your world. From what you have told me, I begin to see that there are eldila who go down into your air, into the very stronghold of the Bent
One: your world is not so fast shut as was thought in these parts of heaven. Watch those two bent ones. Be courageous. Fight them. And when you have need, some of our people will help. Maleldil will show them to you. It may even be that you and I shall meet again while you are still in the body; for it is not without the wisdom of Maleldil that we have met now and I have learned so much of your world.” (Planet 161)

When Ransom reaches earth in the spaceship and steps out once again on earth, he is thrilled by the raindrops beginning to fall on him and by the feel of solid earth under his feet once again. He stands “in pitch-black night under torrential rain. With every pore of his body he drank it in; with every desire of his heart he embraced the smell of the field about him – a patch of his native planet where grass grew, where cows moved, where presently he would come to hedges and a gate” (Planet 171). As a result of his recent experiences, Ransom now enjoys the smell and sense of objects in nature with a new and preferred enjoyment, for his natural senses have become sharpened and eco-ethically re-defined since his absence from earth. Thus, Lewis, in this novel, effects a greater appreciation and wonder for life forms in other planets.

The second book in the space trilogy, namely Perelandra, which represents ‘Paradise Retained’, is rich with ecological significance. With his creative potency Lewis creates a planet where the “pristine vigor is unabated” (Thoreau, “Writing” 24). Lewis’s description of the planet Perelandra is so
spontaneous that it is “reflective of nature’s wonders and of a sensibility capable of appreciating them” (Branch 287). Ransom is ‘called’ to Perelandra or Venus because he already knows the language spoken there, which is Old Solar or Hrossa-Hlab. He is to travel in a coffin, naked, because the climate and culture in Perelandra will not require clothes. Ransom says the Oyarsa of Malacandra himself will move the coffin to Perelandra. On the specified day, when Ransom is placed in the coffin by his request, his friend Lewis closes the lid and fastens it. This casket deposits Ransom in Perelandra, where Ransom awakens swimming in the sea:

He was riding the foamless swell of an ocean, fresh and cool after the fierce temperatures of Heaven, but warm by earthly standards – as warm as a shallow bay with sandy bottom in a sub-tropical climate. As he rushed smoothly up the great convex hillside of the next wave he got a mouthful of the water. It was hardly at all flavoured with salt; it was drinkable – like fresh water and only, by an infinitesimal degree, less insipid. Though he had not been aware of thirst till now, his drink gave him a quite astonishing pleasure. (Perelandra 37-38)

These are Ransom’s first impressions of the natural environment of Perelandra. After sometime, he sees the floating island and his first impressions are confused:
It was an irregularly shaped object with many curves and re-entrants. It was variegated in colour like a patch-work quilt – flame-colour, ultramarine, crimson, orange, gamboge, and violet. He could not say more about it for the whole glimpse lasted so short a time. Whatever the thing was, it was floating, for it rushed up the slope of the opposite wave and over the summit and out of sight. It sat to the water like a skin, curving as the water curved. It took the wave’s shape at the top, so that for a moment half of it was already out of sight beyond the ridge and the other half still lying on the hither slope. It behaved rather like a mat of weeds on a river – a mat of weeds that takes on every contour of the little ripples you make by rowing past it – but on a very different scale. (*Perelandra* 40)

Thus, his environment is entirely different from anything he has ever experienced on earth and Lewis enables the reader to experience with Ransom, each new sight and sound. His Perelandra “is not about real Nature, but about mentalised nature” (Selvamony 146). Lewis’s art of enchantment lifts the reader to experience the new world:

There was no land in sight. The sky was pure, flat gold like the background of a medieval picture. It looked very distant – as far off as a cirrus cloud looks from earth. The ocean was gold too, in the offing, flecked with innumerable shadows. The nearer waves, though golden where their summits caught the
light, were green on their slopes: first emerald, and lower down a lustrous bottle green, deepening to blue where they passed beneath the shadow of other waves. (Perelandra 38)

The narrative engages the senses of the reader, plunging him into exploring the beauty of Perelandra. Indeed, the environment has “so constantly awakened his sense of wonder” (Branch 287) that Ransom wanders in the wilderness of Perelandra without any fear. Each new experience brings new delights.

Lewis’s eco-sensitivity enables the reader to savour the marvels offered by nature in Perelandra. The tasting of a berry becomes “the paradigm of Ransom’s experience on the planet” (Glover 98). When Ransom finds some globes of yellow fruit hanging in clusters from a tree, he picks one and by chance, his finger punctures the rind:

After a moment’s hesitation he put the little aperture to his lips. He had meant to extract the smallest, experimental sip, but the first taste put his caution all to flight. It was, of course, a taste, just as his thirst and hunger had been thirst and hunger. But then it was so different from every other taste that it seemed mere pedantry to call it a taste at all. It was like the discovery of a totally new genus of pleasures, something unheard of among men, out of all reckoning, beyond all covenant. For one draught of this on earth wars would be fought and nations betrayed. It could not be classified. (Perelandra 46-47)
As the empty gourd falls from his hand, he is inclined to pick a second fruit and repeat the pleasure although his hunger had been appeased. Something within him opposes this idea, and it appears to him better not to taste it again. He recollects now, that on earth, “he had reiterated pleasures not through desire, but in the teeth of desire and in obedience to a spurious rationalism” \textit{(Perelandra 47)} but this is not so in Perelandra. Thus, he takes from nature only so much as to satisfy his hunger for the moment. Some issues like over-consumption involve choices made by the individual and Hoffman states: “Theocentrism calls for thoughtful choices” \textit{(30)}. This kind of ethical reflection endorses Lewis’s belief in man’s moral responsibility towards nature.

 Alone, and away from any human or animal, without awareness of his goal or purpose in this new planet, Ransom becomes absorbed by his natural surroundings especially sun, sky and daylight. Solitude enables him to look more intensely at his surroundings and sharpens his eco-sensitivity. As he looked over his shoulder:

\ldots he saw the whole island ablaze with blue, and across it and beyond it, even to the ends of the world, his own enormous shadow. The sea, far calmer now than he had yet seen it, smoked towards heaven in huge dolomites and elephants of blue and purple vapour, and a light wind, full of sweetness, lifted the hair on his forehead. \textit{(Perelandra 48)}
Sitting cross-legged on the edge of the island, he surveys the place with deep solemnity and considers that: “the day was burning to death” (Perelandra 48). Ransom’s behaviour reflects Lewis’s life. Contemplation of his natural environment had always been Lewis’s habit and he writes in his journal All My Road Before Me that he intensely enjoyed a day taken off from his academic pursuits to go on a walking tour, mostly alone:

A free day, at last. I went out walking at 10 o’clock. It was the most delightful, cool, grey skied summer day. I went up Shotover and down the other side to Wheatley, thence to my right over the railway bridge and up past the old windmill where I once went with Jenkin on bicycles. I was in capital form, getting “thrills” from everything, full of unspecified memories and, for some time, almost free from thought. (50)

Lewis had a love for the outdoors, for natural sights and scenes or animals that he came across. His narrative is similarly concerned with “the place and meaning of human life in the world and in the light of the divine” (Dickerson, Narnia 185).

Contrary to the writings of other science fiction writers who depict life in other planets as fearsome, dangerous and peopled with inhuman monsters, Lewis’s Perelandra is enchanting, alluring and enticing for its fresh and novel experiences. In his recreation of Paradise before the Fall, Lewis imagines a life quite unlike earth, “To be naked yet warm, to wander among summer fruits and lie in sweet heather – all this had led him to count on a
twilit night, a mild midsummer greyness. But before the great apocalyptic colours had died out in the west, the eastern heaven was black” (*Perelandra* 48).

When Ransom lies down for the night, absolute darkness presses on his eyeballs and the darkness is warm:

> Sweet new scents came stealing out of it. The world had no size now. Its boundaries were the length and breadth of his own body and the little patch of soft fragrance which made his hammock, swaying ever more and more gently. Night covered him like a blanket and kept all loneliness from him. The blackness might have been his own room. Sleep came like a fruit which falls into the hand almost before you have touched the stem. (*Perelandra* 49)

This unique picture of life on Perelandra represents “something that may be enjoyed for its own sake, and not without profit” (Dickerson, *Narnia* 185) and hence Lewis suggests that the uniqueness of the place and the wholesomeness of the new feelings undergone by Ransom may be appreciated and enjoyed for themselves.

