CHAPTER V

SCIENCE FICTION, ECOLOGY AND C.S LEWIS’S

SPACE TRILOGY

If some fatal progress of applied science ever enables us in fact to reach the Moon, that real journey will not at all satisfy the impulse which we now seek to gratify by writing such stories

C.S Lewis: “On Stories”

According to Philip A. Pecorino, philosophy begins in wonder, doubt, curiosity and results in a method of critical thinking and reasoned inquiry (Myres 9). Like philosophy, science fiction has its origin in wonder, doubt and curiosity. Speculative philosophy involves an intellectual activity that ignites critical thinking. Science Fictions are popularly known as Speculative fictions that are full of adventures, fantasy, romanticism and cosmologic significance. As it has been mentioned earlier science fiction has been a popular genre especially after the World War I and II. On the one hand, they celebrate the wonder of science. On the other hand, it offers a counter narrative to science. Science fiction allows its readers to travel through different worldviews that science fictions promote to compare and contrast by playing with time and space. However, science fictions not simply explore the future possibilities of Science and technological innovations, but deals with future human experience and destiny either in a utopian or dystopian fashion. Hence science fictions have great social and cultural significance. Apart from dealing with adventures and technology, science fictions assess the impact of all these on human civilization and society and thereby offers a critique of Science and technological progress. One such
approach is the ecocritical approach which critiques the degrading environmental values and dehumanization of culture. The dystopian worldview of some science fictions found more powerful expression after the destruction of WWII and the Cold War in the West. Such stories were found in H.G Well’s *The Time Machine* (1895). They exhibit the fear and horror of the technocentric progress and materialism and collapse of civilization. Philip A. Pecorino, expresses that the critical importance of science fictions as art lies in its substance, not the manner in which extrapolated reality is presented. According to Mayers, science fictions give more emphasis to plots and actions and the medium of the story is mainly primitive (Mayers 8). Science fiction because of its speculative and interpretative nature attempts at reconstruction of the lost values and ideas which are essential for future development. Their predicament of nuclear disaster, ecological crisis found expression in various dystopian narratives. Most of the narratives tried to abandon the worldview that Western Scientific rationalism promoted and replace it with an alternative, new humanist and neo-romantic worldview. It is like a dialogue with a different world, a brave New World. Pecorino also writes that science fictions lack the logical coherence and consistency which is the basis of speculative philosophy. Pecorino acknowledges the contemporary significance of Science fictions in the following lines,

The vital importance of science fiction in a world that science is changing daily lies in its attempt to view human beings in their cosmological setting, clothed in their greatest successes and most ignominious defeats. (Mayers 14)

C.S Lewis has been an influential figure in this respect that presented his own cosmological model of universe to critique the existing one and creates consciousness about the lost socio-cultural and ecological values. Before discussing Lewis’s
cosmological model it is important to write about his personal life that inspired him to think about alternate model of the universe. How did he develop his imaginative faculties? What were the incidents that contributed to Lewis’s imaginative adventures?

Lewis spent blissful time with his brother. Even though he was three years junior to his brother, they were like allies. Even though their attitude and nature were different, Lewis was interested in Animal Land while his brother took interest in ships, trains and battles. Both were interested in ‘dressed animals’ and the anthropomorphized beasts of nursery literature. Lewis was good at drawing and he could draw movement-figures that looked as if they were having some movements. However, these two brothers never had a chance to experience outer natural beauty which can be called ‘aesthetic experience’. They were busy with toy garden or toy-forest and such artificial stuff. Lewis writes in his book *Surprised by Joy,*

> Trees appear as balls of cotton wool stuck on posts, and there is nothing to show that either of us knew the shape of any leaf in the garden where we played almost daily. This absence of beauty, now that I come to think of it, is characteristic of our childhood. No picture on the walls of my father’s house ever attracted- and indeed none deserved-our attention. We never saw a beautiful building nor imagined that a building could be beautiful. My earliest aesthetic experience, if indeed they were aesthetic, was not of that kind; they were already incurably romantic, not formal. (Lewis 1955: 7)

Such alienation from the outer natural world eventually allowed him to long for an aesthetic world of Joy and desire. The toy gardens and toy forests had induced a longing for Paradise. Lewis calls such a longing ‘Sehnsucht’ and he began to develop a sense of belongingness to ‘the Green Hills’. However, as he himself admits, his childhood was not other worldly or imaginative. The toy gardens and the green hills offered a momentary pleasure in his prosaic life. Lewis had insect phobia and it was
only after reading Lubbock’s book *Ants, Bees and Wasps* that Lewis began to take some scientific interest in insects. Lewis had a changed life experience in the year 1905 when his father moved house. The new house at the countryside remained very influential in his life and it played as a major character in his writings. There he received a chance to go through many different books. Lewis’s father never got rid of his books and he brought all the books to his new house. Lewis completed volumes after volumes. Besides the books, the surrounding of their house was a great source of joy and pleasure for Lewis. Lewis had a fascination for hills and trees. He expresses in *Surprised by Joy* about the first experience of the country hills.

From our front door we looked down over wide fields to Belfast Lough and across it to the long mountain line of the Antrim shore-Divis, Colin, Cave Hill. This was in the far off days when Britain was the world’s carrier and the Lough was full of shipping; a delight to both us boys, but most to my brother. The sound of a steamer’s horn at night still conjures up my whole boyhood. Behind the house, greener, lower, and nearer than the Antrim Mountains, were the Holywood Hills, but it was not till much later that they won my attention. (Lewis 1955: 11)

Such were the aesthetic experiences of Lewis’s childhood and boyhood days. There were many incidents after those boyhood days that brought changes to Lewis’s personal and professional life. Lewis had to spend solitary days soon after his brother was sent to boarding school. He spent memorable time with his governess Annie Harper from whom he learnt French and Latin. But his brother’s absence sent him to long hours of solitude. However, this solitary experience proved to be blissful for him. Lewis started doing different things. He developed a renewed interest in reading and writing. He tried his hands in writing stories. Here he made an attempt to combine his fascination for ‘dressed animals’ and ‘knights in armor’. He began to write about chivalrous mice and rabbits. Lewis called himself ‘the systematizer’.
Lewis’s concept of the Animal–Land now began to find shape in his writings. Lewis writes,

The Animal-Land which came into action into action in the holidays when my brother was at home was a modern Animal-Land; it had to have trains and steamships if it was to be a country shared with him. It followed, of course, that the medieval Animal-Land about which I wrote my stories must be the same country at an earlier period; and of course the two periods must be properly connected. This led me from romancing to historiography; I set about writing a full history of Animal-Land. (Lewis 1955: 13)

Here Lewis expresses the whole plan of writing about Animal-Land. He acts like a map maker and reinvents the medieval world of the Animal-land in an attempt to romanticise and historicise the past. But Lewis has clarified his position as a historiographer and a systematiser in his autobiographical account. He says that a historian should adopt a critical attitude towards epic material. Thus Lewis wished to present himself as a critic, a historiographer, a romantic and a systematiser.

There were many books that influenced his art of creativity and imagination. He read books like Conan Doyle’s *Sir Nigel* which first set his mind for ‘knights in armor’, Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, Beatrix Potter’s books and E. Nesbit’s Trilogy which opened his eyes to antiquity.

Lewis, at the age of six, seven and eight was living his life in imagination. For him imagination means the world of reverie, day dream, wish fulfilling fantasy. However, Lewis’s invented world of Animal-Land was not a world of fantasy. That was a prosaic world full of interest, bustle, humor and character and he was the creator of that world. Lewis was inspired to create such a world by his power of memory. This memory is induced by a strong sense of sensation, a desire for something which is called Joy by Lewis. According to Lewis, this sensation of joy is not same as
happiness or pleasure. It can be equalled to a particular kind of grief or unhappiness (Lewis 1955: 18). Lewis’s life was full of mixed feelings and experiences. He was greatly affected by sense of separation and alienation. As it has been mentioned earlier, Lewis had to spend lonely days after his brother was sent to boarding school. There were so many people to talk to. But he has not happy as he was not in good terms with his father. His father could not give him sufficient time and he was always busy. Lewis lost his mother at an early age. It was a nightmarish experience for Lewis.

In the chapter “Concentration Camp” in his book *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis shares his pathetic experiences of his first school days. He went to England for his studies with his father and elder brother. His first impression of England was not a satisfactory one. He hated the English flats and busy streets of Lancashire. He also disliked the strange English accent. Lewis writes,

> The flatness! The interminableness! The miles and miles of featureless land, shutting one in from the sea, imprisoning, suffocating! Everything was wrong; wooden fences instead of stone walls and hedges, red brick farmhouses instead of white cottages, the fields too big, haystacks the wrong shape. (Lewis 1955: 24)

Lewis did not like the climate of England, its bitter frost, stinging fog, sweltering heat and the great scale of thunderstorm. Such hatred for England took many years to heal. This happened when he was brought to Wyvern for his preparatory school. Lewis calls it the classic period of his life. The great blue plain in Wyvern, green, peaked hills at once delighted his mind.

