CHAPTER II
ON HUMANISM

Essence of Humanism:

It is difficult to define ‘Humanism’ due to the complexity of the term. Discourse of Humanism includes the origin and development of the term Humanism. The basic point about Humanism as a philosophy or phenomenon is its human centric approach. Humanism is all about the faith in human power and potential. Definitions of Humanism have changed across time as educational movement, philosophical concept and as an existential life stance, as Tony Davies rightly identifies in his famous book Humanism and that the term has been adopted for various cultural and political purposes and contexts. In his introduction to the book Humanism, Tony Davies tries to explain the complexity of the term. Davies’s book is an exploration of the origin and history of the concept of Humanism. The point that he first makes is that Humanism is inseparable from the question of language. This is indeed an interesting point because human is a talking animal. If we trace the journey from Paganism to Modernity, we find that it is the language of human that has changed its shape and meaning. The term ‘Humanisms’ was devised by the educationist Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer in the early nineteenth century to describe school curriculum since the Middle Ages as the ‘humanities’ which included the study of ancient Greek, Latin and the literature, culture, history of the people. Davies further writes that the term was soon taken up by cultural historians like Georg Voigt and Jacob Burckhardt to describe the humanistic ‘new learning’, ‘Renaissance’ or ‘rebirth of Greco-Roman civilisation’ (Davies 10).
Davies writes that with this rebirth began the thoughts relating to the relations between antiquity and modernity which influenced the nineteenth century German debates about education, culture, history and politics (Davies 10-11).

In his introduction to Giovanni Pico Dela Mirandola’s “On the Dignity of Man”, Russell Kirk has written that the oration of Mirandola lives as the most succinct expression of the mind of the Renaissance (Mirandola xi). Pico Dela, one of the most brilliant of the great Renaissance families, was a scholar and a romantic humanist. As Russell writes, Mirandola was a mystic, magician, and a grand scholar who combined in his character the gothic complexity of the Middle Ages with the egoism and enlightenment of the Renaissance. His attempt was to affect a synthesis and reconciliation of Hebrew, Classical ad Christian traditions. I began with a reference to this great scholar because there are similarities between Pico Dela Mirandola and C.S Lewis, so far as treatment of content is concerned. Both of them believed that magic can prove the divinity of Christ and both of them were Medievalists and Evangelists. The manifesto o humanism “Dignity of Man” was revived by Lewis in the twentieth century. The man in the Middle Ages was humble, conscious of his fallen and sinful nature (Mirandola xiii).

As Russell writes Pico and his co-humanists expressed great faith in human capability of ‘descending to unclean depths’ as well as ‘becoming godlike’ (Mirandola xiii). Some of the important notions can be mentioned here.

The spark of godhood in human raises him above all other creation. Man is the noblest work of God and man is angelic because he has been created in the image of God. Man has been given free will and power to shape his own self and man might take pride in his higher nature and turn his faculties to improve and praise his noble
nature. The dignity of human nature was the gift of God. If the spiritual and the rational powers were neglected by human through free will, man sinks to the level of the brutes. Thus Russell writes that a degree of humility chastened the pride of even the most arrogant humanist of the Renaissance (Mirandola xvi).

The essence of humanism rests on those principles of humility and dignity of human life. C.S. Lewis, through his writings expresses concern over the deteriorating nature of human dignity and essence.

**What went wrong in History?**

The Human, as Russell writes, the aspiration of the humanists, changed with time as the modern sensual man turned more towards technological aspirations. Man-made laws of reason and efficiency replaced the laws of God that is, God made laws. And this leads to the dehumanisation of man and which entails fall of human dignity and loss of human values (Mirandola xvii). Russell calls it ‘Hubris’ that diffused all over the world transforming human nature. Man’s lust for divine power is largely responsible for this kind of changed behaviour. Everyone remembers what happened to Dr. Faustus in Marlowe’s Dr. Faustus. For Pico Della Mirandola, ‘the dignity of man’ meant ‘higher nobility of disciplined reason and imagination (redeemed by Christ), upliftment of truly human person through an exercise of soul and mind (Mirandola xvii). Pico did not say about technological triumph or gratification of ego. There must be a Master to raise human above the brute creation and if that Master is denied the dignity of man is lost. Russell regretted that their recent intellectual currents had been trying to swipe away true human dignity and had embraced a mechanistic indignity. ‘To quote Russell,
Thing, nevertheless, has run wild in our time, building town and fleet, bomb and satellite; and the Man has been unkinged; an human dignity is at its lowest ebb, now, when man’s power over nature is at its summit. (Mirandola xix)

This foregrounds the fact that human has failed to restore his essential dignity due to exercise of unrestrained power over nature and his lust for wealth and power.

C. S. Lewis indeed, reflects and shares Pico Della’s principles of dignity of human being and attempts to revive this lost tradition through fairy tales and fantasies. Here I would like to throw some light upon Aldus Huxley’s views on the human situation. Huxley gave a series of lectures on this aspect of human situation at Santa Barbara in 1959 and here in these lectures Huxley made various valuable observations on man and his planet, the Original Sin, art, war and nationalism etc. I would like to point out a few important observations below.

Huxley writes that the function of the literary man is to build bridges between art and science, between objectively observed facts and immediate experience, between morals and scientific appraisals which is known as pontifex maximus. Pontifex was an old pre-Latin language. Huxley writes about problem of words and finding of meaning. Making a reference to Shakespeare Huxley states that three words- the world of abstractions and concept, the world of immediate experience and objective observations, and the world of spiritual insight- must be brought together (Ferrucci 5). Scarcity of words and language problem lies in discovering a literary and artistic vocabulary that will enable one to move from one point of view to another. Hence we need people like Shakespeare who did it very efficiently in his time and acted like a ‘pontifex maximus’. Shakespeare presented different world views describing different human situations through his literary artifice. Huxley is of the opinion that the most important task of modern education is to discover methods of bringing together
different worlds into a relationship. This concept is perhaps, best understood by C.S Lewis who tried to juxtapose different world views and showed the interconnectedness and relationship among them in a very comprehensive way. His didactic purpose is very much evident in his writings and just like the classical masters Lewis tried to instruct and delight his readers. His tales were meant both for children and grown-ups and levels of enjoyments were different. Huxley and Lewis both belonged to the twentieth century and both believed in the concept of a brave new world. Both humanist believed in mysticism and expressed concern over the spiritual degradation of the century and the de-humanising drive of twentieth century culture and ideology. Another point of coincidence is that Lewis and Huxley died on the same day that was, 22nd November 1963 and significantly enough the news of their death was overshadowed by the news of the assassination of U.S President John F. Kennedy on the same day. Based on this mysterious coincidence Peter Kreeft wrote a book entitled Between Heaven and Hell: A Dialogue Somewhere Beyond Death with John F. Kennedy, C.S Lewis & Aldous Huxley.