An interesting aspect of eco-relationship is the inter-species relationship suggested as possible, interesting and educational in Lewis’s interaction with life forms in Perelandra. When Ransom wakes up in the morning, there is a trance-like quality in the experience of seeing a dragon and he thinks he is dreaming. He opens his eyes and “saw a strange
heraldically coloured tree loaded with yellow fruits and silver leaves. Round the base of the indigo stem was coiled a small dragon covered with scales of red gold. He recognised the garden of the Hesperides at once” (Perelandra 49). Ransom ventures to speak to the dragon but receives no response. The reptile or dragon of the lizard type is about the size of a St. Bernard dog, has scales and looks at him almost like a rational creature. It uncoils itself from the tree, gives itself a shake and opens two shining reptilian wings, then waddles and crawls to the water and has a drink. Then it approaches Ransom and nudges him with its cold snout about his knees. Ransom’s response is confused:

He was in great perplexity. Was it rational and was this how it talked? Was it irrational but friendly – and if so, how should he respond? You could hardly stroke a creature with scales! Or was it merely scratching itself against him? At that moment, with a suddenness which convinced him it was only a beast, it seemed to forget all about him, turned away, and began tearing up the herbage with great avidity. Feeling that honour was now satisfied, he also turned away back to the woods. (Perelandra 51)

After sometime, the beast follows him and nudges him again. When he sits down, it deposits its long, heavy head across his legs. Ransom speaks to it in English “‘Do you know,’ he said to it in English, ‘that you are a considerable nuisance?’” (Perelandra 54). Lewis shows an amicable interaction of man
with the animals which is in accordance with the ecocentred ethics such as “seeing animals without hurting them; seeing them in their contexts; teaching about animals; advocating respect for them; and finally knowing them, richly” (Malamud 59). Solitary and friendless, Ransom initiates a gentle and genuine relationship with this animal-creature of another planet:

He decided that he had better try and make friends with it. He stroked the hard dry head, but the creature took no notice. Then his hand passed lower down and found softer surface, or even a chink in the mail. Ah . . . that was where it liked being tickled. It grunted and shot out a long cylindrical slate-coloured tongue to lick him. It rolled round on its back revealing an almost white belly, which Ransom kneaded with his toes. His acquaintance with the dragon prospered exceedingly.

(Perelandra 54)

Ransom enjoys a unique experience with his natural environment when he finds vegetation with branches holding spherical objects reflecting light suggestive of rainbow colouring. He finds innumerable of these globes shimmering and examines one: “Moved by a natural impulse he put out his hand to touch it. Immediately his head, face, and shoulders were drenched with what seemed (in that warm world) an ice-cold shower bath” and “his nostrils filled with a sharp, shrill, exquisite scent that somehow brought to his mind the verse in Pope, ‘die of a rose in aromatic pain’ ” (Perelandra 52). These bubbles are found on trees that draw up water from the ocean and
expel them in this fashion. Each bubble appeared in the size of a pea and then swelled and burst with a faint noise, providing a delicious fragrance and coldness in the air:

Such was the refreshment that he seemed to himself to have been, till now, but half awake. When he opened his eyes – which had closed involuntarily at the shock of moisture – all the colours about him seemed richer and the dimness of the world seemed clarified. A re-enchantment fell upon him. The golden beast at his side seemed no longer either a danger or a nuisance. If a naked man and a wise dragon were indeed the sole inhabitants of this floating paradise, then this also was fitting, for at that moment he had a sensation not of following an adventure but of enacting a myth. (*Perelandra* 52)

Ransom feels an impulse to plunge himself through a whole a lot of those bubbles and to feel that “magical refreshment multiplied tenfold” (*Perelandra* 53), but then, just as suddenly:

. . . he was restrained by the same sort of feeling which had restrained him over-night from tasting a second gourd. He had always disliked the people who encored a favourite air in an opera – That just spoils it had been his comment. But this now appeared to him as a principle of far wider application and deeper moment. This itch to have things over again, as if life were a film that could be unrolled twice or even made to work
backwards . . . was it possibly the root of all evil? (*Perelandra*
53)

In *Perelandra*, the natural environment of trees and their fruits appear
as man’s ally and sustenance provider. The showers from the bubble tree
make him feel fresh and invoke his appetite for food. Walking carefully on
the moving land he moves towards the coast and finds bushes with a rich crop
of oval berries. He picks one and breaks it into two:

The flesh was dryish and bread-like, something of the same
kind as a banana. It turned out to be good to eat. It did not give
the orgiastic and almost alarming pleasure of the gourds, but
rather the specific pleasure of plain food – the delight of
munching and being nourished, a ‘Sober certainty of waking
bliss’. A man, or at least a man like Ransom, felt he ought to
say grace over it; and so he presently did. (*Perelandra* 55)

Thus, Ransom feels compelled to acknowledge divine providence. He also
gains fresh knowledge and realisation that here in Perelandra he is restrained
from plucking more than he needs, while on earth, he would have coveted
more. Thus he fulfils the natural divine law that fruits and animals “will be
yours for food” (*Holy Bible*, Gen. 1.29) but not for the accumulation of
wealth.

The new and different concept of land as something not fixed and
permanent but as something moving in some direction all the time, changing
shape and position, is enchanting as well as disturbing. Ransom himself needs time getting used to the land that changes shape and place:

It was a wonder to see these big mats or carpets of land tossing all around him like yachts in harbour on a rough day – their trees each moment at a different angle just as the masts of the yachts would be. It was a wonder to see some edge of vivid green or velvety crimson come creeping over the top of a wave far above him and then wait till the whole country unrolled itself down the wave’s side for him to study. (Perelandra 56)

In fact, Ransom experiences an intensely elevated experience amidst the natural world of Perelandra. The physical descriptions that “almost overwhelm the narrative before it gets well underway, indicate Lewis’s delight in filling this paradisal world with the sensuous and romantic attraction which had drawn him since childhood. Here, more fully and completely than anywhere else, we feel his commitment to sensual beauty” (Glover 96). All the islands are varied in colouring and sometimes:

. . . his own land and a neighbouring land would be on opposite slopes of a trough, with only a narrow strait of water between them; and then, for the moment, you were cheated with the semblance of a terrestrial landscape. It looked exactly as though you were in a well-wooded valley with a river at the bottom of it. But while you watched, that seeming river did the impossible. It thrust itself up so that the land on either side
sloped downwards from it; and then up farther still and shouldered half the landscape out of sight beyond its ridge; and became a huge greeny-gold hog’s back of water hanging in the sky and threatening to engulf your own land, which now was concave and reeled backwards to the next roller, and rushing upwards, became convex again. (Perelandra 56)

Thus, Lewis takes his reader to other worlds where truth and reality as known on earth are challenged.

Ransom’s meeting with the dragon is soon followed by his meeting some kinds of birds making a musical, chattering noise, appearing to be a little larger than swans. He also finds some dolphin-like fish in the water, spouting columns of rainbow-coloured water from their noses. They have a leader too. With pounding heart, Ransom discovers a human form sitting astride the fish: “... he had seen, in perfect and unmistakable silhouette, the thing on the fish’s back reveal itself as a human form – a human form which stepped ashore, turned with slight inclination of its body towards the fish and then vanished from sight ...” (Perelandra 58).

The Green Lady whom Ransom meets on Perelandra is accompanied strangely by “a throng of beasts and birds as a tall sapling stands among bushes – big pigeon-coloured birds and flame-coloured birds, and dragons, and beaver-like creatures about the size of rats, and heraldic-looking fish in the sea at her feet” (Perelandra 60-61). These animals already have a relationship with the Green Lady, one that Ransom does not yet understand:
They surrounded her ten or twenty deep, all facing her, most of them motionless, but some of them finding their places, as at a ceremony, with delicate noiseless movements. The birds were in long lines and more of them seemed to be alighting on the island every moment and joining these lines. From a wood of bubble-trees behind her half a dozen creatures like very short-legged and elongated pigs – the dachshunds of the pig world – were waddling up to join the assembly. Tiny frog-like beasts, like those he had seen falling in the rain, kept leaping about her, sometimes higher than her head, sometimes alighting on her shoulders; their colours were so vivid that at first he mistook them for kingfishers. Amidst all this she stood looking at him; her feet together, her arms hanging at her sides, her stare level and unafraid, communicating nothing. (*Perelandra* 61)

Quite unexpectedly, at this first meeting between the Green Lady and Ransom, the woman starts laughing, pointing at him, as though asking the other creatures to behold him. She bursts into peals of laughter till she is almost bent double and the creatures, dimly aware that some merriment is going on, began “gambolling, wing-clapping, snorting, and standing upon hind legs” (*Perelandra* 62). As the merriment continued, the wave divided them. It occurs to Ransom to look at himself and realise that he is an odd
spectacle with one leg brownish red and the other white. His whole body had this parti-coloured appearance so that he looked quite absurd.