During his school days also, Lewis had to face unpleasant situations. There he witnessed the cruelty of the school system at Belsen. Lewis grew obsessed with the irrational behaviour and methods at the school. Lewis came to know that most boys
in the school learnt nothing. They were treated like slaves. Lewis saw the picture of oppression and suffering at Belsen. Due to that most of the students left the school. Lewis was left out with four of his classmates with whom Lewis had some memorable moments. They used to go out for long walks and bought sweets in drowsy village shops. They sat at the brow of a railway cutting and watched the tunnel mouths for trains. These moments added pleasure to their lives amidst oppression and suffering. Lewis knew that his father took a wrong decision by sending him to that school. But he didn’t want to put his father into trouble.

During his days at the school, Lewis had a chance to read stories in *The Captain*. But it was more for wish fulfilment and fantasy. There he also developed a taste for the fictions about ancient world such as *Quo Vadis, Darkness and Dawn*, *The Gladiators* and *Ben Hur*. Besides, Lewis also went through books of H.G. Wells and Rider Haggard. As Lewis himself admits, the idea of other planets exercised upon him after that reading. Lewis writes,

> The interest, when the fit was upon me, was ravenous, like a lust. This particular coarse strength I have come to accept as a mark that the interest which has it is psychological, not spiritual; behind such a fierce tang there lurks, I suspect, a psychoanalytical explanation. (Lewis 1955: 36)

Lewis’s space trilogy in fact, represents this sense of psychological adventure and his interplanetary dialogues and adventures are concerned with the questions of life and existence. Lewis’s space trilogy is a quest for alternate worldviews. By inventing and introducing the characters from antique times, Lewis critiques the existing worldview on human life, nature, culture and religion. Such an other-worldly experience has a therapeutic effect too. Lewis writes that his interest in scientification is an affair for psychoanalysts. He further writes,
I may perhaps add that my own planetary romances have been not so much the gratification of that fierce curiosity as its exorcism. The exorcism worked by reconciling it with, or subjecting it to, the other, the more elusive, and genuinely imaginative, impulse. (Lewis 1955: 36)

Thus life at the Oldie’s school was a preparation for his spiritual life which taught him to live by hope and faith.

**Lewis on Science Fiction:**

In the essay “On Science Fiction”, Lewis writes that science fictions must exhibit real values. There are different sub-species of science fictions. In the first kind what Lewis called the fiction of Displaced persons, the author leaps to an imagined future and it would be followed by some love story or crime story. In the second kind, the author has real interest in space and travel. Lewis calls it fiction of Engineers which are about some undiscovered techniques. Lewis was deeply interested in that kind of science fictions which deals not only with space travel, but also with stories about gods, ghosts, demons and monsters etc. Instead of a spaceship, he believed more in the power of supernatural agency of transportation. His belief in magic and miracle is just one such faith.

In another essay “Religion and Rocketry’, Lewis predicts that there might be creatures more clever than us in the other worlds. Lewis writes that human has a tendency to be superior to others. Lewis perhaps was afraid of future imperialism on the outer world and so he writes,

> We know what our race does to strangers. Man destroys or enslaves every species he can. Civilised man murders, enslaves, cheats, and corrupts savage man. Even inanimate nature he turns into dust bowls and slag-heaps. There are individuals who don’t. But they are not the sorts who are likely to be our pioneers in space. Our
ambassador to new worlds will be the needy and greedy adventurer or the ruthless technical expert. They will do as their kind has always done. (Lewis 1960: 89)

He fears the practical problems that will follow after such an act. In the poem “Science-Fiction Cradlesong”, Lewis writes,

Hush, be still. Outer space
Is a concept, not a place.
Try no more. Where we are
Never can be sky or star.
From prison, in a prison, we fly;
There is no into the sky. (Lines: 19-24)

Here Lewis expresses his fear of scientism and compares the earth with a prison house. He expresses his disappointment about degradation of human values and breakdown of order in the modern times in the poem “Readjustment”,

I thought there would be a grave beauty, a sunset
Splendour
In being the last of one’s kind: a topmost moment as
One watched
The huge wave curving over Atlantis, the shrouded Barge
Turning away with wounded Arthur, or Ilium burning.
Now I see that, all along, I was assuming a posterity
Of gentle hearts: someone, however distant in the Depths of time,
Who could pick up our signal, who could understand a Story. There won’t be.
Between the new Hembidae and us who are dying
Already
There rises a barrier across which no voice can ever
Carry, 
For devils are unmaking languages.

Lewis envisages a bleak future. He was hopeful that science will bring real progress and illumined humanity. But that seemed to be an illusion because the two World Wars shattered the hope and faith of the people and only fragmentation and disillusionment prevailed after that. Lewis appeals to people to stand firm against all exploitations and theological imperialism. Lewis appeals to support the right because the spiritual matters more than the biological. Now it is important to understand Lewis’s model of the new worldview. Lewis has not invented a new model for future, but revives a past worldview for present significance. As it has been mentioned above there is a conglomeration of myth, fantasy, history and science in this reinvented model of universe. Lewis’s cosmological ideas are based on the Medieval model of the Field of Arbol. The field of Arbol means the solar systems. Meleldil ruled the field of Arbol but the system was destroyed by the bent Oyarsa of earth. Meleldil was a Godlike force just like Christ. The bent Oyarsa, as per old mythology, rebelled against Meleldil and Eldila of Deep Heaven which meant outer space. The bent one was responsible for bringing evil to earth and made the Earth a silent planet (Thulcandra). Meleldil came to the Earth Thulcandra to save the human races. There was a prophecy that the earth would continue to be silent till the siege of Deep Heaven against the earth. The pattern also predicted that the rule of the Bent Eldila would come to an end with the end of the world. According to the Biblical story also the end is predicted and a Revelation is expected to occur which will mark a new beginning. In Lewis’s space trilogies, Meleldil is a Christlike, holy existence in the outer space and the bent one is fallen Eldila and is like Satan. Lewis used the ‘Elvish Language’ invented by his mate J.R.R Tolkien. This language is structured like the
languages of the old inhabitants of the earth which went extinct under the influence of bent Oyarsa. This is how Lewis reused the forgotten model of the universe and used it to present the contemporary views of the world. The model that Lewis reinvented in the trilogies was the Ptolemic model of the Middle Ages.

![FIG: THE FIELD OF ARBOL IN LEWIS’S SPACE TRILOGIES](FieldofArbol.png)

**Science Fictions and Ecology Connections:**

Ecology deals with the study of organisms in relation to their environment and found its prominence in the early twentieth century. Twentieth century faced the increase of massive population and the subsequent survival crisis. The race for survival within a capitalist set up resulted in destruction of natural environment and there arose a growing sense of conservatism and protection of earth’s ecological systems. The complex relationship between human and environment became a major topic of discussions among the intellectuals. Literature of that time played its role as a mirror of twentieth century life and experimented with different literary forms to reflect the
complex reality of that War period. Science Fiction was one such literary experiment that dealt with the tension between science and fiction. The objective of this genre was to display the utopian and dystopian tendencies of the time. An Apocalyptic vision underlined their narratives. Some narratives, however, expressed optimism about the future of the earth. Life on other planets, alien encounters and alien ecology became recurring features of science fiction narratives. Colonization of other worlds also became a major matter of concern for writers like C.S Lewis. For instance, there are various narratives on the colonization of Mars. Examples of such narratives are- Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Red Mars* (1992). In recent English literature we can see many writers writing about population explosion, pollution, global warming and death of nature and ecologic warfare. Such toxic discourses exhibited bitter irony and arrogance. Hence Science fictions have played an important role in displaying the major problems of environmental crisis and playfully present the horrific technocentric reality. Science fictions are not about science, but about the effect of science on society. By creating consciousness among the readers about the growing ecological crisis, science fictions have bridged the gap between Nature and Culture. Science is actually study of nature. But the science that the West promoted was technocratic and anthropocentric. And that was at the root of ecological crisis on earth. Hence science fictions have ecological significance. Science factions are however deal with catastrophic consequences and aims to mobilise imaginative energies amidst trauma and contradictions.