Huxley writes that Science is intrinsically an ethical process, but that perspective is insufficiently stressed at. Aldous Huxley refers to T. H. Huxley’s views on the functions of science in his lecture entitled “Integrate Education” where T.E Huxley expressed that Science teaches the great truth that is to surrender to the will of God which is there according to the Christian conception (Ferrucci:7-8). This is a very crucial observation because it connects the physical with the spiritual. It informs us about the way actually works and affects. Huxley regrets that a few members of the scientific school have forgotten scientific humility. Huxley also discusses the ideas of Bacon who stressed upon the fact that knowledge without love can be profoundly
corrupt and evil and for that he found Plato and Aristotle guilty because they lacked the humility which is essential for scientific temperament and also because they pursued knowledge only for the sake of intellectual satisfactions without any motive of love and care. C.S Lewis in his nonfictional work *The Four Loves* writes about different types of love from a Christian perspective and calls Love of God who is an embodiment of charitable love is the highest kind of love. Without this love of God other loves are impossible.

Huxley analyses the relation of man with the planet and expresses that human has totally transformed their world of nature and in most cases have devastated whatever he collected from nature. Huxley also recollects man’s contributions to the planet- the way they created tropical grasslands, transported plants from one place to another in the Classical times. However, Huxley expresses concern over growing disharmony between man and nature and extinction of animals.

Huxley brings up the Indian notion of Time and Greek’s similarity with it to stress upon the fact that people have different notions about their future. The Greeks and the Indians believe in a cyclic movement. Huxley writes that our present view of time has changed. We are inclined more towards linear time that moves in one direction (Ferrucci 92). This reminds me of another important writer and critic of the twentieth century, Herbert Marcuse whose book *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society* who critiqued the one-dimensional society and the threatened civilisation.

Huxley writes that progress is a modern myth and is the product of the time of Renaissance. It came to be fully realised in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This myth of progress believed in techno-centric thoughts and hoped that
industrialisation could bring universal peace. At the same time there was a growing belief in secularism. Such beliefs were shattered by the World Wars and the Russian Revolutions. Linearity of progress was questioned and Huxley opined that human life is not a progressive one. This according to Huxley is due to many reasons. First, our life spun is limited. Secondly, human takes things for granted. Thirdly, human is found busy living in an isolated, insulated private life. Hence people are in an ambivalent position.

**The Main tenets of Humanism:**

Now I come to the discussion regarding the main tenets of Humanism. The discussion so far reveals the fact that there is a change so far as man’s response to his time and environment is concerned. C.S Lewis strongly critiques the material worldview of science and scientific naturalism of the West. To understand the deformities in Western Humanism, it is important to see the pros and cons of Humanistic philosophy. Western Humanism and its anthropocentric enterprise finally reached its height in the twentieth century during the two World Wars. Before discussing the impact of anthropocentric humanism on the environment, it is important to highlight some of the main features of Western Humanism. Some points are discussed below:

**Freedom and Individualism:**

Freedom is the first word in the dictionary of Humanism. By freedom the Humanist meant freedom from darkness which means Medievalism and old traditions. Humanists aimed at an intellectual renaissance which fore grounded self-reliance and freedom from superstitious beliefs. Humanism was an intellectual move against the other-worldliness of medieval Christianity. The Renaissance Man, the New man who
is a man of great potentials. They are like Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo of Italy. This movement also contributed to Biblical studies, political thoughts such as democracy, science, arts and other branches of philosophy.

Secularism:

The Renaissance Humanism raised its voice against the authority of the Catholic Church and believed in the separation of the Church and the State. There was a growing reliance on reason instead of faith, revelation and scripture. The Medieval theory of the Universe was replaced by a more secular and scientific theory that highlighted naturalism as its basis. Erasmus, Montaigne, Francis Bacon provided alternate thoughts and metaphysics for the new world. Alastair Hamilton in his essay “Humanists and the Bible” writes that for the humanists and scholastics in the earlier centuries, the Bible remained a fundamental text. For instance, Petrarch and other later humanists reconciled Classical and Christian views of human life and morals. Petrarch followed Augustine and his worldly concerns and regarded the Bible as a work of literature. Hence the Bible was part of Classical literature. For this purpose knowledge of Greek and Hebrew became crucial and Greek was reintroduced in Italy for humanist Biblical scholarship. However, by the end of the 16th century, the Bible was read by Protestants not as an ancient work of literature, but as a work addressed to promote dogmatic values of religion to support the theological system. It was scholars like Erasmus who showed reactions against such dogmatic impulses. Erasmus’s Praise of Folly was an eminent work that attacked the established ecclesiastical setup (Hamilton 100-115).
Naturalism:

The spirit of Humanism began to promote a scientific sensibility that wished to categorise knowledge in different parts and thereby tried to conceptualise Nature. This in fact, entailed a dualism of human beings versus nature. This was a move towards subjectivism and this move consequently led to materialism and Capitalism. This foregrounds the fact that nature and natural law is everything and there is nothing supernatural about it. They believed that this life is all and enough. Humanism exemplifies renewal and the term was first derived from Latin *humanitus* that Cicero used to denote the cultural values found through liberal education. Study of humanities included subject like literature, history and moral philosophy. In the English context the word ‘Humanist’ first appeared in the late 16th century and only in the 19th century in Germany, humanism stood for devotion to the literature of ancient Greece and Rome and the human values in it. Nicholas Mann writes,

> Humanism is that concern with the legacy of antiquity in particular, but not exclusively, with its literary legacy- which characterises the work of scholars from at least the ninth century onwards. It involves above all the rediscovery and study of ancient Greek and Roman texts, the restoration and interpretation of them and the assimilation of the ideas and values that they contain. (Mann 2)

Mann finds a continuity from the 9th century to the end of the 14th century that is, till the time of the Renaissance – the continuity of European cultural and intellectual history. Mann argues how scholasticism was later regarded as antithesis to humanism. The root of humanism can be traced back to the 12th century *dictamen* and Roman Law. The diplomatic and cultural center of the Western world was Italy during the reign of King Robert I (1303-1343). The most prominent figure of this period was Petrarch who is considered as the Father of Humanism. (Mann 8) Mann
writes that Petrarch was the person who became part of the continuing tradition (Mann 14).

**Modern Political Thoughts:**

James Hankins writes that the Humanist movement produced no political thinkers as there was no political theory. The writings of that era were concerned with moral-rhetorical literature that aimed at reform of individuals and society (Hankins 118). They followed the modals of Cicero and Seneca not Aristotle and Aquinas. Two giant political thinkers of that era were Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas More who contributed to the Modern political thoughts. James Hankins writes,

> It is sometimes said that reforms fall into two classes: those who believe in reforming the individual through the reform of institutions, and those who believe in reforming institutions by reforming individuals. (Hankins 119)

The Italian humanists fell into the second group. They tried to improve the level of prudence and wisdom among the ruling class members (Hankins 119). Hankins writes that the medieval historians tended to interpret events in moral and providential terms. They termed success and failure as divine rewards for virtue and divine punishments for sin. On the other hand, the Humanist historians secularised this process of interpretation and saw events as the results of the virtues, aims and resources of human actions or as an outcome dictated by the specific characterisation of a given political culture (Hankins 123). The worship of classical antiquity was an important mark of Renaissance and in doing so they also incorporated the Christian culture and pagan values. However, there had been an internal conflict between Christian humanity and desire for worldly glory. It was believed that the failing of modern Christendom was due to the loss of the Classical heritage that promoted the
values of wisdom and virtue. Hence, the shift in humanistic thoughts resulted in a clash between medieval Christian values and humanistic values. Thus Renaissance scholastic philosophy was replaced by a more politically oriented profit-based philosophy. The Medieval worldview was abandoned in favour of a more materialistic and anthropocentric worldview.