When Ransom sees the Lady again, she is found conversing with a gazelle-like creature and she looks so calm and unearthly that Ransom wonders if she is human after all: “this creature was not of his race; no windings, however intricate, of any genealogical tree, could ever establish a connection between him and her. In that sense, not one drop in her veins was ‘human.’ The universe had produced her species and his quite independently” (Perelandra 63).

The Green Lady has a unique relationship with the animals on Perelandra. When she arrives, they “raced forward to greet her” (Perelandra 72). The Lady also reciprocated their gesture by welcoming them. However, the manner was not like anything comparable to an action on earth but “there was in her face an authority, in her caresses a condescension, which by taking seriously the inferiority of her adorers made them somehow less inferior – raised them from the status of pets to that of slaves” (Perelandra 72). The Lady and the animals understand one another very well and are able to communicate without much difficulty: “As Ransom reached her she stooped and whispered something in the ear of the yellow creature, and then, addressing the dragon, bleated to it almost in its own voice. Both of them, having received their congé, darted back into the woods” (Perelandra 72). Thus, Lewis expresses how the Lady is holding a communion with the natural
world. In fact, this shows “a sense of familial relationship with the flora and fauna” (Branch 288).

In *Perelandra*, readers are invited to appreciate creation before the Fall as a place quickened by real relationships or real ethical responsibility between the woman and the other animal creatures. The woman has the responsibility towards beasts to “make them older every day” (*Perelandra* 72). Lewis is suggesting that man is capable of caring for other beasts and in fact, not to care is to be less than human. According to Schmitz, “if we do not care, then we are missing something. For a human being, to lack a broad respect for living things and beautiful things and well-functioning things is to be stunted in a way” (63). As the Lady grows, the beasts grow along with her. The eco-relationship is mutually beneficial.

When the Green Lady calls to the fish, they respond by coming towards her, “spouting, curling their bodies, pressing upon one another to get nearer, and the nearest ones nosing the land. They had not only the colour but the smoothness of silver. The biggest were about nine feet long and all were thick-set and powerful-looking” (*Perelandra* 86). With great consideration, the Lady selects two of them. They were silver coloured and the two that were selected come close and lay still with their tails to the shore, gently moving their fins. The Lady instructs the man and teaches him how to ride them.

Meanwhile, all the other fishes follow the Lady and Ransom playfully in some distance. The Lady explains that she tries not to choose the same fish
always and that it would be hard if those she did not choose were not even allowed to follow her and this reveals her moral responsibility towards these fishes. Hence, respect and courtesy towards all living creatures, especially animals is joyfully fulfilled in Perelandra, the planet where only the Green Lady and her King are at present alive. Merton claims that God’s love is “manifested in all His creatures, down to the tiniest, and in the wonderful interrelationship between them” (qtd. in Hoffman 10) so that man is by nature eco-centric.

In the Fixed Land, to which the Green Lady brings Ransom, he finds many fluffy objects covering the turf and then realises these are animals that the Lady calls Piebalds:

In a moment they were bounding all about the Lady and welcoming her. They were white beasts with black spots – about the size of sheep but with ears so much larger, noses so much mobile, and tails so much longer, that the general impression was rather of enormous mice. Their claw-like or almost hand-like paws were clearly built for climbing, and the bluish turf was their food. After a proper interchange of courtesies with these creatures, Ransom and the Lady continued their journey. (Perelandra 88)

Thus, the Lady is kindly recognised and welcomed by the beasts wherever she goes. There is no sense of one being inferior or superior to the other: ‘However I teach the beasts they will never be better than I. But it is a joy
beyond all. Not that it is better joy than ours. Every joy is beyond all others. The fruit we are eating is always the best fruit of all” (Perelandra 93). Hence the man-beast relationship is joyful and peaceful, and man’s dominion “over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock . . .” (Holy Bible, Gen. 1.26) is illustrated in eco-friendly “loyalties, affections and convictions” (Hoffman 9).

The day after Weston’s arrival, Ransom, while refreshing himself by standing waist-deep in the water, finds a fish close by trying to get his attention:

. . . watching how the beast nosed towards him and kept itself as near the shallows as it dared, it was borne in upon him that it was trying to attract his attention. Could it have been sent? The thought had no sooner darted through his mind than he decided to make the experiment. He laid his hand across the creature’s back, and it did not flinch from his touch. Then with some difficulty he scrambled into a sitting position across the narrow part behind its head, and while he was doing this it remained as nearly stationary as it could; but as soon as he was firmly in the saddle it whisked itself about and headed for the sea. (Perelandra 114)

He travels for more than an hour on the fish and soon appears to be travelling beyond the heavens and the surface of the sea. Then, there appear before him bluish-green streaks of light:
A whole world of phosphorescent creatures seemed to be at play not far from the surface – coiling eels and darting things in complete armour, and then heraldically fantastic shapes to which the sea-horse of our own waters would be commonplace. They were all round him – twenty or thirty of them often in sight at once. And mixed with all this riot of sea-centaurs and sea-dragons he saw yet stranger forms: fishes, if fishes they were, whose forward part was so nearly human in shape that when he first caught sight of them he thought he had fallen into a dream and shook himself to awake. But it was no dream.

(Perelandra 115)

Thus Ransom is allowed to witness the majestic play of various kinds of sea-creatures including mermen and mermaids with faces “like human faces asleep, or faces in which humanity slept while some other life, neither bestial nor diabolic, but merely elvish, out of our orbit, was irre relevantly awake” (Perelandra 115). He is drawn by a certain cord of longing and gets down from the fish, which has stopped moving. Crawling onto the island, he finds to his delight, all kinds of fruit trees all about him and plucks and eats a fruit. Wearied with the walking and climbing, he sinks into sleep. When he wakens several hours later, he hears the conversation between Weston and the Green Lady. Now he understands that it is towards this that the fish has brought him.

Weston’s intervention into the peaceful atmosphere of Perelandra is the beginning of evil in this island. Weston’s diabolic nature becomes evident
when he begins destroying the colourful frogs. Even as Ransom watches, Weston begins “tearing a frog – quietly and almost surgically inserting his forefinger, with its long sharp nail, under the skin behind the creature’s head and ripping it open” (Perelandra 124) and this act of deliberately killing something or “destroying something for no good reason is the moral equivalent of vandalism” (Schmidtz 65). This creature hates all living things with pure hatred, just as the Green Lady loves all beasts with pure affection. Gerald Root explains that “the loss of his humanity is seen in his disregard of the animals” (7). Ransom recognises Weston’s physical form but realises that it is now possessed by something else:

He saw a man who was certainly not ill, to judge from his easy stance and the powerful use he had just been making of his fingers. He saw a man who was certainly Weston, to judge from his height and build and colouring and features. In that sense he was quite recognisable. But the terror was that he was also unrecognisable. He did not look like a sick man: but he looked very like a dead one. The face which he raised from torturing the frog had that terrible power which the face of a corpse sometimes has of simply rebuffing every conceivable human attitude one can adopt towards it. The expressionless mouth, the unwinking stare of the eyes, something heavy and inorganic in the very folds of the cheek, said clearly: ‘I have
features as you have, but there is nothing in common between you and me’. (*Perelandra* 124)

Ransom recognizes that it is a diabolic figure: “It did not defy goodness, it ignored it to the point of annihilation” (*Perelandra* 125). He perceives that he “had never before seen anything but half-hearted and uneasy attempts at evil. This creature was whole-hearted. The extremity of its evil had passed beyond all struggle into some state which bore a horrible similarity to innocence. It was beyond vice as the Lady was beyond virtue” (*Perelandra* 125) and it is then that Ransom realises his mission to Perelandra: “it was clear beyond all evasion that this was what he had been sent for” (*Perelandra* 126). Ransom’s mission is to overcome Weston, prevent ecological disaster and preserve the sanctity of Perelandra.