In the essay “Life after People: Science faction and Ecological Futures”, Brent Bellamy and Imre Szeman distinguishes between science fiction and science faction. Science faction makes an aesthetic and epistemological approach towards seeking a
resolution of historical problems through an unusual narrative form. Explaining the
function of science faction, the authors wrote,

Science faction represents a landscape devoid of people, an emptiness that bizarrely
and of necessity generates an immediate challenge to narrative logic (that is, narrative can persist even in a world without either narratives and audiences). It is
perhaps this founding antagonism that is one of the reasons why these fictions take
the form of a didactic teaching of fact, science and environmental policies, adopting
a documentary form dominated by its presumed immediate relation to the real.
(Brent & Imre 210)

Such fictions incorporate the matters about post-catastrophe. One example of science
faction that Brent and Imre give is Alan Weisman’s 2007 best seller *The World
Without Us*. Rob Latham in the essay “Biotic Invasions: Ecological Imperialism in
New Wave Science Fiction” discusses the novels of H.G. Wells, John Christopher’s
novels, Ursula K. Le Guin’s novels, Thomas M. Disch’s novels and the cinema of the
1950s that dealt with the sinister alien invasions and conflicts to trace a counter-
narrative in the genre of Science Fiction. Latham examines the new wave science
fictions that presented the eco-disaster stories and took an anti-technocratic bent
(Latham 95). Latham writes,

This critique of technocracy gradually aligned itself with other ideological programs
seeking to reform or revolutionizes social relations, such as feminism, ecological
activism and post-colonial struggles, adopting a counter cultural militancy that
rejected pulp science fiction’s quasi imperialist vision of white men conquering stars
in the name of Western Progress. (Latham 95)

Christina Alt in her essay “Extinction, Extermination, and the Ecological Optimism of
H.G. Wells” discusses about the threat of further colonialism in outer planets. About
H.G. Well’s optimism she writes,
"The War of the Worlds" famously describes the invasion of earth in the closing years of the nineteenth century by a highly evolved and technologically advanced Martian species seeking a new planet to colonise as their own more distant planet grows old. (Alt 26)

Alt discusses that the book expresses an anxiety over the future of human dominance and power of technology. An apocalyptic vision of the future found expression in those narratives. A picture of dethronement of human and extinction was also highlighted. As Alt observes, by the dethronement of human beings, Wells compared the human beings with animals presenting them as mere social insects (Alt 28). Such fear, anxiety and disillusionment eventually paved the ground for ecology in the West during the inter-war period. After the heavy loss and destructions by the two World Wars there was a cry for return to faith. The twentieth century proved the failure of the Enlightenment project and thereby heralded a change in outlook. There was an attempt to revive the lost connections and democratize nature. In the year 1927 Charles Elton’s *Animal Ecology* was published. Ecology became a prominent brunch of biological science. Henry Cowles wrote about ecological succession and Arthur Tansely introduced the concept of ecosystem. Besides, biologist recognised human as ecological manifestation through Human Ecology. In fact, the concept of conservation of nature became part and parcel of ecological studies.

**C.S. Lewis’s Space Trilogy and the Ecological Turn:** In the preface to the book *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction* (2014) Gerry Canavan writes that there is a tension between ‘Science’ and ‘Fiction’ that science fictions present. He is of the opinion that we live in a ‘science fictional’ world and that has destabilised the world (Canavan & Robinson: 2). Such is the worldview that C.S Lewis critiqued in his Space Trilogy.
The Silent Planet, the Unman in Lewis’s *Out of the Silent Planet*:

Lewis’s *Out of the Silent Planet* was published in the year 1938 and is popularly known as a space-trilogy or cosmic trilogy. It is known that Lewis started writing the story after his conversation with J.R.R. Tolkien, one of the Inkling members. The book was experimental in nature because Lewis never attempted any space travel writing before. Lewis and Tolkien were unhappy with the existing nature of the fictions. So they decided to write differently and chose the ‘Mythopoeic’ technique for their writing. In this attempt Lewis acknowledges his indebtedness to H.G. Wells. Lewis in this book defines the earth as the Silent planet. The whole book actually explores the reasons behind this silence of the earth. There are many questions that come up after reading this book – Why is the earth called the Silent Planet in outer space? What is the relation between the earth and Malacandra? How is Malacandra different from the earth? What is the connection between myth and ecology? What is the connection between reason and imagination? Is Science dehumanising?

Lewis has answers to all these questions and there lies the significance of the book. Lewis’s first trilogy *Out of the Silent Planet* narrates the story of a Cambridge Academic person, Dr. Ransom who was abducted to the red planet, Malacandra on a spaceship by two devilish companions Weston and Devine. Their objective was to sacrifice Ransom’s life for extracting the planet’s treasures. Fortunately, Ransom was rescued by the Malacandrians and Ransom learnt a lot from them about the earth. The Malacandrians called the earth ‘the Silent Planet’ (Thulcandra) and they were aware of its tragic story. A major device that Lewis uses in this book is the device of Dialogue. Lewis actually sets a dialogue between two worldviews and thus reveals the reality of life on earth. A major theme in the novel is the debate between good and
evil. The Biblical frame is used by Lewis to identify the wrong and evil in the society. Weston and Devine are placed as evil forces of the society against the benevolent forces like Ransom and Meleldil. Lewis attacks Weston and Devine’s anthropocentric thoughts and philosophy and draws on different related issues like Specicism and imperialism. Ransom acts like a mediator between the two worlds and the whole novel is about Ransom’s experience of this new world, Malacandra. The red planet is known as Malacandra in their local language. Ransom learnt the language of the Malacandrians and could communicate with them. Ransom was helped by the creature ‘hross’ on the red planet. The Malacandrians followed the principles of Oyarsa whom they called Meldilorn. The hross used to enjoy songs and poetry and the creature called Sorn had knowledge in history, astronomy and science. The Pfitfltriggi was the third race and was skilful in making beautiful objects. The Eldil and Oyarsa were invisible. From Oyarsa Ransom came to know that the Malacandrians called the earth, a silent planet, because the voice of the creature similar to Oyarsa who used to rule over the earth had not been heard. Ransom was summoned before Oyarsa. They also summoned Weston and Devine. But they asked Weston and Devine to leave the red planet. On the other hand, Ransom was invited to stay on Malacandra. However, Ransom chose to go back to his place with Weston and Devine. Weston and Devine were not welcomed because their intentions were bad and they were after the treasures of the red planet. It is a surprising fact that this novel was written before the event of Man’s first flight to Space. Lewis could imagine and predict the consequences of such an adventure to an outer space and evils of scientism. He expressed his concern over possible human exploitation of outer space and subsequent conflicts. At the core of the novel is ransom’s battle against the
evil forces. Ransom was chosen by Lewis as the hero of the novel even though we find him indifferent and reluctant at the beginning. By not accepting Weston and Devine on Malacandra, the Oyarsa clarified that the evil had no place in Malacandra. Lewis presents Malacandra like an Arcadia, a place of harmony and peace. Weston and Devine were critiqued for treating the Malacandrians like animals and for abducting Ransom wrongfully. The Oyarsa silenced the two for their greed and lust for Malacandrian assets. The Oyarsa blamed the two for their misdeeds,

> Be silent. You, thick one, have told me nothing of yourself, so I will tell it to you. In your own world you have attained great wisdom concerning bodies and by this you have been able to make a ship that can cross the heaven; but in all other things you have the mind of an animal. (Lewis 1960:171)

Oyarsa blamed Weston for treating wrongfully the man of his own race. Oyarsa said,

> I did not know that the Bent one had done so much in your world and still I don’t understand it. If you were mine I would unbody you even now. Don’t think follies; by my hand Maleldil does greater things than this, and I can unmake you even on the borders of your own world’s air. But I do not yet resolve to do this. It is for you to speak. Let me see if there is anything in your mind besides fear and death and desire. (Lewis 1960: 172)

Here we find that Oyarsa strongly reacted to Weston and Devine’s act of follies and asked them to clarify their words and intentions. But Weston and Devine could not communicate directly to Oyarsa as they did not know the A B C of Malacandrian language. Ransom was asked to translate their words. However, Ransom did not translate his exact words. He changed the words of Weston because Weston expressed his real intentions behind his visit. In his speech Weston tried to give Oyarsa an idea of Western Progress and his faith in further progress in science. Weston said that it was the right of the higher over the lower to supersede the primitive and rustic. Weston’s colonial desires and pride are reflected in his words,
To you I may seem a vulgar robber, but I bear on my shoulders the destiny of human race. Your tribal life with stone-age weapons and beehive huts, its primitive coracles and elementary social structure, has nothing to compare with civilization-with our science, medicine and law, our armies, our architectures, our commerce, and our transport system which is rapidly annihilating space and time. Our right to supersede you is the right of the higher over the lower Life. (Lewis 1960: 173)

In the next few lines, his evil designs became more prominent.