**Crisis of Humanism and the Environmental Question:**

![Diagram of Crisis of Humanism]

Fig: 1 Crisis of Humanism

If we look at figure 1, we find that crisis of humanism has led to various consequences such as competitive societies, rising conflicts among people, war and destruction of nature. The crisis of our environment is actually a result of the clash between the human and the environment. They are related by a cause-effect bonding. What was the root cause of such crises? There is not one cause, but many. To find an answer, we have to trace the history of humanism, modernity and the rise of the West.
Robert B. Marks, in his introduction to his book *The Origin of the Modern World: Fate and Fortune in the Rise of the West* writes that the world is divided into two parts- those countries that are industrialised and that are not or trying to be industrialised. Robert explores the history of the modern world and finds that there are many strange factors behind the rise of the West. He raises a few important points. They are mentioned after this.

The European countries which were rich in industries began to define the world and agrarian countries like India left behind. Robert found it very interesting that two hundred years before the G7 Summit in July, 2001, India and China accounted for two-third of the world’s economic output and they were non-Europeans.

The growing gap between the richest and poorest countries is found in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The G7 countries are exercising power over the non G7 countries and that power is exercised mainly through global trade and financial institutions like WTO, IMF etc. The concept of the rise of the West began to emerge shortly after the Spanish conquest of the Americans during the Italian Renaissance of the seventeenth century. The Europeans felt inspired by this act of conquest.

The Europeans gave credit to the superiority of their religion- Christianity. Later in the seventeenth and eighteenth century i.e. during the Enlightenment era, they attributed it to the secular, rationalistic, scientific sentiments of the Greeks (Marks 3). They looked for the ideas of democracy and rationalism in the Greek institutions and were also impressed by the ideals of the French Revolutions- Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. These ideals outlined a rationalistic temperament among the Europeans which made our understanding of the natural world in scientific terms
(not religious). The cycle of the rise of the West completed during the nineteenth century (Marks 3).

Robert writes that the classical British political economists like Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo developed another idea that the idea of the capitalist development as ‘progress’ , ‘the West as progressive’, and Asia, Africa, Latin America as ‘backward’ and ‘despotic’ is set in binary thoughts( Marks 3 ).

Max Weber in his book *The Wealth of Nations* found that the Europeans’ sense of rationalism and work ethics associated with Protestantism played a crucial role in the rise of the West. Weber also concluded by saying that the History of European progress is based on divided sensibilities. The current environmental crisis between nature and culture is only an offshoot of that complex European equation.

Hence Robert is of the opinion that to understand the world we need to see how and why those European ways of originating the world came to dominate the globe. What is the reason behind the rise of the West must be analysed. These observations are very important because they highlight the scenario of exploitation of the world. The rise of the West was also accompanied by the fall of Nature or degradation of nature. Here I would like to discuss the ideas of another important book *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, edited by Roy Porter which was published in 1997 by Routledge. There in an essay written by Jane Shaw entitled “Religious Experience and the Formation of the Early Enlightenment Self”, Shaw discusses how man’s focus shifted from supernatural to the natural. According to Shaw, in the story of the rise of the West, the rise of the rational self is accompanied by a corresponding decline in religious faith. For a more rational and autonomous outlook of life the old belief in
mysticism, revelation, miracles and supernatural was abandoned. This was replaced by a worldview of observable laws of Nature (Shaw 61).

This shift in focus to a rational self has also resulted in a change in the cultural construction of mankind. The time before the Renaissance celebrated the ideals of communal life and love and respect for nature. Man and nature enjoyed a cordial relationship. But the increasing distance between intellectual culture of the elite and the popular communal culture of the past has transformed the cultural basis and structure of mankind. Jane further writes that the religious beliefs and practices were relegated to the mass of lower orders, to the ‘irrational others’ (Shaw 62). Jane explores that the reason behind such a change are many and man’s changing social and cultural history can provide the best answer to these questions. Some of these reasons are: dominance of culture over nature; growing materialism and individualism; techno-centrism and mechanical life-styles; over-consumptive patterns; race for survival and competitive mind set.

The materialist philosophy began with the beginning of Greek Philosophy. According to that philosophy, the origin and development of whatever exists, is dependent on nature and ‘matter’ is something that is independent and prior to thought. Karl Marx’s approach to materialism was inspired by the works of the ancient Greek Philosopher Epicurus whose materialistic views of the nature of things provided the essential basis for the conception of human freedom. John Bellamy Foster, a famous sociologist and ecologist calls Marx’s materialism as practical materialism which implies that man’s relation to nature was practical from the outset, based on actions. Foster writes that Marx embraced both epistemological and ontological materialism to define his materialist concept of nature though his focus
was primarily upon practical materialism. Marx’s thoughts were also influenced by
the philosophy of Bacon, Kant and Hegel. It is significant to mention here that for
Hegel, Bacon, Hobbes, Locke and Hume in England and Diderot, Holbach in France
were known as Anglo-French philosophers of materialism and all of them were
inspired by Epicureanism that took an anti-teleological view that rejected all natural
explanations on divine intension. This is where, as Foster writes, materialism and
science coincide (Foster 3).

Here I would like to draw observations of W.M Adams who in his article “No Land
Apart: Nature, Culture, Landscape” discusses the ideology of landscapes, its
construction and de-culturing landscapes in a comprehensive way. I quote from his
article,

Different cultural ideas of landscapes often clash. Historically, the power to dictate
how landscapes were understood and used was dominated, from the 16th century, by
successive European imperial powers. Emerging Western ideologies of nature were
carried to Europe’s newly colonised territories. (As quoted in Pilgrim & Pretty 73)

There is another article by Tirso Gonzales and Maria Gonzales entitled “From Colonial
Encounter to Decolonizing Encounters: Culture and Nature seen from the Andean Cosmo
vision of Ever: The Nurturance of Life as a Whole” where the writers have discussed the
Western mechanistic Worldview and Agrocentric Andean Worldview. They have
analysed the stark distinction between Dominant western mechanistic worldview and
Andean indigenous place-based worldview. According to their observations, the
dominant Western mechanistic worldview was based on Judio-Christian and Cartesian
worldview. Man dissociates from nature (subject-object). According to the
anthropocentric vision of the world, Man is the centre of the world; world is viewed as a
machine. Life moves around men’s material needs. The egocentric ethic takes the view
that is best for the individual is best for the society as a whole. The Western mechanical
philosophy was based on mechanistic science (lab based) and capitalism. Earth is dead
and inert, malleable from outside, and exploitable for profits. Innovations were protected
by Individual Property Rights. History was considered as linear (Past-present-future).
Knowing is considered scientific: specialised/fragmented/reductionist. Focus was on
production (homogenizing/standardizing). It was often non-sustainable (Tony Gonzales
and Maria Gonzales 88).