While the days and nights after Weston’s arrival are spent in continuous conversation between Weston and the Green Lady, the evil Weston (or the possessed Un-man as Weston now seems to be) keeps persuading the Lady to disobey Maleldil, but the Lady’s untainted goodness is her protection, just as Maleldil’s voice also comes to her now and then, to keep her from disobeying. When Weston’s attempts to make the Lady fall into his trap seem to fail, he turns his evil anger towards the beasts and plants and Ransom does what he can to prevent Weston from destroying the animals:

Whenever it got out of sight, or even a few yards ahead, it would make a grab at any beast or bird within its reach and pull
out some fur or feathers. Ransom tried whenever possible to get between it and its victim. On such occasions there were nasty moments when the two stood facing each other. It never came to a fight, for the Un-man merely grinned and perhaps spat and fell back a little, but before that happened Ransom usually had opportunity to discover how terribly he feared it.

(*Perelandra* 146-47)

The evil Un-man attacks plants as well “when the Un-man could not get animals it was content with plants. It was fond of cutting their outer rinds through with its nails, or grubbing up roots, or pulling off leaves, or even tearing up handfuls of turf” (*Perelandra* 147). The Un-man also obtains the colourful feathers from the birds to clothe the Green Lady and to show her how beautiful she looks when she is dressed or robed. The Lady’s failure to realise that the feathers have been robbed from the birds is shown in her words: “‘He has found the feathers somewhere, said the Lady carelessly. They drop them’” (*Perelandra* 154). Fortunately, after sometime, she loses interest in the robe of feathers and discards it.

Weston or the Un-man goes all out to wean the Lady away from her obedience to Maleldil. The narration and dialogue go on page after page as Weston draws the Lady to think of the attraction of living on the Fixed Land and of learning new truths without the help of Maleldil. In this “almost perfect piece of narrative art,” the reader is worn down almost as Ransom is being worn down, and “the reader is subjected, as far as narrative can achieve
it, to the very thing that Ransom is being subjected to” (Howard 109). Finally just when Ransom fears that this simply cannot go on, suddenly and sharply, in the solid darkness, Ransom “knew that Maleldil was not absent” (*Perelandra* 159). Ransom argues within himself that there is little he can do to help the Green Lady until his voluble self lapsed into silence. A voice speaks to encourage Ransom: “‘It is not for nothing that you are named Ransom,’ ” and again: “‘My name also is Ransom’” (*Perelandra* 168). Subsequently, Ransom is led to a point of total commitment and total conviction: “the thing was neither more nor less dreadful than it had been before. The only difference was that he knew – almost as a historical proposition – that it was going to be done” (*Perelandra* 170).

Ransom’s war with the Monster Un-man, which brings death to the animals and plants and attempts to destroy the Green Lady’s harmonious relationship with her co-creatures and his subsequent defeat of this devil after a prolonged conflict, is the gospel of ecology in *Perelandra*. The conflict is also ordained such that no innocent living thing has to witness this ugly and bloody evil: “It seemed that the Lord God had cast that whole island or perhaps that whole world into deep sleep. For a moment this gave him a sense of desolation, but almost at once he rejoiced that no memory of blood and rage should be left imprinted in these happy minds” (*Perelandra* 173). The creatures remain untainted and unaffected by the evil released in the combat. As the two are locked in combat attacking each other tooth and claw, Ransom chases his enemy all over the island:
They passed through a flock of large orange-coloured birds all fast asleep, each on one leg, each with its head beneath its wing, so that they looked like a grove of formal and flowery shrubs. They picked their steps where pairs and families of the yellow wallabies lay on their backs with eyes fast shut and their small forepaws folded on their breasts as if they were crusaders carved on tombs. They stooped beneath branches which were bowed down because on them lay the tree-pigs, making a comfortable noise like a child’s snore. (Perelandra 179)

The combat between good and evil or between man and Satan is fought for gaining control over the innocent Green Lady and all her loving creatures that are dwelling in harmony, with joy and peace in the paradise Perelandra. Wang Nuo states that when “representing the relation between nature and man, ecoliterature stresses on man’s responsibility and duty to nature: it earnestly calls for protecting the natural world” (47-48). As Ransom holds ecological responsibility he strives to protect Perelandra from its destroyer.

In his struggle against the evil Un-man, Ransom discovers the real meaning of hate. As he begins to distinguish the sin from the sinner, he begins also, to be filled with a perfect hatred for sin and instead of being horrified, “the joy came from finding at last what hatred was made for” (Perelandra 178). Ransom’s grappling with the Devil and “the sheer physical grossness of the fight” (113) is described page after page, dramatized at agonising length bringing clarity to “the distinction between flesh and spirit,
nature and supernature, history and myth” (Howard 114), and Lewis enables
the reader to follow the fantastic chase, in and out of the shadows, up and
down the moving valleys, mountains and ridges, through fields, woods and
water with surprise and excitement. Suddenly the Un-man mounts a huge
fish and speeds away. Ransom also follows on a fish. Soon it seems that all
of nature has joined the chase after the Un-man:

All this time the Un-man rode on before him, up-wave and
down-wave, and the fishes followed and Ransom followed the
fishes. There seemed to be more of them now, as if the chase
had met other shoals and gathered them up into itself in
snowball fashion: and soon there were creatures other than fish.
Birds with long necks like swans – he could not tell their
colour for they looked back against the sky – came, wheeling at
first, overhead, but afterwards they settled in long straight files
– all following the Un-man. (Perelandra 182)

The chase thus gains in ecological significance and magnitude, for the
man is enemy of all natural life. As darkness falls, the intensity of the chase
decreases, Ransom lies down to rest on his fish and feels strangely comforted
and unified with the fish, for “it gave him the illusion of sharing in its strong
bestial life, as if he were himself becoming a fish” (Perelandra 184). Soon
he meets the water people or Mermen swimming around him and feeding on
some kinds of seaweed. Feeling hungry himself, he tries to eat some of these
and as he tasted it, “it gave knowledge as well as pleasure, though not a
knowledge that can be reduced to words,” for “as soon as he had eaten a few mouthfuls of the seaweed he felt his mind oddly changed” (Perelandra 185) and he is assaulted by doubts and begins to think that it is all merely a dream. He realises that something in this food is distracting his mind. Just then, Weston appears and drags down Ransom into the sea-water: “the waters closed over his head: and still his enemy pulled him down into the warm depth, and down farther yet to where it was no longer warm” (Perelandra 196).

When Ransom emerges successful from the watery underworld, the battle continues. Ransom is seen astride his enemy, cracking its ribs and claspings its throat, so that “long after the creature’s struggles had ceased he did not dare to relax his grip” (Perelandra 197). While they fought they had fallen into a severe subterranean chasm and in the darkness, Ransom is uncertain if the enemy is truly dead. After many hours, he moves forward, in an ascent, keeping contact with the roof by raising his arms. He comes to a small pool, drinks and is greatly refreshed. He finds himself in a very large cave and follows a stream until he sees a small light. The light comes from a lighted cave above, through something like a funnel. By standing on a pile of stones, Ransom reaches up above his head, catches the vegetation on each side and struggles up through the chimney-like opening.

As Ransom emerges from the dark hole, he is blinded by light and looking over a cliff, finds a fire perhaps thousands of feet below him and he cannot bear the heat or light and moves away from it. As he sits down, a
human form crawls out of the cave. Ransom recognises it as the Un-man, “dragging its broken leg and with its lower jaw sagging open like that of a corpse, it raised itself to a standing position” (Perelandra 208). Ransom yells at the Un-man and picking up a big, jagged stone, hurls it at the Un-man with the words: “‘In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost’” (Perelandra 209) and the Un-man falls like a pencil, smashed to bits. Taking no chances, Ransom shoves the body over the cliff into the sea of fire. Then returning to the stream, he drinks deeply and sleeps soundly, uttering, “‘Glory be to God, I’m tired’” (Perelandra 210), for he has fulfilled his mission. There is now a sense of relief and appreciation for Ransom’s victory over evil.