It is in her right, the right, or, if you will, the might of Life herself, that I am prepared without flinching to plant the flag of man on the soil of Malacandra: to march on, step by step, superseding, where necessary, the lower forms of life that we find, claiming planet after planet, system after system, till our posterity-whatever strange form and yet unguessed mentality they have assumed-dwell in the universe wherever the universe is habitable (Lewis 1960: 175)

It is certain from the words of Weston that he was planning for some inter planetary colonial enterprise. His faith in progress in science made him blind to the fact that human life has limitations. Oyarsa was disappointed and sad to know that human has no love and care for fellow human beings. Oyarsa called it an act of the bent one. Oyarsa was surprised to see Weston’s hypocrisy and selfishness. Oyarsa said to Weston in utter surprise,

Strange! You don’t love any one of your race-you would have let me kill Ransom. You do not love the mind of your race, nor the body. Any kind of creature will please you if only it is begotten by your kind as they now are. It seems to me, Thick One, that what you really love is no completed creature but the very seed itself: for that is all that is left. (Lewis 1960: 177)

Oyarsa explained before Ransom and Weston about the truth of their world. She explained that Malacandra was older than the World and was nearer to its death. She said that all worlds would die. The Malacandrians were not like those on earth. Meleldil did not make them long liver. They never attempted to colonise the earth
because Maleldil did not wish it. Oyarsa further explained to Weston that Malacandrians were peaceful creatures and the weakest of all did not have any fear. Oyarsa said,

The weakest of my people does not fear death. It is the Bent One, the lord of your world, who wastes your lives and befouls them with flying from what you know will overtake you in the end. If you were subjects of Maleldil you would have peace. (Lewis 1960: 179)

Ransom translated the words that Weston uttered before Oyarsa revealing his real intentions. But Ransom did not tell everything that Weston said, because they were against the rules of Malacandra. Ransom, however clearly got to know about Westen’s evil design. Oyarsa asked Ransom to speak his decision. He decided to go back to earth with the two. He explained before Oyarsa,

Love of our own kind is not the greatest of laws, but you, Oyarsa, have said it is a law. If I cannot live in Thulcandra, it is better for me not to live at all. (Lewis 1960:182)

To these words, Oyarsa responded,

It seems to me that this is the beginning of more comings and goings between the heavens and the worlds and between one world and another-though not such as the Think One hoped. (Lewis 1960:183)

Those last words to Ransom carry great significance because here lay Lewis’s chief notion of space and time. Lewis wrote his space trilogy with a special purpose. Lewis removes his mask at the end of his chapters and concludes his book with the following words,

Now that ‘Weston’ has shut the door, the way to the planets lies through the past; if there is to be any more space-travelling, it will have to be time –travelling as well…! (Lewis 1960: 206)
Here Lewis has written about Weston’s inability to see the future consequences. Lewis believed in a planetary cosmology that Western science had long rejected. According to that old Cosmology, the earth was not the centre of the Universe and that the seven planets of old cosmology had symbolic significance. His interest was mostly on the concept of the Seven Heavens that Medieval Cosmology described in the past. In the Poem ‘The Planets’ by C.S Lewis here he described the significance of the Medieval Cosmology. He personifies the planets and describes their attributes. According to Medieval Cosmology, the Sun and Moon are also called planets. The others were Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Lewis addresses the Moon as ‘Lady Luna’ which enchants and sometimes changes minds to madness. He calls Mercury ‘the Lord of Language’ that mixes sounds with senses. Mars is called ‘a Haughty God’. Saturn is in the seventh region where sickness and silence dwell. In the novel Out of the Silent planet, the Earth is portrayed as the silent one with martial attributes. On the contrary, the Mars is presented as peaceful planet. So Lewis reversed these characteristics of the planets in order to present the discarded image of the planets. Watson’s evil design to colonize the peaceful world of Malacandra was a plan for the destruction of Malacandrian natural habitat and its rich treasure. But Weston did not know that Malacandra was older than the earth and was nearing its death. In the novel Ransom plays his role as a mediator and conscience of the novel. He was somebody who could understand the language of the old world. He is characterised as the interpreter of two worldviews and he was the one who tried to bridge the gap between the two worlds. Even though he was initially confused, he conquered fear and regained his spirit after he came into contact with the inhabitants of Malacandra. He came to learn that the Malacandrians had old stone-age culture,
poetry and music. They were very hospitable and loved to lead a natural life. They were unfamiliar to words like ‘race’, ‘progress’, ‘beget’, ‘conflict and war’. It was peaceful and spiritual world. Against the character of Ransom, Devine and Weston are like ‘Unman’ with total lack of sympathy, fellow-feeling and emotions. They are the symbols of greed and pride. Weston was quite boastful of his achievements and thought it would be possible to supersede the Malacandrians.

Lewis designs Malacandra as an un-fallen utopia where peace prevailed till its nearing end. Against the materialist world of the earth, Lewis presents the spiritual world of Malacandra where nature is respected and obeyed. Within a theological framework, Lewis engages his audience into a dialogue between man and un-man, fallen and the un-fallen. The purpose was to have a better understand of the spiritual and social problem and crisis on earth. A meaningful dialogue often leads to new roads and solutions. Hence Lewis perhaps was looking for some solutions to cure the diseased modern world. Man fell from the grace of heaven because his rebellion against the Oyarsa on earth and since then the earth was called the silent world. Hence Lewis was like Milton in the twentieth century with his concept of paradise and fall of man. Lewis’s advocacy of the Malacandran primitivism is set against the evolutionary myth of human progress and development. If we compare Lewis with H.G. Wells, we find that Lewis was more optimistic in regaining the lost past. The extreme sense of loss and destruction that we encounter in Wells is not present in Lewis. Lewis’s impact is more psychological than physical and a vein of irony and satire runs through his cosmic narratives. A dreamlike, allegorical quality is at the heart of his narrative input and that makes the books so interesting and worth reading.
Thus Lewis’s Science fictions are named cosmic trilogy for their chemistry of myth and realism.

**C.S Lewis’s attack on Scientism and Scientific Naturalism:**

Lewis was not against either science or technology. He was against the demoralising effect of science on the natural world. His evangelical stand was against the monopoly and exploitation of science. He was against scientism of the scientists like Devine and Weston who dreamt of a colonised world of power and politics.

Lewis was against such too much dependence on science. Lewis has showed concern over the collapse of the spiritual and ethical values in the society due to hard secularism and technocracy. It was the one-dimensional society that Lewis critiqued.

In a letter to Bede Griffiths, Lewis wrote,

> The scientists have got us in such a middle that at present rationalism is in our side and enthusiasm is an enemy: the opposite was true in the nineteenth century and will be true again. (Ford 2009:56)

In another letter written on 10th May, 1945, Lewis wrote to Bede Griffiths about his idea of writing a book on the New Creation, about his dream of new earth and new heavens.

> I too have been very much occupied by the idea of the New Creation. I am absolutely with you. New heavens and earth—the resurrection of the body—how we have neglected these doctrines and indeed left the romantics and even the Marxists to step into the gap. (Ford 110)

Here Lewis has dreamt of a resurrected world that will transform the traumatized scenario. He is looking back to the past for inspiration and solution. Lewis believed that a return of faith would put everything into place. Lewis’s book *Miracle* is such an
attempt to imagine a transformed world. The book invents new ways of looking at nature. As Lewis himself acknowledges,

To write a book on miracles, which are in a sense invasions of nature, has made me realise Nature herself as I’ve never done before. You don’t see Nature till you believe in the supernatural…Those who mistake Nature for the All are just those who can never realise her as a particular creature with her own flawed, terrible, beautiful individuality. (Lewis 1960:110)

In the light of the New Creation all miracles are like snow drops-anticipations of the full spring and high summer which is slowly coming over the whole wintry field of space and time. (Lewis: 1960, 110)

Lewis’s optimism amidst confusion and crisis is evident in these lines in the letter. His space trilogy attempts to invent such a resurrected world. It is like a search for a beautiful, un-fallen world in Malacandra and Perelandra.

**A crime against Nature in C.S Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength***:

Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength* was published in 1945 and the sub-title for the novel is “A Modern Fairy Tale for Grown Ups”. The sub-title of the novel makes it very clear that Lewis has revived the old fairy tale tradition through the book. Fairy tales are generally meant for children. But here, the book is written for the grown-ups. Hence it bears a great significance. The narrative of story-telling is devised in a way to address the contemporary issues. Lewis has made a great combination of fact and fiction to make the narrative more substantial and effective. In his preface to the book, Lewis wrote,

I have called this a fairy-tale in the hope that no one who dislikes fantasy may be misled by the first chapters into reading further, and then, complain by his disappointments. If you ask me why -intending to write about magicians, devils, pantomime animals and planetary angels-I nevertheless begin with such hum-drum
scenes and persons, I reply that I am following the traditional fairy-tale. (Lewis 1945: IX)

According to Lewis, the fairy tale is still relevant because once it used to hold the imagination of the people.