The dominant Western mechanistic worldview that spread throughout the world
from the 1700s to the present day has been widely scrutinised. It is the blueprint
that Western (ized) societies have used to build their scientific institutions and to
construct capitalist development. Such a worldview has made central the
dichotomy and premises of the subject-object relationship. It views nature as inert,
whether animate or inanimate, as malleable for profit and as an endless source of
resources. It relies heavily on reductionist science by detaching the material world
from the non-material world. It views the past as primitive, traditional and
backward. The concept of sustainability is not part of the thread of such a world
view, as its basic impulse is the relationship of dominance implicit in the subject-
object split (Pilgrim & Pretty 87).

They further write,

Knowledge and truth are pursued in order to manipulate, transform, dominate, and
perfect reality, whereby the mind and reason impose order upon the chaotic outside
world. The modern scientific approach seeks to generate a universal knowledge in that
truth is the inviolable and universal outcome. However, the sum of the fragments of
reality often fails to make the whole. (Pilgrim & Pretty 91)
Eclipse of Reason:

The basic foundation of Humanism was rationalism. But after the Enlightenment, there was a perversion of reason and growth of irrationality. There was total chaos after the two World Wars and loss of conscience in the entire West. This eclipse took place because of ‘disenchanted’ mechanical concept of nature in scientific philosophy, loss of faith in humanism and rise of atheism. This was accompanied by a philosophy of anthropocentrism and hegemonic concept of humanism. After the war, very few retained faith in the Western metaphysics of Progress and their hopes were shattered by the heavy destructions.

End of Man and Essence of the Human:

Modernity is often characterised by the formation of Cities and development of industries, break from traditional customs and religiosity. The encroachment of land and deforestation, separation of the human and labour and separation of Nature and Culture pose as threats to modernity. Such features imply the fact that the human nature has undergone a change in terms of its ideology and belief. In the chapter “Globalization, Imperialism and the Capitalist World System”, Alex Callinicos opines that with the shaping of the capitalist world economy, economic and geopolitical competition began to intersect (Held & Mcgrew 70). Besides, the colonial adventures provided the European rulers with resources to promote their ‘projects of dynastic territorial aggrandizement’. These led them to modernise and destabilise the process of political transformation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, as Callinicos writes, two decisive changes took place. First, the global economic space was created and dominated by capitalism in its
mature form which transformed the whole world. Secondly, political and capital accumulation integrated into a single process (Held & Mcgrew 70). This led to the rise of industrial capitalism around the world promoting economic struggles and competitions for markets and resources and subsequent military and diplomatic conflicts among the states. The two world Wars is the final outcome of this competitive process which destabilised the whole West. The crisis that followed after it was multidimensional. This was followed by the pressure of migration, decline of world economy, change in the pattern of demography and environmental degradation.

David Held writes,

The post-war multilateral order is threatened by the intersection and combination of humanitarian, economic and environmental crisis. (Held & Mcgrew 242)

This crisis contributed to the great age of alienation and rootlessness in the twentieth century. The dehumanizing move of Western Humanism and globalisation destabilised the symbiotic relation between natures and culture. This is the great divide that threatened the essence of the human.

If we check the literature of the medieval past we find that Nature, Ethics, Religion and Law were major elements of the discourse. Romance, Adventures, mysticism characterised those writings. Morality plays, miracles and interludes were played and they shared Biblical and scriptural messages. In contrast to Medieval culture and literature Modern culture and literature was fragmented, isolated and barren. Modern literature reflected on the sense of alienation, rootlessness and loss of human dignity. Matthew Arnold, T.S Eliot and many such modern writers presented a pessimistic view of modern life and culture. Eliot called the modern period a ‘Wasteland’ with no vitality and fertility and growth. The stagnant condition of the World War period was
also presented in Eliot’s writing. Derrida in his famous work “The End of Man” has elaborately discussed the changing nature of humanism and philosopher’s response to such a change. By referring to Heidegger and Husserl, Derrida pointed out that humanism and anthropologism were considered as common grounds of existentialisms and such readings were based on the readings of Hegel and Marx (Derrida 1963:36). Heidegger said that all humanisms are metaphysical. Jean Paul Sartre also said that Existentialism is Humanism. Thus the anti- anthropological and anti-humanist philosophy aimed at some sort of destruction of such ‘metaphysics’. Derrida considers Husserl’s Transcendental humanism as a reaction and criticism of empirical anthropologism. Derrida explains Husserl’s concept of ‘end’ and ‘telos’ as ‘transcendental end’. Such transcendental end can appear under the condition of mortality and relation to finitude (Derrida 1963: 44). From this situation, according to Derrida, arises the ‘we’ which incorporates the question of metaphysics and humanism. Derrida makes an important observation when he said that there is always a sort of ‘re-evaluation’ or ‘revalorisation’ of the essence and the dignity of man. Derrida wrote,

The thought of Being, the thought of the truth of Being in whose name Heidegger de-limits humanism and metaphysics nevertheless remains a thought of man. In the question of Being as it is raised in metaphysics, man and the name of man are not displaced. And they certainly do not disappear. There is, rather, a sort of re-evaluation or revalorisation of the essence and the dignity of man. (Derrida 1963: 50)

Thus there was a growing tendency towards making man (homo) human (humanus) rather than inhuman i.e. towards the restoration of essence of human. Derrida writes that restoration of essence means restoration of a dignity of Being and human and proximity of Being and human (Derrida 1963: 51).
C.S Lewis was that medieval scholar who understood the essence of human and tried to restore it through his amazing stories and narratives. From the books of Narnia we derive a great lesson on what it means to be a human. Lewis preaches the ideas of good governance, freedom, democracy and peace. His Narnia books present that ecology which teaches the value of dignity of human and non-human. Lewis’s was inspired by the Medieval worldview where human is presented as part of the divine creation. Lewis in fact tried to dismantle the modern worldview for its anthropocentric worldview. Lewis reused the Biblical Myth to question the sinners of Humanity. Lewis’s approach to literature was like that of Chaucer, Langland Bunyan. Chaucer used inter-textual devices to represent contemporary time and culture. In a similar pattern Lewis used the device to rethink the past. Lewis’s attempt was to displace the modern myth of scientific utopianism and progress.

**C.S. Lewis’s response to Crisis of Humanism:** C.S. Lewis was a powerful writer who used theology as a device to critique the irrationality of modern times. His objection was against the secular, anthropocentric turn in history and culture. He was different from other twentieth century writers so far as his treatment of themes and literary strategies are concerned. He was a Renaissance scholar and a medievalist as well as a classicist who believed in antiquity. Lewis revived the medieval model through his fantastic fictions to throw light upon the Geocentric or earth-centric worldview and Christian values and ethical behaviour.

In all his books Lewis used the Biblical model to write about human, nature and culture. Lewis used various metaphors to critique the modern society. Through the lens of the medieval model, Lewis set a dialogue between the past and the present. David Clark writes about Lewis in the following words,
Lewis not only studied, believed, and lived the Scriptures; he applied what he understood to his world. Whether the subject was the history of the world, human nature, modern science, space travel, whether major or minor topics, the Bible provided the lens through which he understood everything. (Clark 2)

Clark further opines that Lewis’s strength lies in his use of imagination to bridge different cultures and his use of metaphors and symbols that throw light on ancient viewpoints from different cultures. His imagination allowed his readers to welcome different perspectives. Lewis’s humanism was, thus, not confined to mere anthropocentric setup. It goes beyond that and embraces a philosophy that encompasses the interrelation between human and non-human. Wise animals, talking animals symbolically represent the bond between human and nonhuman and blur the boundaries between them.