Ransom’s eco-appreciation evidently makes him respectful of all other species in the other worlds. When he awakens from his long sleep after destroying the Un-man, he looks upon four great earth-beetles, crawling two by two, drawing behind them a flat car on which stands upright, a mantled form, huge, slender, and majestic in form. Ransom is awestruck when he recognises that there are other life forms equal to him in significance and value:

That thing, that swathed form in its chariot, was no doubt his fellow creature. It did not follow that they were equals or had an equal right in the under-land. A long time after this came the drumming – the boom-ba-ba-boom-boom out of pitch darkness, distant at first, then all around him, then dying away
after endless prolongation of echoes in the black labyrinth.

*(Perelandra 211)*

Similarly, somewhere else, he finds “great halls still dimly illuminated and full of unknown mineral wealth that sparkled and danced in the light and mocked his eyes as if he were exploring a hall of mirrors by the help of a pocket torch” (*Perelandra* 210) and walking through a vast cathedral space, artistically created, he finds “two great thrones at one end and chairs on either hand too large for human occupants” (*Perelandra* 210-11). These are mysteries that Ransom never grasped before but he now believes that inhabitants other than man occupied these places. Thus, Lewis’s gospel of ecology presents the idea that while humans have an appropriate place in the universe, so also other species occupy their own places. Lewis draws the distinction between life forms but also invites readers to appreciate and accept them as they are.

As Ransom wonders at the environment that contains varied life forms, he feels that he is standing on holy or sacred ground. It “appeared to Ransom that there might, if a man could find it, be some way to renew the old Pagan practice of propitiation of the local gods of unknown places in such fashion that it was no offence to God Himself but only a prudent and courteous apology for trespass” (*Perelandra* 211).

Lewis’s concern for the safety and well-being of creatures other than himself brings him into harmony with his environment. In Lewis’s fiction, “to mean well indicates future redemption” (Filmer 156). As he contemplates
the strangeness and grandeur of the place, his feet slips on a slippery surface and he falls into the swift-flowing water that carries him forward through passages of “blackness into greyness and then into an inexplicable chaos of semi-transparent blues and greens and whites” (*Perelandra* 212), through arches and caves, and then into broad day light and deposits him in the shallows of a great pool. Ransom feels too weak to move and rolls on to a blue turf. The place is covered with mist and dew. At his side, he finds a cliff covered with bright vegetation and rich clusters of grape-like fruit. Reaching out he plucks and eats till he falls asleep. Thus, the environment provides natural sustenance.

A period of convalescence follows Ransom’s adventure with his enemy, when the stream of water carries him to a place where he eats and takes rest for days and weeks without fear:

> How long he lay beside the river at the cavern mouth eating and sleeping and waking only to eat and sleep again, he has no idea. He thinks it was only a day or two, but from the state of his body when this period of convalescence ended I should imagine it must have been more like a fortnight or three weeks. It was a time to be remembered only in dreams as we remember infancy. (*Perelandra* 213)

Thus, nature provides both food and rest. He has rest amidst natural surroundings and “he was breast-fed by the planet Venus herself: unweaned till he moved from that place” (*Perelandra* 213). This sound and balanced
eco-relationship established between the man Ransom and nature is described by Lewis as a Sabbath covenant relationship where the three-in-one presence brings his mind healing:

One is the endless sound of rejoicing water. Another is the delicious life that he sucked from the clusters which almost seemed to bow themselves unasked into his upstretched hands.

The third is the song. Now high in air above him, now welling up as if from glens and valleys far below, it floated through his sleep and was the first sound at every waking. It was formless as the song of a bird, yet it was not a bird’s voice. As a bird’s voice is to a flute, so this was to a cello: low and ripe and tender, full-bellied, rich and golden-brown: passionate too, but not with the passions of men. *(Perelandra 213)*

As Ransom undergoes his Sabbath rest he is weaned so gently from this state of rest that his consciousness of his environment returns very gradually to him. He finds cliffs and rocks around him, and a lawn of blue turf, which ended suddenly, leading the river down in a series of cataracts. Like a nature poet, the writer sketches the scene vividly:

The slope was covered with flowers which shook continually in a light breeze. It went down a long way and ended in a winding and wooded valley which curled out of sight on his right hand round a majestic slope: but beyond that, lower down – so much lower down as to be almost incredible – one caught the point of
mountain tops, and beyond that, fainter yet, the hint of still lower valleys, and then a vanishing of everything in golden haze. On the opposite side of this valley the earth leaped up in great sweeps and folds of almost Himalayan height to the red rocks. They were not red like Devonshire cliffs: they were true rose-red, as if they had been painted. (*Perelandra* 214)

All the while, the tender song continues and the mists keep appearing and vanishing “in a veil of saffron or very pale gold and reappearing again – almost as if the golden sky-roof, which indeed looked only a few feet above the mountain-tops, were opening and pouring down riches upon the world” (*Perelandra* 215). All the wounds in Ransom’s body continue to heal, except the wound in his heel – which has been inflicted by some human teeth.

Having recovered sufficient strength, Ransom sets out following the watercourse, down the hill. The descent brings no weariness and the turf is soft and springy. He approaches a forest of little trees “whose trunks were only about two and a half feet high; but from the top of each trunk there grew long streamers which did not rise in the air but flowed in the wind downhill and parallel to the ground” (*Perelandra* 217). Ransom blends with his natural environment, wading knee deep in a continually rippling sea of streamers, blue in colour, and feels “the soft, almost impalpable, caresses of the long thin leaves on his flesh, the low, singing, rustling, whispering music, and the frolic movement all about him” (*Perelandra* 217). Ransom feels a deep joy in this natural environment which he calls his readers to share with him, as his
heart begins “beating with that almost formidable sense of delight which he had felt before in Perelandra” (*Perelandra* 217). The landscape in Perelandra, “whose contours, textures, and colours elicit from Ransom not only awe and delight at new sights but also an intensifying of desire for *more than this*” (Howard 92) evokes similar feelings in the readers.

Ransom encounters other worldly creatures when he is seated amidst the dwarf forests in the rustling stream with its whispering music. As the streamers growing from the trees flow over his head, they form a blue transparent roof “continually moving and casting an endless dance of lights and shapes upon its mossy floor” (*Perelandra* 218). He finds many dwarf-like creatures moving hither and thither, which look at first like insects but are really tiny mammals:

> There were many mountain mice, exquisite scale models of those he had seen on the Forbidden Island, each about the size of a bumble bee. There were little miracles of grace which looked more like horses than anything he had yet seen on this world, though they resembled proto-hippos rather than his modern representative. (*Perelandra* 218)

He carefully avoids stepping on these creatures, and continues to wade down the stream. The deep singing that he continues to hear is now loud and so full of melody that he searches for its origin. Whenever Ransom makes a noise, the song ceases and when he halts, the song comes forth. By advancing with
great caution, Ransom stalks it till it is in full view, singing because it thinks it is not being watched:

It sat upright like a dog, black and sleek and shiny, but its shoulders were high above Ransom’s head, and the forelegs on which they were pillared were like young trees and the wide soft pads on which they rested were large as those of a camel. The enormous rounded belly was white, and far up above the shoulders the neck rose like that of a horse. The head was in profile from where Ransom stood – the mouth wide open as it sang of joy in thick-coming trills, and the music almost visibly rippled in its glossy throat. (Perelandra 219)

The creature ceases singing when it sees Ransom, and moves away but when he calls to it, it comes near, and “put its velvet nose into his hand and endured his touch; but almost at once it darted back and, bending its long neck, buried its head in its paws”, and then darts away, wishing ever to be “a sound and only a sound in the thickest centre of untravelled woods” (Perelandra 220).

Ransom continues his journey, emerging from the woods, where he had met the singing beast, and keeps ascending, feeling neither lonely nor afraid. At night he sleeps between the ripple-trees with “the sweet-scented, wind-proof, delicately-whispering roof above his head” (Perelandra 222) and in the morning, resumes his journey.

