A Christian apologist that C.S. Lewis is, he handles in his trilogy — Out of The Silent Planet, Perelandra, and That Hideous Strength — the anti-utopian novel in a new and different light. If We, Brave New World, and Nineteen Eighty-Four are anti-utopia differing from each other no doubt in numerous features, Lewis' triology differs from them in the sense that it is an attack from a conservative angle. Lewis' triology has been considered by Hillegas as "A kind of Paradise Lost employed to teach Christian doctrine to a sophisticated but unsuspecting Twentieth Century." If Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four show Wellsian science fiction moving farther from myth to satire, Lewis' triology, more than any other anti-utopian fiction, generates an enveloping myth. But of course the triology, though anti-Wellsian, owes much to Wells because of Lewis' strong interest in science fiction. The triology's Wellsian quality is first of all predominantly visible in its fictionalizing of travel to other worlds, which provides its chief myth. According to Lewis' conception, the earth, the only fallen world in the universe, has been quarantined to prevent the spread of its spiritual infection. That is why the earth is called "Thulcandra," the silent planet.

Much of the impulse behind science fiction in the Twenties and the Thirties came from the need to articulate the
values and the glories of science. This is largely true of the work of a philosopher like Olaf Stapledon. An inevitable reaction against this tendency is perhaps the development of a genre which "would provoke the sleeping giant of religious fantasy." The anti-science fiction movement is found primarily in the works of C.S. Lewis, whose space triology shares not only some of the qualities of science fiction but some of the qualities of fairy-tale. As the author of *The Allegory of Love*, Lewis saw how fantastic story-telling and didactic seriousness often co-existed in the same work. That is, for him fantasy functions as a vehicle for the expression of serious thought. This is evident in his descriptions of the beautiful, unfallen world of *Perelandra* in which a delight in fantastic imagining is coupled with a serious philosophical purpose. That Lewis admired Stapledon's invention but not his philosophy is best illustrated in the following passage from *Perelandra* where he makes Prof. Weston embody the Gernsbackian human-racism he detested.

He was a man obsessed with the idea which is at the moment circulating all over our planet in obscure works of "scientification" in little Interplanetary Societies and Rocketry Clubs, and between the covers of monstrous magazines, ignored or mocked by intellectuals, but ready, if ever the power is put into its hands, to open a new chapter of misery for the universe.
This attack on Gernsbackian human-racism is made from a Christian perspective. Indeed, this attack, as Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin point out, paved the way for subsequent critical considerations of the same position made from within the field of science. For example, "the ecology movement" that developed in America in the sixties expresses a view similar to Lewis'. But it finds its support not in scripture but in works of scientific speculation like Gregory Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972). This view is given expression to within the field of science fiction by a writer like Ursula K. Le Guin, who is in many respects a descendent of Lewis.

Lewis recognised that Behaviourism was the real enemy of religion in the twentieth century. The great quarrel between science and religion that began around the time of Galileo acquired a new impetus in the twentieth century with science speculating even more boldly about origin of the universe and the descent of man. This generated a further conflict between theology and science. The application of behaviourist theory to human conduct was found despicable by Lewis, because it involved scientists lacking in values themselves but manipulating the values of others. This idea is given creative embodiment in *That Hideous Strength* where Lewis creates a scientific foundation run by power-hungry bureaucrats. This foundation threatens to usurp all power in England, and attempts a brutal modification
of individual human beings.

Quite simple and obvious things, at first sterilisation of the unfit, liquidation of backward races (We don't want any dead weights), selective breeding. Then real education, including pre-natal education. By real education I mean one that has no 'take-it-or-leave-it' nonsense. A real education makes the patient what it wants infallibly ... it'll have to be mainly psychological at first. But we'll get on to biochemical conditioning in the end direct manipulation of the brain. 4

The behaviourists in Lewis' novels are literally possessed by devilish agents.

The ethical issue before Lewis in these novels seems to be to find whether or not human beings are capable of finding values to replace those of the religion. His view is that they have not, and will not, because humans are "fallen." They are incapable of reasoning their way to any ultimate, be it Truth, Beauty or Goodness. That is why, according Lewis, man must turn back to God and to the teachings of Christ. Ranged on the other side are those who observed that humanity must create its own values through its reasoning. For scientists, there is no science of values but science fiction has provided a matrix in which values implicit in science are explored. Lewis entered the ethical debate on this issue both with philosophical books like The Abolition of Man, The Problem of Pain and Miracles, and with his space trilogy. But if we accept Lewis' views, problems like overpopulation and women's rights,
let alone women's Lib, have to be examined from a Lewisian theological standpoint rather than from the contemporary perspectives on these issues.

Lewis's works of science fiction -- or anti-science fiction -- challenge the opponents of the religious viewpoints both as entertainment and as vehicles for ethical speculation and debate. The special strength of Lewis' work is to be seen in a number of later writers who have learned from him the mode of combining Christian casuistry with science fiction. Among them is James Blish, whose *A Case of Conscience* is a uniquely Christian work of science fiction. Also in the late fifties, Walter Miller produced a work of religious science fiction in *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, in which he examines the interaction of science and religion over a period of centuries after a nuclear holocaust. From this chronicle emerges a perspective on science and religion that Lewis sympathised with. Both Blish and Miller are less vehement in their casuistry than Lewis, though their achievement in the field of science fiction is generally regarded as greater than his.