We do not always notice its method, because the cottages, castles, woodcutters and petty kings with which a fairy tale opens have become for us as remote as the witches and ogres to which it proceeds. But they were not remote at all to the men who made and first enjoyed the stories. They were indeed, more realistic and commonplace than Bracton College to me: for many German peasants had actually met cruel stepmothers, where I have never, in any university, come across a college like Bracton. This is a ‘tall story’ about devilry, though it has behind it a serious ‘point’ which I have tried to make in my *The Abolition of Man*. (Lewis 1945: IX)

In the lines above the writer has clearly pointed out that it is a tall story about devilry. The story has personal undertones and the period of the story was vaguely after the war as Lewis himself mentioned. The novel begins with several problems—the problems between Jane Studdock and her husband, Mark Studdock, the problematic situation at Bracton College regarding the selling of college property and agony of a frustrated married woman, Jane, frustration of a modern man, Mark Studdock. In the novel Lewis develops the character of Mark as a frustrated individual, a confused person in search of a stable career. Due to his unstable career, he fails to live a happy life and remains alienated. His sense of alienation and frustration affects his personal life also. He fell under the grip of conspiracy and was forced to work with N.I.C.E. which stood for the National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments. The N.I.C.E robbed him of his worth and exploited him. He wanted to change his job but could not make his mind as he grew indecisive and impatient. His married life with Jane was not running smoothly due to such frustration and detachment. Similarly, Jane, Mark’s wife is portrayed as a confused woman, frightened and anxious due to her unhappy
married life and unstable career of her husband. She could not express her grief and deep sense of insecurity to Mark as they hardly got time to sit together and talk. There was communication gap between them and Jane became accustomed to such loneliness and detachment. Mark’s life became a hell due to his lack of commitment towards his relation and his ambition for a stable job at N.I.C.E. Mark was not able to see the realities in N.I.C.E and its underlying conspiracy. On the other hand, Jane had the power to see and sense the realities. Mark became so ambitious that he could not trace the problem and committed mistakes. Lewis also portrayed the horrors of a corrupt and materialist world and the growth of devilry in human through various characters in the novel. Lewis was actually writing about the increasing crimes against humanity and Nature. That Hideous Strength is set in England and it narrates the story of exploitation and assault on earth. The greater design of the novel is an apocalyptic one. England, at the time of Lewis was facing great environmental crisis. A heavy act of deforestation was going on as part of a massive industrialist enterprise. England was facing an apocalypse. That Hideous Strength actually represents the scene of environmental crisis and exploitation of nature. The first chapter of the novel ‘Sale of College Property’ locates the problem inherent in the book. There was a project to deforest the ancient Bracton Wood located at Edgestow and to erect the new headquarters for the N.I.C.E which stood for the National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments. Lewis symbolically presents the story of human fallibility and destruction of the environment by introducing the functions of the N.I.C.E in the novel. The Bracton wood was like the life blood for the people of Edgestow. But the corrupt, selfish society could not recognise its worth and dignity. The permission for deforestation was received through deceit and corruption. Lewis questions this aspect
of industrial society that fails to protect nature. About the wood, Lewis expressed in the following,

Very few people were allowed into the Bragdon Wood. The gate was by Inigo Janes and was the only entry: a high wall enclosed the Wood, which was perhaps a quarter of a mile from east to west. If you came in from the street and went through the College to reach it, the sense of gradual penetration into a holy of holies was very strong. (Lewis1945:11)

Thus Lewis introduces the Wood with all its beauty and holiness. When he entered the Wood, he felt something very special and heart touching. He writes,

As I went forward over the quiet turf I had the sense of being received. The trees were just so wide apart that one saw uninterrupted foliage in the distance but the place where one stood always to be a clearing; surrounded by a world of shadows, one walked in mild sunshine. (Lewis 1945:12)

He felt,

This is the sort of place which, as a child, one would have been rather afraid of or else would have liked very much indeed. (Lewis 1945:12-13)

As the narrator reached the center of the Wood and saw the well and the ancient pavement around it his heart felt a kind of peacefulness. He did not step on it. He lay down in the grass and touched it with his fingers. He expressed in excitement,

I did not step on it but lay down in the grass and touched it with my fingers. For this was the heart of Bracton or Bragdon Wood: out of this all the leg ends had come and on this I suspected, the very existence of the college had originally depended. (Lewis1945:13)

Lewis writes that the wood was older than the Bractons and it had a Medieval existence. Such was the impact of the Wood. However, the business of the sale of Bragdon Wood really threatened the existence of the wood. There was an attempt on the part of the sellers to hide the real agenda. Even Mark Studdock was enticed to join
the cruel agenda. Hence many things followed through corruption and deceit. Mark’s wife Jane came to learn about the conspiracy about the selling of the wood from the Dimbles and was shocked to find that her husband was also involved.

**The Evil design: N.I.C.E:**

The N.I.C.E. stood for National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments. Nobody exactly knew its real objectives because its real agenda was not revealed. As Lewis writes, it was the most controversial business. The N.I.C.E had great hopes for a better world. It aimed at productive research. When the meeting was held regarding the N.I.C.E, many questions were raised by various socially concerned people. Curry, the Sub-warden of the college rose to introduce a few letters to the members of the meeting and those letters were from various persons from different places. The first letter was for the preservation of the ancient monuments at Bragdon. But that suggestion was received with ill temperament and disappointment. It was clear from the prospects of the meeting that N.I.C.E. was not interested in the preservation of the ancient wood. It was treated like a private property of the college. Another letter came from a society of Spiritualists who wanted to investigate the ‘reported phenomenon’ in the wood. But that was also refused later on. Lord Feverstone, a member of the college fully agreed to the action undertaken by the college. Thus the N.I.C.E’s main focus was on profit and development. They could not predict the cost of such a large scale devastation of nature after deforestation. The narrator says,

The few real ‘Die-hards’ present, to whom Bragdon Wood was almost a basic assumption of life, could hardly bring themselves to realise what was happening. When they found their voices, they struck a discordant note amid the general buzz of cheerful comment. They were manoeuvered into the position of appearing as the
party who passionately desired to see Bragdon surrounded with barbed wire. (Lewis 1945:23)

An air of conspiracy ran through Bragdon and the evil design was given shape to destroy the worth and identity of the wood in pursuit of profit and progress. This was evident from Mr. Dimble’s comment over the controversial business of the N.I.C.E. Dimble informed Jane about the evil design of the N.I.C.E and about the selling of the Bragdon wood. Jane became more surprised when she came to know that her husband, Mark was also involved in the deal. Dr Dimble also warned Jane against the threatening business of selling woods. During his lunch with his wife and Jane, Dr. Dimble talked about the Arthurian legend where there were always two set of characters in those stories. Dimble expressed that there seemed to be some similarities between the stories and the picture of Britain at that time. By this comparison he actually meant the possibilities of invasions in Britain. Dimble made a shocking revelation that the historical figure, Merlin’s body was buried under the Bragdon wood.

In the chapter “Dinner with the Sub-Warden”, Lewis informs the readers about the main objectives of the N.I.C.E and the plans of the Fellows at Bragdon college. They had high hopes from the N.I.C.E. some of the fellows including Curry, Busby, Lord Feverstone and Mark Studdock were in a discussion regarding the functions and future of experiments in N.I.C.E. Bushby said that N.I.C.E was the first attempt to take applied science from national point of view. He hoped that it would be able to mobilise the talent of that country. Curry called it the beginning of a new scientific era. He saw great future in the development of Pragmatometry. Mark opined that the experiments in N.I.C.E would be able to use science in solving social problems
(Lewis 1945: 37-39). Lord Feverstone continued his talk with Mark after the dinner. He said to Mark that humanity is at the cross road. The question is to choose either obscurantism or order,

It does really look as if we now had the power to dig ourselves in as a species for a pretty staggering period, to take control of our own destiny. If science is really given a free hand it can now take over the human race and re-condition it: make man really efficient animal. If it doesn’t-well we’re done. (Lewis 1945:42)

Feverstone mentioned about three problems with regard to this expected change in humanity.