As Ransom nears the pass between the mountain peaks, he begins to feel a strange sensation of “perfect duty to enter that secret place which the
peaks were guarding combined with an equal sense of trespass” (*Perelandra* 222) and reflects that it is a holy as well an unholy act that he is performing, for he feels Maleldil bidding him to proceed. Soon he finds himself treading on ground covered by flowers, shaped like a lily but tinted like a rose, and walking on these flowers, he arrives at a place between the two peaks:

> He saw a valley, a few acres in size, as secret as a valley in the top of a cloud: a valley pure rose-red, with ten or twelve of the glowing peaks about it, and in the centre a pool, married in pure unrippled clearness to the gold of the sky. The lilies came down to its very edge and lined all its bays and headlands. Yielding without resistance to the awe which was gaining upon him, he walked forward with slow paces and bowed head. (*Perelandra* 222)

Nearing the place, he finds a coffin on the water’s edge, open and empty, with a lid lying beside it. He realises it is prepared for his return to earth. He finds himself in the presence of two eldils who take on forms that can be visible to Ransom and also become visible as “a flush of diverse colours began at about the shoulders and streamed up the necks and flickered over face and head and stood out around the head like plumage or a halo” (*Perelandra* 228). Afterwards Ransom could never remember these colours. Lewis introduces ceremonies and verses in the meeting between Ransom and the other worldly powers. The Oyarsa of Mars gleams “with cold and morning colours” and the Oyarsa of Venus glows with “a warm splendour, full of the suggestion of
teeming vegetable life” (*Perelandra* 229). Ransom has many questions and some are answered. For others, Ransom is told, “‘there are no holding places in your mind for an answer to that’” (*Perelandra* 232). Thus, through *Perelandra* Lewis encourages a sense of awe and appreciative wonder towards the natural world. In his portrayal of an enchanting planet, Lewis also highlights man’s harmonious relationship with his co-creatures.

*That Hideous Strength* is the final book in the space trilogy and a deeply impressive fairy tale for grownups. While the book “focuses on man’s attempts to control nature and to redefine the very essence of man” (Sullivan 1) it also reveals a sharp contrast between those who are consciously aware of the beautiful and marvellous in nature with those who are insensitive to the wonders in nature. Written at the end of World War II, its message continues to be relevant today, for it mainly recalls Lewis’s breath-taking insight into the human condition. The novel recalls the horrors of the Third Reich in Nazi Germany when mercy killing of the sick, disabled and mentally retarded took place with the Nazis exterminating those who did not fit into their vision of the Fatherland. *That Hideous Strength* is partly a “reaction to the flawed scientific philosophy of the Nazis” (Sullivan 1), whose scientific experiments in eugenics and social engineering led to the killing of those who were not of Aryan descent. Lewis also explores man’s desire to use biotechnology to attain total control of nature and the environment in order to gain his own immortality. However, the novel ends hopefully because the eco-friendly generation defeat the evil purposes of the greedy modern establishment.
The eco-friendly characters show “a broad respect for living or beautiful or well-functioning things” (Schmidtz 63). Cecil Dimble and Margaret Dimble are humane, kindly folk who love the natural environment and their well-kept beautiful garden is esteemed and famous. Jane Studdock herself finds joy in looking at this garden of the Dimbles for she has had her early education in “books grounded in wholesome imagination, such as George MacDonald’s children’s tales, Shakespeare, and Jane Austen’s Mansfield Park” (D. Nelson). It comes as a rude shock to Jane when Mrs. Dimble tells her that they are going to lose their garden and the house as well because the college has refused to renew their lease, in order to be able to sell the property to the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.) establishment. This is the result when “the claims of sentiment against progress and beauty against utility” (Hideous 13) are defeated in the debate at the college meeting in the recent past. Within a few days, without prior notice, the Dimbles are turned out of their house and arrive at Jane’s house for a temporary stay. Mrs. Dimble discusses how swiftly the N.I.C.E., who now has legal right, is taking charge:

“There’s no question of trying to live on the far side of the river any longer, even if they’d let us. All the poplars are going down. All those nice little cottages by the church are going down. I found poor Ivy – that’s your Mrs. Maggs, you know – in tears. Poor things! They do look dreadful when they cry on top of powder. She’s being turned out too; she’s had enough
troubles in her life without this. I was glad to get away. The men were so horrible. Three big brutes came to the back door asking for hot water and went on so that they frightened Martha out of her wits. A sort of special constable sent them away. What? Oh yes, there are dozens of what look like policemen all over the place, and I didn’t like the look of them either. Cecil and I both thought the same thing: we thought, it’s almost as if we’d lost the war.” (Hideous 49)

Mother Dimble like Ransom embraces both man and beast with equal regard. She symbolizes “those cognitive and affective characteristics that lead us to see human life as especially worthy of esteem” (Schmidtz 64). Later, when she prepares the rooms in the lodge so that the Maggs family would have a place to stay as soon as Tom Maggs was released from prison, “the task became something between a game and a ritual” in her hands and “it woke in Jane memories of sixteenth century epithalamions – old superstitions, jokes, and sentimentalities about bridal beds and bowers” (Hideous 185). In Ransom’s words: “ ‘Mother Dimble is friends with all that world as Merlinus is friends with the woods and rivers’ ” (Hideous 193).

Jane is at first unaware that she herself has a supernatural gift as a seer. Her nightmarish dreams lead her to seek help from the Dimbles who are understanding and friendly. They direct her to Miss Ironwood at St. Anne’s. The St. Anne’s household represents traditional civilization and sound ecological relationship. St. Anne’s is located in a place of beautiful natural
surroundings. The place is usually quiet and wholesome solitude is available at all times. When Jane first takes refuge in St. Anne’s, she is amazed to find that people outside her circle can be kind, funny, helpful, frank and open-minded. In this amiable habitat, Jane talks comfortably of her marriage difficulties with the Fisher-King Ransom and enjoys genial and amusing kitchen-talk with the others. Ransom, the head of the St. Anne’s household, has a sound ecological relationship with man and beast. The Dimbles are provided shelter at St. Anne’s when their own house is torn apart by the N.I.C.E.. Jane also ends up in St. Anne’s when the women police harass her and seek to capture her for her supernatural gift. Ivy Maggs who had been Jane’s housemaid is offered protection in St. Anne’s when she is driven out of the town by the N.I.C.E..

A very interesting and delightful inhabitant of St. Anne’s is Mr. Bultitude the bear whom everybody loves and tolerates. Jane first meets him when she finds him inside her bathroom:

Inside, sitting up on its hunkers beside the bath, was a great, snuffly, wheezy, beady-eyed, loose-skinned, gor-bellied brown bear, which after a great many reproaches, exhortations, pushes, and blows from Mrs. Maggs, heaved up its enormous bulk and came slowly out into the passage. ‘Why don’t you go out and take some exercise this lovely afternoon, you great lazy thing?’ said Mrs. Maggs. ‘Don’t be frightened, Mrs. Studdock. He’ll let you stroke him.’ (Hideous 97-98)
Thus, St. Anne’s characterizes security, shelter and affection for both man and beast. Dale Nelson explains: “St. Anne’s is a household . . . the members of the community raise some of their own food in gardens, a greenhouse, and a piggery. Everyone shares in the labor. They seem to enjoy it. The St. Anne’s fellowship is hospitable.” Here is visible proof that “the human race can live in harmony with nature on a human scale, decently in ‘glad poverty,’ not in destitution but with a snug, hard-working frugality” (qtd. in D. Nelson).

Opposed to the St. Anne’s household is an evil group of conspirators, satirically presented as the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.), which is involved in a diabolical plot to take over the Earth by remaking humanity through its agenda of social and genetic engineering. In his preface to the novel, Lewis admits, “the outer rim of that devilry had to be shown” where man’s ultra-rational philosophies are anti-nature in the extreme. The man named Wither represents dark magic while Frost represents the modern nationalism. Mark, the scholarly and young agnostic husband of Jane is recruited into this modern Babel. He undergoes training that is intended to destroy any sentiments that could have humanized him. His training includes scrutiny of surrealistic art such as a blasphemous Last Supper painting.

