PREFACE
C.S. Lewis, familiar to the student of Literature as the author of *The Allegory of Love, A Preface to "Paradise Lost"* and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, is a prominent Christian apologist, who has become popular as a modern-day "apostle to the skeptics". His mode of communicating his opinion to those unduly influenced by the nineteenth-century liberalism and scientism is to write as if he is a "cocktail-party advocatus Christi." His *Screwtape Letters* and *The Problem of Pain* show how he discusses the weightiest of spiritual matters in a language to which those reared on Marx and Freud and "human science" and moral relativism are accustomed. The same urbanity and tone of ethical orthodoxy are reflected in his novels as well. Especially the first three novels, *Out of The Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*, which have been chosen for study in this dissertation, constitute a trilogy in which Lewis creates his own myth, with science fiction providing him with a method and a plot and the theology of the Church with a theme.

In the first of three novels, *Out of The Silent Planet*, the Earth becomes "Thulcandra", the silent planet, cut off from the rest of the cosmos by Satan's rebellion and the subsequent Fall of Man. Lewis here attempts to present basic Christian
concepts in pseudo-scientific and mythical terms without distorting their meaning. The Silent Planet myth offers Lewis a metaphorical framework to present in fictional form the basic tenets of Christianity. If, as Charles Moorman points out, "the main tenor of Lewis' myth is Christian Orthodoxy, his vehicle is science fiction." *Perelandra*, the second novel of the *Silent Planet* trilogy, illustrates this general method. Lewis here uses the literary methodology of the writers of science fiction in attempting, as in his tracts, to exemplify the doctrine of the Fall of Man. This he does subtly in a passage which reinforces the identification of Weston with Satan by means of an allusion to the Crucifixion. *That Hideous Strength* still retains the primary structure of the silent planet myth. But the field of action shifts in this novel from Heaven to the Earth. The creation here of the National Institute of Co-ordinated Experiments is Lewis' most vehement means of demonstrating the futility of the ideals of secular humanism, science and progress. Weston's idea of the eventual triumph of the forces of Creative Evolution over the universe is laid bare in this novel. Belbury, a headquarters of the N.I.C.E., veritably portrays a chaotic society founded on *cupiditas* rather than on *caritas*. As an antithesis to this, the idyllic atmosphere of St. Anne's is evoked in order to provide a contrast with secular civilization. Lewis in *That Hideous Strength* deals not merely with the moral struggles of Jane and Mark Studdock but with issues of great
importance that once destroyed the civilization. This he does by resort to the strategy of the science myth which in his hands is something of a suggestive archetype through which ordinary fictional situations are referred by allusion.

These three novels which have been described as a space trilogy reveal Lewis' delight in fantastic imagining and show how it is imbued with serious philosophical purpose. Lewis indeed admired Olaf Stapledon's invention and not his philosophy. Stapledon's terrible creator, the Star Maker who combines in one being the functions of a deity and a Satan was utterly blasphemous from Lewis' point of view. He detested the attitude he discerned behind much of the pulpy variety of the American science fiction. Lewis thus in his "space trilogy" offered a challenge to science and to modern technological culture based on science. His attempt was to produce an ethic worth living and dying for. An attempt at drawing constant parallelisms between the Christian myth and the myth Lewis creates in the trilogy would lend to reduce the work of art to the level of an allegory which C.S. Lewis's space trilogy is not. The evocative power of the space trilogy is sought to be studied by examining how the elements of religious and moral fantasy and the attributes of Wellsian and other science fiction have been incorporated in the trilogy in order to focus on the negative aspects of "the technologico-Benthamite civilization," as F.R. Leavis described
it. Lewis was indeed "a new irrationalist" to use an expression to which Kathleen Nott gave currency. If Eliot believed that the negative conditions of our culture do retain some vestiges of Christian faith which the Christian artist must try to exploit, Lewis likewise attempted to use fiction as a means to overcome the formation of "a civilized but non-Christian mentality" by using science fiction as a vehicle for the expression of his reaction against liberalism and scientism.

The study of Lewis' space trilogy has been an extremely stimulating enterprise for the reason that a critical perspective is enabled by it on the whole field of science fiction for anti-science fiction, utopian as well as dystopian. Rewarding though the study was, a serious handicap was the non-availability of certain significant critical texts. I owe a great deal to the somewhat limited critical material at my disposal.

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