First, according to him, was the interplanetary problem. The second problem was their rivals on earth and resistance from various angles. The third problem was human himself. He informed Mark that the only person who could do all that was Weston, who was murdered by a respectable Cambridge don. Mark responded to Feverstone by saying that the preservation of the human race must be the right choice. Feverstone argued that man must take the charge of man which would mean some men taking charge over the rest. Feverstone clearly suggested that they should take the charge. If Feverstone’s words are examined properly, it becomes evident that he was thinking in terms of future capitalistic ideas and colonising principles. This was evident in his use of phrases like ‘taking charge’, ‘taking over’, ‘preservation of human race’ etc. He was interested in some kind of interplanetary invasion or expedition in the near future. He further said that through education and pre-natal education that could be achieved. By real education he did not mean either ‘take-it’ or ‘leave-it’. He thought about sterilisation of the unfit, selective breeding and liquidation of backward races (Lewis 1945: 44). This was Feverstone’s specicism, reductive anthropocentrism and to many extent fascism. His mission completely excluded the non-human other. There was
fellow called Jules, who was a distinguished novelist and science populariser and he was associated with the N.I.C.E; but he was rejected by Fevertone for his socialist ideas. Hingest, another fellow scientist at Bragdon, was a physical chemist. He was a man of reputation. He shared his bitter experience with Mark and Blizzard at Bragdon. He expressed that he was no longer interested in N.I.C.E because, according to Hingest, the fellows were talking about unreal issues. He warned them and advised them to retreat (Lewis 1945: 67). It is important to mention here that Mark Studdock was a sociologist. Hence the fellows at Bragdon were not willing to engage him in important jobs. Mark was quite puzzled when two other fellows at Bragdon, Steele and Cosser warned him against getting involved with Feverstone. At last appeared another fellow from Bragdon, Professor Filostrato, a physiologist, who differed from Steele and Cosser. Filostrato tried to convince Mark that N.I.C.E would do a great job and introduced him to the institutional police, Miss Hardcastle, a thickly built lady. Mark was totally perplexed by them as he was not sure what to do there at N.I.C.E, because none seemed to be interested in his affair. He felt tempted. Mark’s sense of frustration and anxiety could be perceived from the following lines which he repeatedly said,

I have a strong objection to being put in a false position. (Lewis 1945: 70)

Miss Hardcastle also tried to convince Mark that they must work together. She however, asked him to be careful from Frost and old Wither and added that Steele was a dangerous man. All these words conveyed the fact that there was some conspiracy and deception that was going on at Bragdon about which Mark, perhaps, was not aware of. This was also because Hingest left the N.I.C.E predicting some conspiracy in it. Hingest advised him not to mix up with N.I.C.E.
Here is a conversation that took place between Hingest and Mark,

‘You haven’t told me why you are leaving us yourself,’ said Mark.

‘Oh well, it all depends what a man likes. If you enjoy the society of that Italian eunuch and the mad parson and that Hardcastle girl—her grandmother would have boxed her ears if she were alive—of course, there’s nothing more to be said.’

‘I suppose it’s hardly to be judged on purely social grounds— I mean, its something more than a club.’

‘Eh? Judged? Never judged anything in my life, to the best of my knowledge, except at a flower show. Its all a question of taste. I came here because I thought it had something to do with science. Now that I find it’s something more like a political conspiracy, I shall go home. I am too old for that kind of thing, and if wanted to join a conspiracy, this wouldn’t be my choice.’ (Lewis 1945: 84-85)

While leaving the place, Hingest again said to Mark,

‘Take my advice, Studdock. Or at least think it over. I don’t believe in sociology myself, but you’ve got quite a decent career before you if you stay at Bracton. You’ll do yourself no good by getting mixed up with the NICE- and, by God, you’ll do nobody else any good either.’

Mark felt himself like an outsider and was puzzled by different views about the objectives of N.I.C.E.

He felt a hesitation about going back into the house. It might mean further talk with interesting and influential people; but it might also mean feeling once more an outsider, hanging about and watching conversations which he could not join. Anyway, he was tired. (Lewis 1945: 87)

The Dimbles were quite sure that the N.I.C.E was going to spoil humanity and destroy England. They could sense the horror of the situation when gardens would be replaced by great lorries and traction engines. The grip of the N.I.C.E on Edgestow was tightening; but no one knew that it was exploiting the land of England. The permissions for deforestation were obtained through deception and manipulations.
Thus N.I.C.E entered like an evil in the Garden of Eden. The old agrarian landscape was soon replaced by heavy industrialisation. The wood was no longer available. It was treated like a commodity for human profit. N.I.C.E’s hidden agenda remained hidden. We find that both the wood and Mark became victims of the rhetoric of progress. Mark was tempted by Feverstone, Frost, Wither, Straik and Filostrato to join N.I.C.E, to become a part of that sinful act of crimes against nature. The wood that used to be the essence of the people of Edgestow, became a commodity. Filostrato, in fact, instructed to cut down the trees because he wanted to get rid of them. He called the forest a weed. He even said that there were civilised trees in Persia. His real motif was to clean the planet. This was actually a ridiculous affair on the part of a college Professor.

In the chapter “The Liquidation of Anachronisms”, Lewis describes the effect of deforestation and displacement in people’s lives. Mrs. Dimble had to take shelter in Jane’s place as her own place was unendurable. She explained the situation to Jane,

“That’s what Cecil said... Just think of it, Jane. The first thing we saw when we poked our heads out of the window this morning was a lorry on the drive with its back wheels in the middle of the rose bed, unfolding a small army of what looked like criminals, with picks and spades. Right in our own garden! There was an odious little man in a peaked cap who talked to Cecil with a cigarette in his mouth, at least it wasn’t in his mouth but seccotined onto his upper lip- you know- and guess what he said? He said they’d have no objection to our remaining in possession (of the house, mind you, not the garden) till 8 o’clock tomorrow morning. No objection! (Lewis 1945: 90)

Mrs. Dimble described what she saw in her place- the flares and noise everywhere, horrible workplace and expressed with grief that it was not possible to live by the riverside any longer. The riverside at Edgestow was excavated and the cottages were out of place. Great disturbances occurred at Edgestow due to NICE’s prospects.
Wrong information were published regarding NICE’s works that the NICE was settling down very comfortably and that the local people cooperated completely. It was not the actual picture. The newspapers hid the ugly realities at Edgestow. In the chapter “Fog”, Lewis symbolically represents the growing sense of unrest and crisis at Edgestow. The fog grew denser at Edgestow and Belbury due to excessive pollution, noise and climatic changes. Lewis writes,

‘The fog, which covered Edgestow as well as Belbury, continued and grew denser. At Edgestow, one regarded it as ‘coming up from the river’, but in reality it lay all over the heart of England. It blanketed the whole town so that walls dripped and you could write your name in the dampness on tables and men worked by artificial light at midday. The workings, where Bragdon Wood had been, ceased to offend conservative eyes and became mere clanging, thuddings, hootings, shouts, curses and metallic screams in an invisible world. (Lewis 1945: 157)

The confidential news was that the river Wynd was to be diverted and the conspiracy was revealed gradually that there was to be no river at Edgestow. Lewis narrates about the changing scenario of the whole place after NICE’s encroachment and infrastructural settlings.

The grip of the NICE was tightening. The river itself which had once been brownish green and amber and smooth- skinned silver, tugging at the reeds and playing with the red roots, now flowed opaque, thick with mud, sailed on by endless fleets of empty tins, sheets of paper, cigarette ends and fragments of wood, sometimes varied by rainbow patches of oil. Then, the invasion actually crossed it. (Lewis 1945: 158)

This explains the real conspiracy of the NICE and there was a clash between Feverstone and Busby. Busby was shocked to find that the NICE wanted to extend its territory up to the college walls and at this he strongly refused. The college too had to face hazards due to the NICE and the river Wynd was doomed.
Lewis writes,

The college was caught in the net of necessity. They sold the little strip of their side of the Wynd which meant so much. It was no more than a terrace between the eastern walls and the water. Twenty-four hours later the NICE boarded over the doomed Wynd and converted the terrace into a dump. (Lewis 1945: 158)

Now the picture was clear to everyone at Edgestow and at the college. Bracton was wholly blamed for bringing the NICE to Edgestow. As a result the college became unpopular and the undergraduates stopped attending lectures of Bracton dons. The innocent warden of the college was mobbed in the streets. There was, thus, great unrest and disturbance at Edgestow and Bracton. This was followed by threatening and disorderly behaviour on the part of the NICE people. But as it has been mentioned before, these unpleasant incidents were never brought to the forefront.

It is important to mention here that Lewis was not against science, but scientism. He was against the conspiracy of scientism against humanity. Scientism is a dehumanising endeavour. In an essay entitled “On Living in an Atomic Age”, Lewis noted that survival of human should not be at the cost of oppression of other life. It would be immoral. Lewis also brings the question of theology and organised religion and its debate with modern science and technology. Lewis introduces a mad Parson in the chapter “The Liquidation of Anachronism” and his conversation with Mark regarding religion is remarkable. The parson calls himself the poor, weak, unworthy prophet who could understood the real motif of the NICE. The poor parson warned Mark against the NICE’s evil design and called science an ‘irresistible instrument’. He warned Mark,

Sweep away all the idea of co-operation. Does clay cooperate with the potter? Did Cyrus co-operate with the Lord? These people will be used. I shall be used too.
Instruments, vehicles. But here comes the point that concerns you, young man. You have no choice whether you will be used or not. There is no turning back once you have set your hand to the plough. No one goes out of the NICE. (Lewis 1945: 97)

This observation comes from an insane parson. But this was something that was also true. The parson narrates the picture of a horrific future and that was a prediction as well. In his words one can trace the sense of insecurity that people England experienced during those days.