*Out of The Silent Planet* and *Perelandra* are set on Mars and Venus, though not as science knows them. *That Hideous Strength* traces a return from outer space to the earth. From the Utopian and Ethereal realm of paradisal Deep Heaven we move on in this novel to the tawdry realities of political and
scientific intrigue and psychological warfare. If we consider the amount of "otherness," of "fantasy," present in these works, important distinctions arise with regard to the degree of concern they show with either their secondary worlds or their supernaturalsm. In Out of The Silent Planet and Perelandra, particularly in the latter, the fantastic landscapes are as much at the centre of interest as the stories. These books in which the other world is present for its own sake are more fully fantastic than those where moral, allegorical, historical or narrative interests are dominant. Lewis contrasts stories in which the supernatural is granted only as a frame or premiss at the outset, after which we inhabit the known world and are as realist as any one, with those where the marvellous is on the whole of the grain of the work. As instances of the former, Lewis cites Charles Williams' Many Dimensions and R.L. Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. As instances of the latter he cites Spenser's The Faerie Queene, Morris' Jason, E.R. Eddison's The Ouroboros, Tolkien's The Lord of The Rings, and David Lindsay's A Voyage to Arcturus which provided him with the inspiration to construct his extraterrestrial worlds. Lewis describes this second type as the mythopoeic. For him it is the highest class of creation. He declares, "I am not sure that anyone has satisfactorily explained the keen, lasting, and solemn pleasure which such stories can give". In a way, Perelandra is the central work of C.S. Lewis in which the various creative
impulses that went into his fantasies have all come together. Lewis, the self-confessed dinosaur, reveals in *Perelandra* his dislike for modernity and its goods. In particular, he expresses his dislike of the glorification of technology, the social idea of equality and the liberalism of the present day theology. Like his friend Tolkien, Lewis turned towards medieval cultural values in his neo-medievalist enthusiasm. He was particularly alienated from the humanist character of contemporary literature and criticism. Most of his own literary criticism is concerned rather with allegory and myth rather than with the novel. In his inaugural lecture as Professor of Medieval and Renaissance English Literature at Cambridge in 1954, *De Descriptione Temporum*, he described himself as an old Western man and said "There are not going to be many more dinosaurs." Further from Lewis' point of view, only a Christian standpoint enables an understanding of the paradox at the head of *Perelandra* that any created thing is at once at the centre and at the periphery in the universe. For Lewis it is only the supernaturalist who sees truly.

In the same way and for the same reason, only Supernaturalists really see Nature. You must go a little away from her, and then turn round, and look back. Then at last the true landscape will become visible. You must have tasted, however briefly, the pure water from beyond the world before you can be distinctly conscious of the hot, salty tang of Nature's current. To treat
her as God, or as Everything, is to lose the whole pith and pleasure of her. 7

It is Lewis' object in fiction to get as near to this point of vantage as he can. The nature of choice is analysed in terms of the contrast built up between Heaven and Hell. An enlightening perspective on the condition of the Earth is made available by viewing it from other planets or in the context of the Cosmic Dance. The aim as Manlove mentions it, is "one of catching us up as Ransom is caught on Perelandra, into the larger pattern (168), where alone we are in our own dimensions like ourselves." 8 It was indeed this idea of "otherness" which led Lewis to admire Lindsay's 'A Voyage to Arcturus' which he considered the real father of his planet books. This "otherness," what Lewis terms Sehnsucht or "joy," which is a major strand in his work and his faith alike. It is in terms of the fantasy that Lewis attempts to recreate Sehnsucht. Perelandra is less of a Utopian fantasy but there are a few touches suggestive of Wells. The alien vegetation on the floating islands perhaps owes something in its lushness to Wells' lunar vegetation. Weston arrives again in Bedford and Cavor's sphere. And certain limits of the rational insect life inside the Perelandrian mountain echo Wells' selenites. But as Hillegas rightly observes, "Perelandra is a theological fantasy, in which Ransom, transported to Perelandra by the Oyarsa, defeats the Un-man, who having possessed the body of Weston, is trying to attempt Tinidril, the Eve of Perelandra, into
disobedience of God's command. Man on Perelandra thus does not fall.\(^9\)

While Lewis uses the literary methodology of the writers of science fiction to justify the ways of God to sceptical man, in *That Hideous Strength* he shifts his emphasis to some extent away from the silent planet myth developed in the first two novels. The primary structure of the myth is still retained. Ransom is still the hero and there are allusions to Weston, the physicist, and the Moon as Earth's battle perimeter. Charles Moorman says that Lewis in *That Hideous Strength* abstracts from the Arthurian myth.\(^{10}\) Lewis takes the figure of the wounded Fisher-King from the Grail legend and in his personage has portrayed a new Ransom. The identification of Ransom-Fisher-King with the Pendragon can also be said to extend the implications of Lewis' theme. By making the triple identification, Ransom—Fisher-King—Pendragon, Lewis completes the pattern of joining the Grail (Mr. Fisher-King) with the ideal kingdom (the Pendragon) with Deep Heaven (Ransom, the Voyager). The Arthurian myth is used both as a complement to and as an incorporated element of the silent planet myth. The reason for this incorporation is that in *That Hideous Strength* which is a novel about people on Earth, the *seroni*, the *hrossa* and *oversu*, all of which function perfectly on Mars and Venus, could not be forced into the new context. Lewis here could manage an extension of his myth in terms more suited to earthly
situations. "Through the Arthurian myth Lewis conveys the impression that we are dealing not merely with the moral struggles of Jane and Mark Studdock, but with issues of momentous importance, issues that once split the kingdom and destroyed the civilization whose unification could have brought about the Second Coming." Lewis' space trilogy thus conveys a deeply felt religious idea in terms of a fictional frame which highlights the effective use of religious and moral fantasy and techniques of science fiction, fairy tale and Arthurian legend.


11. Ibid., p. 126.