Lewis was not an orthodox Christian. He, in fact, tried to revive the classic model of Christianity. Lewis’s God was not simply a human God. His notion of the highest power was different. He used theology as a map and his sense of geography was not based on political boundaries or any topography. Lewis took an all inclusive worldview of the world. As we find in his fictions, the human and the non-human are closely connected. In Narnia, for instance, Aslan, the great lion is the authority figure and everyone followed his steps. In the unfailing world of Peralandra, everyone is happy, free and peaceful. Lewis anticipates such a utopian world where everyone lives in dignity and honour. However, at the same time Lewis regrets the loss of true Christian values and degradation of humanity. Lewis used several patterns to re-enchant the lost world. They are shown through the following diagram,
Fig: Lewis used the four patterns to re-enchant the worldview

In the famous essay “The Weight of Glory”, Lewis wrote that spells can be used for breaking enchantments as well as for inducing them (Lewis 1949: 17). Lewis wrote that we are in need of the strongest spell to wake up from the evil enchantment of worldliness. Lewis also critiques the Scriptures for making false promises of glory on earth. Lewis calls it wicked and ridiculous because desire for fame means ‘competitive passion’. Lewis on the other hand, was in favour of ‘heavenly glory’ preached by Christians like Thomas Aquinas and Milton. Glory for Lewis was brightness, splendour and luminosity (Lewis 1949:24).

In the essay “The Poison of Subjectivism”, Lewis writes that one cause of misery and vice lies not only in the greed and pride of men, but at certain periods in history for prevalence of ‘false philosophy’. The novels of Lewis are like a response to such false philosophies. Lewis was against the exercise of power philosophies such as Subjectivism. Lewis’s objection was against the objectification of reason and subjectivism of logic. Lewis attacked the blind evolutionary thoughts and believed in the cosmic significance of life. Lewis raised his voice against the irrationality of scientific naturalism and its limited worldview. His novels invite us to participate in
the debate between humanism and ecocentrism and also make us rethink our relation to the universe.

Another important device that Lewis used in his fictions was dream vision which was medieval in origin. This is such a literary device where the writer travels between two worlds. In the book *The Great Divorce* (1946), Lewis transports the readers to a place called Grey Town which is presented as hell. There in the town the narrator had conversation with various ghosts and spirits. Lewis, here, deals with the timeless question of human existence and heaven and hell. Lewis’s attempt was to place the readers outside time and life after death. Hell is depicted by Lewis as a motionless, rigid, hard place. Lewis presents a conflict between the ghosts and the spirits. The spirits asked the ghosts to get back their solid bodies by staying by the river. The ghosts, however, refused to do so as they were busy making profits at Hell. Interestingly enough, the narrator met the famous writer, George Macdonald there who revealed a lot of facts to the narrator. Macdonald expressed before the narrator that most of the people (ghosts) in hell are driven by earthly desire. He added that by surrendering such desire for the loved ones, human can become more beautiful, powerful and loving. Macdonald told him that it is possible to leave hell and join heaven if one chooses to do so. The place called Grey Town is very symbolic in the narrative. Most of the people that the narrator met there were rude and quarrelsome. They even behaved violently on minor issues. The book concludes with the writer waking up suddenly. Lewis critiques the human nature, their lust wealth and power, earthly desire for matter. Because of that they remained friendless and unhappy. Lewis’s writes about importance of choice in one’s life. Heaven and hell are two choices. Lewis wrote in the preface to the book, *The Great Divorce*,

75
We are not living in a world where all roads are radii of a circle and where all, if followed long enough, will therefore draw gradually nearer and finally meet at the centre: rather in a world where every road, after a few miles, forked into two again, and at each fork you must make a decision. Even on the biological level life is not like a river but like a tree. (Lewis: 1946, viii)

At the same time Lewis explains that the virtue is rewarded and evil is punished. This is the theological pattern that Lewis used in all his writings. Lewis’s sense of optimism is expressed in the preface to the book *The Great Divorce*,

I do not think that all who choose wrong roads perish; but their rescue consists in being put back on the right road. (Lewis: 1946, viii)

If we insist on keeping Hell (or even earth) we shall not see Heaven: if we accept Heaven we shall not be able to retain even the smallest and most intimate souvenirs of Hell. (Lewis: 1946 ix)

Thus, Lewis tries to identify the reasons behind our present crisis of humanism and seeks solutions to such a problem. By using allegorical patterns, Lewis addresses the contemporary questions of human existence and expresses concern over the decline of human values and ideals.

**Apocalyptic Narrative and the Environmental Question: Lewis’s *The World’s Last Night and Other Essays* and *The Last Battle* in The Chronicles of Narnia**

Greg Garrard in his book *Ecocriticism* discusses various types of apocalypse and explains that the apocalypse has been a matter of concern for many environmentalists and secular thinkers. Garrard discusses the nature of Christian, secular and environmental apocalypse. As Greg writes, the apocalyptic narratives date back to 1200 BCE, in the thoughts of an Iranian prophet Zarathustra. According to such narrative, the world is having a gradual decline. Teresa Heffernan defines apocalypse
as catastrophic conclusion or approaching end (Heffernan 4). Such apocalypse has a point of transition that leads to some new order. This genre of apocalyptic literature came to form to represent the time of crisis. Apocalyptic rhetoric has been well accepted by Judaeo-Christian believers, the Nazis, Muslim Mahdists have accepted it as prophecies of doom and crisis (Garrard 2012: 93). Eschatological themes are predominantly found in the writings of T.S Eliot and Wyndham Lewis and also in D.H Lawrence. However, as Garrard writes, such modernist writers aimed at secular apocalypse (Garrard 2012:93). In D.H Lawrence, on the other hand, one finds the reflections of destruction and violence replete with environmental concerns. Like Nietzsche, Lawrence sought ecocentrism. Environmental apocalypticism became a major theme in Rachael Carson’s Silent Spring and H.G Well’s The War of the Worlds. A sense of fear and loss underlines such narratives. Early and mid-Twentieth century writings express a great sense of insecurity, fear and anxiety. The history that preceded the twentieth century was responsible for such feelings and anxiety. To give vent to their troubled thoughts the writers used various rhetoric such as symbols, images, inter-textual references, fantasy, science-fictions and various art forms. Some were pessimists while some were optimists. C.S Lewis’s novels and essays also exhibit such apocalyptic visions. However, his novels are not pessimistic. There is a message of hope and renewal. Lewis was an optimist and explored the scope of change and renewal. Lewis understood the root of the problem of modernity and tried to correct it. Lewis was of the opinion that modern man is denying the prophecy of apocalypse by refuting the ideals of Christianity. Lewis finds that there are many reasons behind modern embarrassment. Lewis writes that most Christians and Moderns find the genre tedious and unedifying (Lewis 1960: 95). Lewis writes that
modern thoughts and philosophy do not embrace such apocalyptic thoughts and the
doctrine of the second coming because their progressive rhetoric does not find support
in Christian apocalypticism (Lewis 1960:101). Lewis writes that modern conception of
progress and evolution is simply a myth with no supportive evidence available. About
Darwin Lewis wrote,