In the chapter “The Liquidation of Anachronisms”, we find that Cosser, a colleague of Mark asks him to go with him to a village called Cure Hardy to get out a report. Cosser informed Mark about the plan of diverting the river Wynd. The plan was to divert the river and bring down an artificial channel. This was to build a new model village to be called Jules Hardy or Wither Hardy. At this information, Mark was surprised and expressed concern about the river. Mark objected by saying that Cure Hardy was a beauty spot and a place of ancient heritage. Mark sensed some kind of conspiracy there at NICE as he was not clearly informed about his job and position at NICE. He refused to cooperate at first, but he could not do it. He accompanied Cosser to Cure Hardy. There he had a different experience. The beauty of the place had a miraculous influence upon him. Lewis writes,

Mark was not as a rule very sensitive to beauty, but Jane and his love for Jane had already awakened him a little in this respect. Perhaps the winter morning sunlight affected him all the more because he had never been taught to regard it as specially beautiful and it therefore worked on his senses without interference. (Lewis 1945: 107)

Mark was cured of his sickness by the fresh beauty of the place. His sickness was caused by anxiety, life stress and unrest. When Mark proceeded to Cure Hardy, its
beauty began to heal his mind and he exclaimed with joy, “How nice it is!” as he walked through the village he started liking it. He said to Cosser,

I was saying that on a fine morning there is something rather attractive about a place like this, in spite of its obvious absurdities. (Lewis 1945: 109)

Cosser, however, did not approve of his words and he simply expressed that he wanted to get rid of such a place. Cosser was such a person who did not know how to appreciate the beauty of nature. His inability to enjoy the songs of birds indicates his mechanical sensibilities. Mark then reacted to Cosser,

What I am really thinking about is not this pub, but the whole village. Of course, you’re quite right: that sort of thing has to go. But it had its pleasant side. We’ll have to be careful that whatever we’re building up in its place will be really to beat it on all levels—not merely in efficiency. (Lewis 1945: 110)

Mark clarified this point because Cosser was keen on building constructions at Cure Hardy at the cost of everything. Mark began to find it very boring to stay with Cosser and became sick of the NICE.

Lewis writes about Mark,

It made Mark feel as if he were on a holiday, for it was only on holidays that he had ever wandered about an English village. For that reason he felt pleasure in it. It did not quite escape him that the face of the backward labourer was rather more interesting than Cosser’s and his voice a great deal more pleasing to the ear. (Lewis 1945: 108)

Mark remained confused about what to do next. He even thought of changing his job. He decided to meet the DD of NICE at Belbury for his work and went accordingly. But he was quite disappointed after meeting him, because he did not get definite assurance about his post and salary. Meanwhile, an unpleasant incident took place at Bracton. Some people began to fight with others; dozens of voices began to shout and threw
stones. The situation became so intolerable and noisy that it frayed everyone’s nerve at Bracton. Besides, the work of conversion of the ancient wood into ‘an inferno of mud’ was going on and this again contributed to the disturbances. In his autobiographical account, Lewis expresses his distaste for mechanical city life and its noisy surroundings. Lewis had a fascination for countryside hills and greenery. When he went to Belfast he saw the contrasting pictures. He writes about the flat floor of the valley and its industrial set ups. Lewis had a deep interest in travelling. He considered himself to be fortunate in this sense because his father had no car. He went out mostly with his friends. He shares his experiences in his book *Surprised by Joy,*

I measured distances by the standard of man, man walking on his two feet, not by the standard of the internal combustion engine. I had not been allowed to deflower the very idea of distance; in return I possessed ‘infinite riches’ in what would have been to motorists “a little room”. The truest and most horrible claim made for modern transport is that it “annihilates space”. It does. It annihilates one of the most glorious gifts we have been given. It is a vile inflation which lowers the value of distance, so that a modern boy travels a hundred miles with less sense of liberation and pilgrimage and adventure than his grandfather got from travelling ten.(Lewis 1955: 157)

Here Lewis brings to light some important insights. Lewis expresses his concern over the changing nature of the society and its mechanical philosophy. Lewis blames the modern man for annihilating the space and their colonising tendencies. The sense of liberation, adventure and pilgrimage that one enjoys with nature is lost due to the foregrounding of machines and modern transports. Lewis grows nostalgic about this sense of the past and sense of joy that their grandfathers used to enjoy.

Lewis’s novel is significant for its thematic structure. In this novel he has drawn two narratives- one apocalyptic and the other about change and renewal. Along with the
story of the conspiracy of NICE, Lewis presents a sensational story of the murder of William Hingest who was once an integral part of NICE. What was the reason behind his withdrawal from NICE and why was he murdered? The novel does not give a clear answer to it. But give indications that this was part of the NICE conspiracy. Surprisingly enough Jane had a dream where she actually saw a murder taking place at Edgestow. Does it have any connection with the real murder of Mr. Hingest? Jane saw the vision before the actual death of Mr. Hingest and the news came to her as a real shock. It becomes clear later on that Mr. Hingest became a victim of the NICE conspiracy and he was murdered. Through this story of suspense and conspiracy, Lewis draws attention to the problems that the place was facing. The land of Edgestow was annihilated and exploited. This explains the danger of man-made environment.

There are two sections in this novel. Two different narratives are placed side by side—one is the events at Bragdon college, the other with the Dimbles. The two narratives are drawn in parallel to design the story of apocalypse and renewal. The novel ends with a happy note because the good is restored and evil subsided. The NICE’s evil intension was to convert the city of Edgestow into a police state. But this evil design was refuted by a group led by Ransom near the place of St. Anne’s. Mark’s wife, Jane came under the influence of St. Anne’s and came to learn about the conspiracy of NICE. Jane helps Ransom in his mission against NICE and the search for the legendary wizard Merlin. Merlin with other angelic figures help Ransom and his group in their fight against NICE.

Thus the whole story surrounds round the complex lives of the couple Mark and Jane Studdock. Both were disturbed, frustrated because of the unrest at their place. The
project of N.I.C.E failed and the couple, Jane and Mark had a renewal of love. Lewis gave a new shape to the apocalyptic narrative by attributing a more positive and optimistic set up to it. The pessimistic attire that we notice in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four* and Aldus Huxley’s *Brave New World* is not found in Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength*.

**Perelandra: The Unfallen World**

Perelandra is Lewis’s second science fiction novel where Lewis depicts the question of moral conflict and the process of dehumanisation. The old Biblical story of Adam and Eve is reused here with a new end. Perelandra is still the region of peace and innocence in Lewis’s book. However, a threat is highlighted in the story of Perelandra. The threat came from professor Weston who was in his desperate mission to exploit the innocence of the planet. Dr. Ranson was sent to Perelandra or Venus to stop this evil act of Weston. Lewis presents the world of Perelandra as the abode of peace and harmony, like that in of Eden. Lewis’s archaic vision can be traced in the descriptions that he gave about the place. In the earlier novel, *Out of the Silent Planet* we found that there was a conflict between Dr. Ransom and Weston. This was due to their separate missions on the land of Perelandra. Weston followed Ransom to Perelandra and the conflict continued. Weston’s evil design threatened the peacefulness of the planet. But Ransom was determined to stop it. Matthew Dickerson and David O’Hara in their book *Narnia and the Fields of Arbol: The Environmental Vision of C.S. Lewis* wrote the following about Perelandra,

> The second book in the space trilogy is quite different from the other two novels. Nearly all of its dialogue is among three characters, each of whom is, if not ‘representational’, at least representative and archetypal. This book, perhaps more than any other of Lewis’s, reads like a Platonic dialogue. (Lewis 1943:182).
In other words it can be said that Lewis is more direct in his approach to myth and theology in this book. Perelandra, however, was an older to the earth, but yet recently inhabited. Lewis designed this novel as sequel to the first space trilogy book *Out of the Silent Planet*. Here Lewis continues the story of conflict between Ransom and Weston. Here Dr. Ransom is transported to a primitive world by the Oyarsa of Malacandra. After reaching Perelandra, Ransom came to learn that Perelandra was under threat and that he was chosen for this mission to save the planet.

After reaching Perelandra, Ransom came to know that Weston had already entered the Planet. Lewis describes Ransom’s first impression after landing on Perelandra.

> It was almost like meeting pleasure itself for the first time. He buried his flushed face in the green translucence, and when he withdrew it, found himself once more on the top of it. (Lewis 1943: 36)

Lewis describes the beauty of the unfallen land of Perelandra in the following words,

> 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. (Lewis 1943: 36)

This description is like epic, like Dante’s *Divina Comedia*. Lewis spends the whole chapter to write about the heavenly beauty and gracefulness of the place. There was something extraordinary in Perelandra that might overload a human brain. Dr. Ransom began to ponder over issues like desire, pleasure and reason. The heavenly beauty and blissfulness of the place aroused in his mind a sense of belongingness and peace. As if he has received a new direction in life and a new definition of desire and pleasure.
In Peralandra, Ransom meets an individual known as the Green lady and he came to learn a lot from her about peralandran life. Lewis places Peralandra against Thulcandra, that is, the earth to critique the sinful humanity on earth. Thulcandra, the earth is called ‘the silent planet’ and ‘the Fixed land’ by the Malacandrians and Peralandrians because its notion of space was limited and closed. In the very beginning of the novel Lewis introduces the eldila, the inhabitants of that planet who neither ate nor breeds or brethe. They regarded ‘space’ which they called ‘deep heaven’ as their habitat and planets to them were not closed worlds. They called it the Field of arbol.