The organisation named N.I.C.E. seeks control over Bragdon Wood because it hopes to unearth the buried magician named Merlin and enlist his supernatural power to take control over all mankind. Hence, their interest in buying the property is motivated by a greed for power. Bragdon Wood which
is a beautiful and ancient forest is a part of Bracton College and considered ecologically valuable by the older generation. In fact, very few are allowed into this sacred place. As one goes through the college to reach Bragdon Wood, a “sense of gradual penetration into a holy of holies” settles on the person. The visitor has to enter “a cool, tunnel-like passage, nearly dark at midday” and pass through the cloister of a small quadrangle, and the chapel as “the hoarse, heavy noise of the works of a great and old clock comes to you from somewhere overhead” (*Hideous* 12). Then as he passes a row of elms and a wall, he hears the sound of running water and the cooing of pigeons and as he continues walking, he finds himself crossing a bridge and the dark-brown Wynd flowing beneath him and finally enters the centre of the Wood. In the centre of Bragdon Wood is a well with steps going down to it, and “the archaeologists were agreed that the masonry was very late British-Roman work, done on the very eve of the Anglo-Saxon invasion” (*Hideous* 13). In the fourteenth century, it came to be known as Merlin’s well.

Unfortunately, Bracton College, where Bragdon Wood is situated faces a financial crisis. The Bursar declares the requirement of a huge amount for the repair of a broken wall of the Wood and also for the rectification of the stipends of Junior Fellows. As the remunerations received by the Junior Fellows are insufficient to meet the expenses of their residence in college they appeal for a rise in their stipend. A society has also sent letters calling for the preservation of ancient monuments in the college Wood. On the other hand, the organisation called N.I.C.E. has planned to buy a part
of the Bragdon Wood for their site and offers an astonishing figure which will be enough to meet all the financial necessities of the college. When this news is heard, the members at the college meeting feel most enthusiastic. The advantages of “the sale discovered themselves one by one like ripe fruit dropping into the hand. It solved the problem of the wall: it solved the problem of protecting ancient monuments: it solved the financial problem: it looked like solving the problem of the junior Fellows’ stipends” (Hideous 16). Thus, the college decides that their financial security is more significant than Bragdon Wood.

When Canon Jewel, one of the die-hards at the Bracton College tries to interrupt the selling of the Wood by relating his sentimental attachment towards it, he is silenced and overridden. Moreover, the utilitarian mind of man is reluctant to admit his relationship with the natural world and thereby discards all sorts of sentiments. The College Committee regards that the advent of N.I.C.E. in Edgestow, rather than in Oxford or Cambridge, would enhance its fame, its power and ultimately its wealth. In the view of Dickerson: “Any consideration of value of Bragdon Wood other than utilitarian value – any consideration of its beauty, or its historical value, or simply its value as a wood, a place of peace and sanctuary, where birds, sheep and men are nurtured – is dismissed as mere sentiment” (Narnia 210-11). Thus, the invaluable Wood is considered valueless by both the N.I.C.E. and the College Committee.
When N.I.C.E. takes charge, the landscape of the Wood is rapidly marred, and the beautiful natural environment is sacrificed for establishing countless palatial buildings. The common people lose their houses and jobs, even without being given prior notice. Lewis describes the virtual raping of the land and forests going on all around the centre of the N.I.C.E. activities. According to Lewis: “Man destroys or enslaves every species he can” (Fern-Seed 91). Except for a chosen minority, all other life forms are considered unnecessary and therefore must be destroyed: “‘I don’t mean only insects and bacteria. There’s far too much life of every kind about, animal and vegetable. We haven’t really cleared the place yet. All that is to be gone into. The third problem is man himself’” (Hideous 26). Their antagonistic attitude to nature is revealed in their intention to replace the inefficient trees of nature with metallic trees. Thus, the man who lives in an era of urbanization, fails to relate with nature or to remember that “we are nonetheless animals, two-legged sacks of meat and blood and bone dependent on the whole living planet for our survival” (Sanders 194). Neither does he have any sense of wonder for all that is beautiful in nature.

The N.I.C.E. is headed by men who have little care for traditional values or moral ethics. They have succeeded in bringing to life the head of an executed criminal, namely Alcasan and are in contact with supra-physical intelligences called ‘macrobes’ who will soon dominate the people who work under the N.I.C.E.. However, a few men are not aware of the evil purposes of this organisation. One such person is Mark, who is in awe of Curry and his
gang. Mark hopes to improve his financial status by getting proper employment and is misled when Feverstone explains to Mark that they must “choose the right side” which is the winning side. According to Feverstone, man is a problem, and “man has got to take charge of man” which means “some men have got to take charge of the rest” (Hideous 26) which amounts to:

“. . . sterilisation of the unfit, liquidation of backward races, selective breeding. Then real education, including pre-natal education. By real education I mean one that makes the patient what it wants infallibly: whatever he or his parents try to do about it. Of course, it’ll have to be mainly psychological at first. But we’ll get on to biochemical conditioning in the end and direct manipulation of the brain.” (Hideous 26-27)

Such changes are being manipulated in order to create a new type of man. In fact, the N.I.C.E. is in need of powers to experiment on criminals. The evil characters of N.I.C.E. are all vivisectionists who join in a “ruthless, non-moral utilitarianism” in which the “animals, are already the victims” (Dock 228). In his visit to Belbury Mark comes to know of “an immense programme of vivisection, . . . all manner of trumpeting, bayings, screams, laughter even, which shuddered and protested for a moment and then died away into mutterings and whines” (Hideous 64-65). Lewis makes “a clear link in these books between evil characters and the ill-treatment of animals” (Root 7). George Orwell in his accurate portrayal of a future police state in 1984,
commented on Lewis’s book *That Hideous Strength* in the Manchester Evening News in 1945 as follows:

> All superfluous life is to be wiped out, all natural forces tamed, the common people are to be used as slaves and vivisection subjects by the ruling caste of scientists, who even see their way to conferring immortal life upon themselves. Man, in short, is to storm the heavens and overthrow the gods, or even to become a god himself. (Taylor)

Mark and his wife appear in opposite camps in the battle between England and her enemies. Mark is attracted to the N.I.C.E. who promise him employment, power and a status in the society. The men whom Mark respects and admires appear unappealing to his wife Jane. Mark is easily taken in by Lord Feverstone while Jane “had distrusted his face” (*Hideous* 31) even in the beginning. Feverstone had no appreciation for natural beauty but “had always hated the country and always hated weather, and he was not at any time fond of walking” (*Hideous* 237). In brief, he is an anti-environmentalist like the Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* who is “a destroyer of the environment, a persecutor of animals and a hater of nature” (Trott 3). Feverstone is the representative of the modern totalitarian who has little to do with nature or natural creation. Much later, when Mark is imprisoned, he has “a spiritual encounter with darkness that reveals to him the anti-nature elements of the N.I.C.E. once and for all” (Trott 5). As Mark reflects:
These creatures of which Frost had spoken – and he did not doubt now that they were locally present with him in the cell – breathed death on the human race and on all joy. Not despite this but because of this, the terrible gravitation sucked and tugged and fascinated him towards them. (*Hideous* 163)

This reflects Lewis’s standard Christian motif of evil as “one of being ‘against’ nature, against joy, against the blessed embodiment of life and individual lives in the world” (Trott 5) as well as one that fails to be drawn by all that is beautiful and wonderful in nature.

In the novel, Mark and Jane are revealed as opposites in their attitudes to nature. When Mark takes a walk on the grounds of Belbury he discovers that these grounds “were not the sort of grounds that anyone could walk in for pleasure. . . . The whole effect was like that of a municipal cemetery” (*Hideous* 99). Later, when he sees the gardens at St. Anne’s he understands what he has been missing. The N.I.C.E.’s design to wipe nature off the face of the planet is because of their repulsion towards flora and fauna of all kinds. It is obvious that the representatives of N.I.C.E. deliberately place themselves in opposition to all that represents life and this is due to their negation of the value of nature.