It can be argued that what Darwin really accounted for was not the origin, but the
elimination, of species, but I will not pursue that argument. (Lewis 1960: 101)

Lewis’s argument was against the ‘illegitimate transition’ from the Darwinian
biological theorem to the modern myth of evolutionism or developmentalism. Lewis
further says that the myth of progress arose earlier than the theorem. This reveals the
fact that there was either a misinterpretation or an exaggeration to transit the biological
theorem to a myth of progress. Thus Lewis refutes the opinion that the evolutionary
myth of progress was a result of Darwin’s theorem. Instead, Darwinism, according to
Lewis, gave the pre-existing myth the scientific reassurance it required (Lewis 1960:
103). Lewis considered the real source of the myth of progress as political rather than
biological. Lewis says that there is no general law of progress in biological history.
Lewis argues that idea of progress is only a myth which distracts people from their
real duties and real interest (Lewis 1960: 104). Such a myth shuts out the idea of
Second coming from their minds. Lewis made an important observation when he said
that human is part of the apocalyptic pattern and hence subject to decay. Lewis
considers life as a drama and human as characters. Lewis writes,

We are led to expect that the author will have something to say to each of us on the
part that each of us has played. The playing it well is what matters infinitely. (Lewis
1960: 106)
Lewis writes that the doctrine of Second coming is like a medicine for the twentieth century paralytic situation. But there are difficulties in situating this doctrine due to impossibility of prediction.

Lewis writes that modern Christians find it difficult to remember that the whole life of humanity in this world is temporary and provisional (Lewis 1960: 110). At this point, according to Lewis, the scientists join hands with the theologians. They believe that the earth has a limited period and human is mortal.

The difference is that whereas the scientists expect only a slow decay of from within, we reckon with sudden interruption from without-at any moment. (“What if this present were the world’s last night?”). (Lewis 1960: 110-111)

Lewis writes that this approaching end can take the form of a verdict, may be a fatal one for mankind. Lewis was of the opinion that the spiritual light will lead one to immortality. Hence, Lewis’s notion of Second Coming deals with the idea of Hope and Renewal.

**The Last Battle and the End of the Shadow Lands:**

*The Last Battle* of Narnia reveals Lewis’s Eschatological predictions and he presents this apocalyptic turn within the Biblical Myth of Death and renewal. Here the Narnians fought against the evil forces for the last time. The battle was followed by the end of Narnia. The story of Biblical Revelation finds expression in this narrative of Lewis. According to the book of Revelation life on earth has a limited time and that the last day on earth would be the day of Judgement. On the day of Judgement the good is restored while the evil is expelled by some divine order. Narnia was in danger because of many reasons. The evil entered Narnia and tried to threaten its peacefulness. Among the evil characters were the witch Jadis, the Caloremen people,
the ape Shift and Puzzle, the donkey. The witch wished to destroy the peace of Narnia and wanted to rule Narnia. The Caloremen were greedy and merciless people. They did deforestation in Narnia only for their own profit. The ape, Shift wished to deceive the Narnians by pretending to be Aslan. His attempt was to lead the Narnians astray. Against such evil forces King Tirian fought bravely till last hours. Aslan praised him for his valour and firmness. The Narnians fought for their justice and freedom even though they were outnumbered. Diggory and Jill also came to help them at the darkest hour. Thus the last battle was the battle for justice and freedom. The world of Narnia came to conclusion because its time came to an end. Diggory explained to all that the old Narnia was only a shadow of the real Narnia. Lewis was anticipating a new order after the collapse of the old one. Lewis writes that the true believers of God become the part of Aslan’s country.

**The End of the World and Dystopia:**

Andrew Feenberg wrote an essay entitled “Dystopia and Apocalypse: The Emergence of Critical consciousness”. In this essay Feenberg wrote about the secularised myth of the end of the World. He writes that since World war II prophesies of Doom became a matter of common concern (Feenberg 44). This myth, according to Feenberg takes two forms- the material and spiritual destruction of humanity by its own technology. One is from nuclear and environmental disaster and the other is from future technologies. Feenberg writes that the scientists themselves were frightened by the post historic implications of technological advance. Hence in the war period they tried to communicate their insight to the general public by writing both serious essays on public policy and science fiction (Feenberg 41).
Science fictions as a literary genre played a major role in promoting such social and environmental consciousness. The heavy deforestation enterprise, the growing mechanisation of life, natural disasters are such topics of their discussion. The threats and horrors of techno-centric lifestyle were also highlighted in those texts. Remarkable examples in this respect are H.G Well’s *The War of the Worlds, The Time Machine*. The writers of the apocalyptic fictions spread dystopian anxieties. Regarding Dystopian Fictions Feenberg writes,

> Dystopian Fiction reflects a new society in which the principal social cleavage divides the masters of the modern technical system from those who work and live within it. (Feenberg 42)

In popular culture of 1960s and after one can easily see the portrayal of horror and threat. After 1960s, films were also screened to display the catastrophic events of the wars and technocentric lifestyles. The Startrek film series are also about such catastrophic warfare and the rise of the machines. The technologically advanced weapons, weapons of mass destructions are real threat to human civilisation.

According to Feenberg, Science fiction is the literature of the ‘Other’ culture, the culture of science and technology. Its double audience not only included scientists but also the public in search of diversion (Feenberg 43). This was particularly after the invention of the Atom bomb. The creation of the atom bomb traumatised the scientific community and shattered the traditional self-image of science. Feenberg writes,

> Suddenly the detached and obsessive wise man of little science became the sorcerer’s power politics. (Feenberg 44)

The individualism of little science soon took the shape of corporate collectivism, conformity and alienation. Thus traditional science soon became a part of power-
politics and business. That was actually heading towards transhumanistic and post
humanistic phase.

C.S Lewis’s novels offer valuable insights over the question and progress of
Humanism. Lewis questioned the atheistic tendencies of the modern man, his
irrational exercise of reason and free will. He critiqued the misuse of science and
anthropocentrism of scientific naturalism and rethought humanism in terms of Human-
Nature relationship, Human-Non-human bonding. Lewis was in search of the lost
tradition. He wished to bridge the gap between past and present.

According to Peter J. Leithart, C.S Lewis’s allegory is anti-apocalyptic and a rebuttal
to William Blake’s vision in “The Marriage of Heaven and hell”. As Peter argues,
Lewis presents the necessity of ‘closure’. This implies that there is always a scope for
change and renewal. Lewis perhaps was in the hope of a Revelation. In the New
Testament it is written apocalypse is followed by a revelation. Lewis’s notion of
apocalypse was something different form that of Nietzsche and Foucault. Nietzsche
talked about death of God and Foucault talked about end of man. But in Lewis we
fine the opposite. There is a search for divine order and renewal of man. Jacques
Derrida wrote about problem of place in philosophy. One thing is always replaced by
another. The place Nature used to enjoy in the past was replaced by Human. C.S
Lewis was against such anthropocentrism and thought in terms of rights of Nature.
Derrida used the word ‘Displacement’ and ‘Re-evaluation’. He wrote about ‘closure
of man’ which meant displacement and renewal. Unlike Foucault and Deleuze,
Derrida thought about ‘re-emergence’. C.S Lewis meant such a ‘displacement’ in
human interpretation of Nature when he wrote the Narnia tales and Space Trilogy. In
the book *The Magician’s Nephew* Lewis tried to re-establish the lost essence of
The future existence of Narnia was dependent on the Tree of Apples. Aslan appealed to all the Narnians and the Pevensie children to guard and protect the tree. When the evil entered Narnia the trees stopped singing and dancing. Then King Caspian fought for the Narnians and for Aslan. In the chronicles two threats are being highlighted – fight for Kingship and the displacement of prince Caspian from his throne; and the evil design of the witch, Jadis and the displacement of Aslan from Narnia.