In the novel, Lewis presents a special character called Tenedril – the Green Lady. She is like the Eve of Perelandra. She becomes the victim of a scientist, Weston’s temptation. The Green Lady represents the innocence and purity of the unfallen land of Perelandra. From his conversation with the Green Lady, Dr. Ransom came to learn that Perelandra was a young world. Ranson received great insights on life and existence from the Green Lady. On his first introduction, Ransom was confused and shocked by her words and attire. Ransom tried to inform her about the threat to her world, about the entry of the evil. Ransom felt,

Gaiety and gravity together, splendour as of martyrdom yet with no pain in it at all, seemed to pour from her countenance. (Lewis 1943: 80)

Ransom informed the Green Lady that the earth is a fixed land. The Green Lady was surprised to learn that and added that perelandran law did not wish them to dwell in their world. The Green Lady then asked Ransom about the population on earth. Ransom replied,

‘There is not one fixed land, but many. And they are big: almost as big as the sea.’
Then she asked impatiently,

‘How do you endure it? Almost half your world empty and dead- Loads and loads of land, all tied down. Does not the very thought of it crush you?’

Ransom then replied,

‘Not at all. They very thought of a world which was all sea like yours would make my people unhappy and afraid.’ (Lewis 1943: 88)

The Green Lady was confused by Ransom’s explanations as there was no fixed land in Perelandra. There were only floating land.

In the chapter six of the book, Lewis informs us about the evil intensions of Professor Weston. He was a man obsessed with the idea of ‘Scientification’ (Lewis1943:97). Lewis writes,

It is the idea that humanity, having now sufficiently corrupted the planet where it arose, must at all costs contrive to seed itself over a larger area: that the vast astronomical distances which are God’s quarantine regulations, must somehow be overcome. This for a start. But beyond this lies the sweet poison of the false infinite-the wild dream that planet after planet, system after system, in the end galaxy after galaxy, can be forced to sustain, everywhere, and forever, the sort of life which is contained in the loins of our own species-a dream begotten by the hatred of death upon the fear of true immortality, fondled in secret by thousands of ignorant men and hundreds who are not ignorant. (Lewis: 1943, 97)

Here Lewis critiques the colonising impulse of Weston and many scientists who wish to exploit more planets in the name of progress and rationality. Lewis calls it irrational rationality because the agenda is destructive rather that constructive. In chapter seven of the book we come to know about Weston’s character in more detail. There was a long discussion between Ransom and Weston regarding their mission on Peralandra. They were engaged in a series of philosophical arguments over the question of progress and future of humanity.
Weston said to ransom,

To do myself justice, I should make it clear that the false humanist ideal of knowledge as an end in itself never appealed to me. I always wanted to know in order to achieve utility. At first, that utility naturally appeared to me in a personal form- I wanted scholarships, an income, and that generally recognised position in the world without which a man has no leverage. When those were attained, I began to look farther: to the utility of the human race! (Lewis 1943:107)

The key of human destiny was placed in my hands. It would be unnecessary –and painful to us both –to remind you how it was wrenched from me in Malacandra by a member of a hostile intelligent species whose existence, I admit, I had not anticipated. (Lewis 1943: 107)

Lewis was against the materialist philosophies and its reductive worldviews. Materialist philosophy is based on subjective interpretation of life and such views are frequently found in politics. Lewis believed that such reductive outlook cannot explain the complete truth of human. This is part of the process of dehumanisation. Lewis presents that Weston’s world a false utopia. His intention was narcissistic. Such a materialistic illusion destroys the sense of responsibility. This concept of materialism is critiqued by Lewis in his book *The Pilgrim’s Regress*.

When Ransom and the Green Lady stood face to face with Weston, Weston accused Ransom of seducing the Green Lady. Ransom understood that the devil had possessed him. Weston is found afterwards with the Green Lady. He tried to convince her that Maleldil wanted her to live on the fixed land and grow older. However, the Lady resisted the temptation. Weston tries several times to tempt the lady. But Ransom did not leave her alone. He tried to break his spell over her and she favoured Ransom’s explanation. Weston used the following words to tempt the Green Lady,

The women of my world are of a great spirit. They always reach out their hands for the new and unexpected good, and see that it is good long before the man
understand it. Their minds run ahead of what Maleldil has told them. They do not need to wait for Him to tell them what is good, but know it for themselves as He does. They are, as it were, like Maleldils. And because of their wisdom, their beauty is as much greater than yours as the sweetness of these gourds surpasses the taste of water. And because of their beauty the love which the men have for them is as much greater than the King’s love for you as the naked burning of Deep Heaven seen from my world is more wonderful than the golden roof of yours. (Lewis 1943: 128)

Thus Lewis presents Weston as the Satanic figure in the Eden of Perelandra and calls him the Un-Man. This also represents the sin of twentieth century man. The sin was about exploitation of nature and culture. In this book, Lewis uses the same model of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* with its story of temptation of Eve and danger from Satan. However, Lewis has not described the world of perelandra as a fallen world as the Satan in this book fails to tempt the Green Lady. Lewis has a message to convey to his readers. Lewis recounts the old story of temptation to throw light upon the sinning humanity of the West. The same theme is incorporated in Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters*. Lewis wishes to set an alarm for modern people who are being tempted by lust, pride and power. The two books *Perelandra* and *The Screwtape Letters* were written during the two world Wars and this has great significance. Lewis thus tried to address the spiritual crisis of that time and wished to revive the old religious unorthodox values to seek solutions. Lewis presents the novel in a dialogical pattern by which he set a debate among various spiritual and cultural ideas of his times. The novel has a Platonic dimension and it allows its readers to rethink the questions of life and existence.

C.S. Lewis shows concern over the degrading nature of the earth and loss of humanity. In *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*, Lewis questions the very notion
of scientific progress and its imperialist enterprise. Lewis presents the hard fact that our natural world is facing encroachment and exploitation. In the name of progress and development nature and culture and traditional institutions are exploited. Lewis indicates that man-made environment is highly responsible for such degradation. Man’s unlimited desire for wealth and power has brought in such a critical time of crisis. Why should we blame humanistic thoughts for such a fall and crisis? It is because humanism encouraged anthropocentric philosophy which turned unethical. Western Humanism encouraged scientific experiment and objectification of nature. Science was not the problem. It was the elevation of science above the Bible that created the problem. The unethical turn in humanism and scientism has resulted a threat to humanism. The anthropological turn in history was at the root of such a transition in thought. Humanism initiated the concept of equal distribution of wealth and property and rights of human. Humanism propagated the capitalistic thoughts among people and spread the utilitarian principles. Right to happiness and a happier life was preached. As a result exploitation of the earth continued and people began to take a more materialistic outlook. Humanism encouraged a secular philosophy that was based on non-belief. The medievalist geo-centric concept of the universe was replaced by a human centric secular philosophy that marginalised the significance of natural and the supernatural. The changing concepts of Nature and devaluing of Nature has created the crisis and the human is responsible for breaking the boundaries of nature and culture.

Lewis offers us the choices to solve such problems. Lewis writes about use of common sense. Good and evil is a matter of choice. We have to take the responsibility for what we do and think. Right decision will lead to happiness and joy while wrong
decision and evil worship will lead to pain and suffering. Lewis expresses the urgency to rethink the Human and humanism. As the human is responsible for today’s environmental crisis, the human must take the first step to redeem and correct it. Thus Lewis expresses faith in the human and wants him to take the responsibility of the Earth. Lewis’s New Humanism celebrates this restored faith in human potential to rethink and protect close relation between nature and culture.
END NOTES:

i Lewis cites the examples of Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand League under the Sea* and H.G. Wells’ *Land Ironclads*. Lewis, however, was not interested in the two kinds of adventures. Lewis writes about Eschatological sub-species of science fiction where the future is in focus and political and social implications.

ii Lewis’s *Out of the Silent Planet* also has some reference to the plant Mars. Besides, books like A.G Street’s *Already Walks Tomorrow* (1938), Ward Moore’s *Greener than You Think* (1947) are about ecological catastrophes and destruction of the natural world.

iii Like Milton he thought about regaining lost Paradise. One can easily draw similarities between Satan in Paradise Lost and Weston in Malacandra. Similarly, Maleldil in Malacandra equates Christ on earth and Aslan in Narnia. The clash between the world of hospitality and hostility is highlighted in the novel.

iv However, like his other two cosmological writings *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*, Lewis restores the good and punishes the evil. Lewis also shows that contradictory forces (good and evil) are present everywhere. But the situation totally depends on an individual’s choice.
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