On the other hand, when Jane is walking in a garden, she has an encounter that leads her to surrender her pride:

Then, at one particular corner of the gooseberry patch, the change came. What awaited her there was serious to the degree
of sorrow and beyond. There was no form nor sound. The mould under the bushes, the moss on the path, and the little brick border were not visibly changed. But they were changed. A boundary had been crossed. She had come into a world, or into a Person, or into the presence of a Person. Something expectant, patient, inexorable, met her with no veil or protection between. In the closeness of that contact she perceived at once that the Director’s words had been entirely misleading. This demand which now pressed upon her was not, even by analogy, like any other demand. It was the origin of all right demands and contained them. In its light you could understand them: but from them you could know nothing of it. There was nothing, and never had been anything, like this. And now there was nothing except this. Yet also, everything had been like this: only by being like this had anything existed. In this height and depth and breadth the little idea of herself which she had hitherto called me dropped down and vanished, unfluttering, into bottomless distance, like a bird in space without air. (Hideous 196-97)

Jane’s conversion leads her “not away from sensuality and celebration of nature, but directly to an outward expressing of it” (Trott 7). Thus, Jane is comforted by the assurance and hope she obtains from Ransom.
Instead of aspiring to preserve all that is beautiful and beneficial in nature, the brains behind the N.I.C.E. work to gain control over nature and man himself. They have obtained the severed head of the distinguished Arab radiologist Alcasan who had been guillotined for poisoning his wife. By using advanced medical technology, they keep this head alive:

“. . . [It] was a head (the rest of a head) which had had the top part of the skull taken off and then . . . as if something inside had boiled over. A great big mass which bulged out from inside what was left of the skull. Wrapped in some kind of composition stuff, but very thin stuff. You could see it twitch. I remember thinking, ‘Oh, kill it. Put it out of its pain.’ But only for a second, because I thought the thing was dead, really. It was green looking and the mouth was wide open and quite dry. And soon I saw that it wasn’t floating. It was fixed up on some kind of bracket, and there were things hanging from it. From the neck, I mean. Yes, it had a neck, but nothing below: no shoulders or body. Only these hanging things. Little rubber tubes and bulbs and metal things. (Hideous 107)

Frost informs Mark that “Alcasan’s mind is not the mind we are in contact with when the Head speaks. . . . But the cortex and vocal organs in Alcasan’s head are used by a different mind . . . macrobes” (Hideous 155). These have greater intelligence than man himself, and through the vocal organ and brain taken from Alcasan a regular intercourse between the macrobes and man is
made possible. Frost further adds: “the scientific reconstruction of the human race – the elimination of war and poverty – a fuller exploitation of nature – the preservation and extension of our species, in fact” (Hideous 156) are his aims. Regarding man’s scientific progress Lewis states that “what we call Man’s power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument” (Abolition 40). Mark learns that the progressive science of the N.I.C.E. will eliminate retrogressive types and by stages the intellectual nucleus will remain as the race:

“You are to conceive the species as an animal which has discovered how to simplify nutrition and locomotion to such a point that the old complex organs and the large body which contained them are no longer necessary. The masses are therefore to disappear. The body is to become all head. The human race is to become all Technocracy.” (Hideous 157)

This shows the horrific and frightful extent to which modern science has reached. Lewis exposes “the irrationality of scientism” (Johnson 10) that tries to “manipulate nature” (Johnson 9). Man’s “blind pursuit of development and progress” (Sumathy, “Rivers” 102) occurs when he fails to understand the existence of the interrelationship between man and his life supporting environment.

Mark’s awakening or liberation comes the moment he realizes the devilishness of Frost’s motives and his evil intention of destroying a good number of people for the advancement of science. When his conscience
approves his decision, he feels an unexpected lightness of heart: “He might lose the fight. But at least it was now his side against theirs. And he could talk of ‘his side’ now. Already he was with Jane and with all she symbolised” (Hideous 162).

The small group that feverishly opposes the N.I.C.E. are the Christian group at St. Anne’s. The antagonism between the two forces reaches a peak, when both sides discover that Merlin is buried ‘alive’ in Bragdon Wood and can be brought to life and joins their side. Meanwhile, Jane has had another dream in which, the cave where she had previously seen Merlin, is found to be empty. In order to save the human and the nonhuman creatures, Ransom decides to trace out Merlin before the N.I.C.E. gets hold of him. Denniston, Dimble and Jane go in search of Merlin in Bragdon Wood and bring him back to St. Anne’s. Unfortunately, they are unable to find Merlin and their endeavour ends in failure.

It is excitingly revealed that Merlin’s intimate relationship with the natural environment proves him the enemy of Belbury. In Merlin’s lifetime there had been things on earth such as elves, dwarfs, water-people and not all of them were rational beings. Merlin is now the “last vestige of an old order in which matter and spirit were, from our point of view, confused” (Hideous 174). He enjoys a healthy ecological relationship so that “every operation on Nature is a kind of personal contact” (Hideous 174). The resurrected Merlin whom Mr. Bultitude, the bear finds so attractive is himself full of the natural elements:
Bathed and anointed though he was, a sense of mould, gravel, wet leaves, weedy water hung about him. One might have believed that he listened continually to a murmur of evasive sounds; rustling of mice and stoats, the small shock of falling nuts, creaking of branches, the very growing of grass. The bear had closed its eyes. The room was heavy with a sort of floating anesthesia. (Hideous 176)

The Belbury people who are anti-nature by choice, “thought the old magia of Merlin, which worked in with the spiritual qualities of Nature, loving and reverencing them and knowing them from within, could be combined with the new goeteia – the brutal surgery from without” (Hideous 174) and they are proved wrong. Ransom denounces them as the Hideous Strength, whose greed for power recalls “the days when Nimrod built a tower to reach heaven” and their punishment for violating the ethics of nature has specific results in the present age for “the soul has gone out of the wood and water” (Hideous 176). Man’s rejection of all things pertaining to Nature is a poison that has spread internationally and everywhere there are “men maddened with false promises and soured with true miseries, cut off from Earth their mother and from the Father in Heaven. The shadow of one dark wing is over all Tellus” (Hideous 180).

*That Hideous Strength* thus “satirizes the modernity” that campaigns against natural law and nature. They are blinded to the wonders in nature. The bureaucratic conspirators at the N.I.C.E., crave for “the powers of both
science and the magician Merlin in their plot to reengineer society” (West 19). However, the materialistic and utopian interests of the N.I.C.E. which includes “the remaking of humanity by means of social and genetic engineering” (D. Nelson) is overthrown by Merlin during the inaugural banquet at Belbury when all their learning and dignity is brought to confusion and chaos as at Babel.

The St. Anne’s fellowship by contrast is hospitable and eco-friendly. The members of the community respect and honour each other. Everyone shares in the work. They enjoy the labour and the discipline. Even the mistreated bear finds a home in St.Anne’s because the household in St. Anne’s “have come to understand that nature is also a co-inhabitant and not a subordinate” (Frederick, “Suicidal” 135). In St. Anne’s there is peace and comfort and the household reflects the good order of the heavens so that it is naturally chosen as the scene of interaction between the gods and the Pendragon Ransom. In this appropriately god-fearing atmosphere, the heavenly powers descend to empower Merlin to accomplish his task in defeating ‘that hideous strength’.

Exercising his heaven sent powers, Merlin releases man and beast from their enemies and captors. Mr Bultitude as well as all other animals kept in captivity for scientific experimentation are released. Tigers, elephants, wolves, bears and snakes find their way into the banquet room where the curse of Babel was already in full effect. Mr. Maggs who is set free from Belbury receives a message to go to St. Anne’s and the other prisoners are
allowed to go where they desire. As Mark is liberated from the N.I.C.E. he resolves to meet his wife at St. Anne’s. He walks a considerable distance and gets a lift in a lorry. As he nears St. Anne’s he is overcome by shyness:

He was going to see Jane: and Denniston: and (probably) the Dimbles as well. In fact, he was going to see Jane in what he now felt to be her proper world. But not his. Everything about them was different. They could not even fling themselves into chairs without suggesting by the very posture of their limbs a certain lordliness, a leonine indolence. There was elbow-room in their lives, as there had never been in his. They were Hearts: he was only a Spade. Still, he must be getting on. . . . Of course, Jane was a Heart. (Hideous 233)

When Mark is released through Merlin’s actions and escapes from the clutches of the N.I.C.E., he is reunited to his wife. Jane herself has received a re-education in St. Anne’s and is now ready to be the wife of Mark in all ways.

The analysis of The Space Trilogy reveals Lewis’s belief in enjoying a bonding with the environment through enjoying the delights of nature. His three novels encourage readers to view nature with awe and wonder. Lewis presents enchanting new perceptions of nature. He invokes his readers to enjoy and appreciate the beauty of landscape in other planets as well as earth. When man becomes enchanted with the beauty offered by nature, he will begin to appreciate its salient features and safeguard it rather than damage it.