C.S Lewis does justice to the good characters by defeating the evil in the narrative. Lewis ethically presents the story of Narnia which sets a limit to transgression. By transgression I mean breaking of laws and order. The Witch for instance violated the laws of Narnia and thus transgressed. Thus the Derridian kind of ‘Re-evaluation’ finds expression in Lewis’s narrative. Lewis allows his evil characters to face the good characters and this clash of the opposites eventually leads to restoration of new order. In the space trilogy also, Lewis allows the evil character Weston to confront Dr. Ransom. The readers can make their own judgement because such confrontation clarifies the positions. Lewis made a deconstructive approach when he imagined the world of Narnia as an agrarian, primitive world of talking animals. The use of talking animals actually critiques human language and civilisation. By giving voice to the animals Lewis set a dialogue between the human and the non-human, between nature and culture. The anthropocentric humanism of the West tried to distance nature from culture and animal from human. This was evident from the mass deforestation that was carried out in the West for the establishment of industries and companies. Trees were cut in large numbers for fuel and for making weapons. In *The Chronicle of Narnia* and *That Hideous Strength* Lewis presents this picture of deforestation. By
promoting the world of Narnia Lewis tried to dismantle the world of human civilisation similarly in the movie *Avatar* we see such a clash between two worlds – the primitive and the civilised world of science and technology. This clash in fact reveals the fact that the existing world has failed to sustain life. Thus it necessitates an inclusion of the ‘excluded’. Such a displacement can really herald a change in interpretation. Lewis’s ecological ideology seeks such an inclusion of the excluded. So to the question –What went wrong in humanism? We have the answer that humanism excluded Nature from its definition. Lewis used several strategies to promote his ecological ideology like rethinking and re-evaluating the past by foregrounding primitivism and Medievalism and by advocating supernaturalism over naturalism. Lewis preached Christian Humanism and its sense of Rights and duties, ethical values and concept of sin through a Biblical narrative. Lewis imagined alternate modernity through science fictions. In his worldview, everyone enjoyed equality, freedom and dignity. Lewis indirectly wished to instruct his readers about the importance of law and order. Laws play an important role in human life and they are important for maintaining order and peace in the society. It is the responsibility of the people to observe the ethical laws of life as ethical laws are part of human life. In the Narnia Books, Lewis this concept has been developed with the words of Aslan, the Great Lion.

For Lewis Nature is a Miracle. That nature is not a closed box. The six lettered word Narnia almost resembles the word Nature-the six lettered word. Perhaps, Lewis was trying to define Nature through the chronicles of Narnia. The whole book seems to an answer to the question – What is Nature? And the answer can be described through the following diagram,
Peter J. Leithart in a blog entitled “Apocalyptic in Ordinary” writes that contemporary apocalyptic is not always about the end of the world. C. S. Lewis in fact gave anew shape to the apocalyptic tradition by attributing a more positive and optimistic touch. His Christian humanism actually contributed to the faith and renewal of humanism.

Lewis’s fictional works brought the issues of individualism, freedom, responsibility, naturalism in an attempt to critique and debate. There is so much irony and symbolism in his novels that involve great insights. Lewis was not the first critic to critique humanism. Lewis was preceded by various anti-humanistic and counter-enlightenment moves. Western humanism and its one dimensional philosophy were critiqued by the post colonialists, post modernists and environmentalists.

**Anti-Humanism and Counter-Enlightenments:**

The monopoly of Humanism and Enlightenment began to collapse gradually in the post-industrial era in the West and most significantly in the post-World War era. There was a gradual decline of traditional humanism. Humanism and its myth of progress were questioned by different theorists of the contemporary period such as Ferdinand
de Saussure, J. Derrida, Levi Strauss, Roland Barthes and Michael Foucault, Heidegger. They dismantled the established metaphysics of Western Humanism and its one-dimensional philosophies. Rene Descartes’ notion of ‘cogito’ was challenged by the post-structural, deconstructive metaphysics. ‘Cogito’ sought to posit human at the center of human knowledge. This concept was also critiqued by Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. The concept ‘Death of the Author’ is nothing but expression of such deconstructive endeavour. Traditional humanism was individualistic, secularist and capitalistic. It was basically an uneven society. Humanism also had a colonial side and that is critiqued in post-colonial theories. Post structuralism, post-colonialism and post-modernism shared this common stand against traditional Humanism. In the book Humanism and Democratic Criticism Edward Said writes about non-Western or ‘other’ Humanism and made an enquiry into the relevance and future of humanism in the contemporary life. He has also discussed the importance of philology in the 20th century scenario and changing nature of humanistic philosophy. Current issues like War on terror and environmental crisis have further necessitated the rethinking of the subject. Edward Said was critical about Humanism but he could not be at one with the ideological anti-humanist and the structuralist anti-humanism of the post-modernist, because, Said was a believer in the ideals of justice, equality and liberty that have the potential to resist unjust war and military occupation. He believed that historical import of human agency and labour will continue to enjoy its place (Said 10). Said wrote in Humanism and Democratic Criticism,

I believe then, and still believe, that it is possible to be critical of humanism in the name of humanism and that, schooled in its abuses by the experience of Euro-centrism and empire, one could fashion a different kind of humanism that was cosmopolitan and text-and –language bound in ways that absorbed the great lessons of the past from, say,
Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer and more recently from Richard Poirier, and still remain attuned the emergent voices and currents of the present, many of them exilic, extra-terrestrial and unhoused, as well as uniquely American. (Said 11)

I find these observations very interesting and important because criticism is not simply about finding faults, it is also about finding solutions. Said’s observations express a faith in human changeability and it appears from his observations that an alternative reading of humanism is possible and also essential. Said was supporting Vico’s observation on New science that we can really know what we make. Like Vico, Said was also of the opinion that Humanistic knowledge is ‘incomplete’, ‘insufficient’, ‘provisional’, ‘disputable’ and ‘arguable’ (Said 12). Said calls it a ‘tragic flaw’ of humanistic knowledge. Said however, writes that this flaw can be remedied and mitigated by the disciplines of philosophical learning and philosophical understanding (Said 12).

Analysing the trends of anti-humanism in the US, Said writes that the anti-Humanist turn in US is due to the widespread revulsion with the Vietnam War and the revulsion included the resistance movement to Racism and imperialism. According to Said the academic humanities were also responsible for discrediting the ideology of humanism. To quote Said,

So, in my opinion, it has been the abuse of humanism that discredits some of humanism’s practitioners without discrediting humanism itself. Yet in the past four and five years, an enormous outpouring of books and articles has, in a vast overreaction to this purported or attempted humanism which in most cases was an often idealistic critique of humanism’s misuses in politics and public policy, many of which were in regard to non-European people and immigrants gone on to diagnose such lugubrious improbabilities as the death of literature or failure of humanism to respond robustly enough to the new challenges. (Said 13)
Hence, Said believes that the centrality of the great literary texts has been threatened by popular culture and heterogeneity of different branches of knowledge. This also reveals the role of language in shaping one’s identity and ideology. It is important to mention here that the 20th century literary theory and criticism actually played with this shaping power of language and the idea of the text. The arbitrary nature of language and meaning was foregrounded in the writings of the structuralism and post-structuralism. Even the New Critics and the post-structural new humanists of the 20th century made an endeavour to discuss this changing nature of language. Jacques Derrida’s very notion of deconstruction was applied to the ‘Text’. By the word ‘Text’, he meant ‘History’, ‘Ideology’, ‘Language’ and ‘Culture’. Deconstruction gives stress to objective criticism and explains that a Text has multi-meaning and that meaning is always postponed. So Said’s observation is very crucial so far as democratic criticism is concerned. Said was concerned over the diminishing eminence of the humanities in American Universities. Said was critical about the monopoly of humanism that is regulated by the selective elite section of the society. Such humanism can be oppressive and act like a tyrant. Locating a few inherent problems at the heart of humanism, Said wrote,

The first problem is a frequent but not always admitted connection between humanism as an attitude or practice that is often associated with very selective elites, be they religious, aristocratic or educationist, on the one hand, and, on the other, with an attitude of stern opposition, sometimes stated, sometimes not, to the idea that humanism might or could be a democratic process producing a critical and progressively freer mind. (Said 16)

Anti- humanist revelation of the 1960s and 70s influenced by writers like T.S Eliot and the New Critics note that humanism was a special attainment that required the
cultivating and reading of certain difficult texts and there was an appeal to go back to the ‘sacrosanct, pastoral past’ in literature and humanism (Said 17).

The New humanists whose members were Irving Babbit, Paul Elmer More had been critical of the American education, culture and academics for abandoning the classical worldview and critiqued for spreading materialist ideas and unethical values (Said 19). The new humanists were anti-modernists and anti-romantics. They were interested in humanistic counter-movements and were traditionalists. They were also against romanticism and naturalism in the West. They sought a revival through creative expressions. However, they failed to leave lasting impression due to their elitist inclinations. Allen Bloom wrote a book entitled *Closing of the American Mind* (1987) and it was a revolutionary book on anti-intellectualism. In this book Bloom critiqued American Higher Education as it failed to restore democratic ideals. Said wrote,

> What Bloom and his predecessors shared, in addition to a common dyspepsia of tone, was a feeling that the doors of humanism had been left open to every sort of unruly individualism, disreputable modishness, and un-canonized learning with the result that true humanism had been violated, if not altogether discredited. (Said 18)

Here Said has stated an important fact that true humanism is violated and that indeed, is at the root of whole crisis be it economic, political or environmental. Said, however, is very optimistic for he believes in the open character of humanism. He writes,

> Humanism is not about withdrawal and exclusion. Quite the reverse: its purpose is to make more things available to critical scrutiny as the product of human labour, human energies for emancipation and enlightenment, and just as importantly, human misreadings and misinterpretation of the collective past and present. (Said 22)
Davies has referred to the neo-humanistic reformers like Niethammer of the nineteenth century who grounded their curriculum in classics such as Latin and Greek language, culture and literature.

It was Karl Marx whose radical humanism attempted at a true resolution of the conflict between man and man and between man and nature. John Bellamy Foster’s *Marx’s Ecology: Materialism and Nature* also focuses on historical-materialist analysis and its relation to ecology. Foster explains the difficulties that arise in explaining the connection between social theory and ecology because in doing so one has to go back to the foundations of materialism. vi

Forster in his book discusses the new views of nature that arose with the development of materialism and science in the seventeenth through the nineteenth century. These two indeed ‘promoted’ the ecological ways of thinking. Foster writes,

> The overall discussion is structured around the work of Darwin and Marx-two greatest materialists of the nineteenth century. But it is the later who constitutes the principal focus of this work, since the goal is to understand and develop a revolutionary ecological view of great importance to us today; one that links social transformation with the transformation of the human relation with nature in ways that now consider ecological. (Foster I)

Thus it is found that the counter-Enlightenment and anti-humanist responses mainly critiqued Western Modernity and its dehumanising drive. For an alternate modernity human needs to rethink its various relations. One needs to think about others. To promote ecological thinking human needs to rethink and rebuild his/her connections with nature.
**Post-modernism, Trans-humanism and Post-humanism:**

The counter-enlightenment or counter-modernist philosophy is at the heart of post-modern discourse and it critiques the one-dimensional metaphysics of the Western Humanism. Post-modern literature uses various rhetorical devices to assess the dialectic of modern philosophy and ethics. Post modernism shares its philosophy with Post-colonialism and ecocriticism. All three worked against inequalities, injustice and logic of domination at various levels. Post-modernism also exhibits a post-humanist tendency which is again a counter-humanist rhetoric. Post-humanism means ‘after humanism’ and ‘beyond humanism’. Post-human is also a form of anti-humanism which explores place for the non-human other. It is critical about the subjective nature of dominant Western Humanism and calls for objectivism. Philosophical post-humanism thus aims at an all-inclusive philosophy that explores a place for everyone on earth and makes a decentering move. Humanism actually faced a crisis and a blow after such anti-humanist and counter-modernist philosophies during the mid-twentieth century. It happened because humanism was transforming to a trans-humanist and post-humanist future. Post-humanist philosophy critiques the monopoly of human rights and pleads for animal and nature rights. The fallibility and limitations of human intelligence were highlighted in the post-humanist discourse. Such a discourse also discards the anthropological rhetoric of the humanist discourse and challenges the boundaries of humanism. However, a major objection to such Post-humanist discourse was that it abolishes the human from the discourse. Trans-human and post-human discourse is critiqued for their exclusion of the human and inclusion of some super-human or macro-human entity which can be called technological utopianism of post-humanist philosophy. C.S Lewis in his novel *That Hideous Strength* critiqued
such trans-humanist and post-humanist inclinations. The utopian scientific rationalism of the English intellectuals is questioned by Lewis. Lewis discussed the question of Human, non-human and inhuman in his novels and critiqued the reductionist view of nature and culture. In the other two cosmic novels Out of the Silent Planet and Peralandra Lewis critically looked at the irrational scientism of Dr Weston and presented him as a Un-man. Lewis did not anticipate such post-humanist philosophy because his objective was to rethink the relation between nature and culture. His novels made an attempt to answer to the question- What it means to be a human? Hence, Lewis did not aim at an exclusion of human in his discourse. Human, in Lewis’s novels enjoys a special position because human is chosen by God as a protector of the earth. The good characters are rewarded and the evil are punished in Lewis. Lewis was not an anti-humanist or a post-humanist. He was a classical humanist, a medieval humanist and a Christian humanist. He was that old Western Man.

It is important to mention here that recently the concept of Post humanism has been developed as post human ecocriticism where ecocriticism explores the dimension of post humanism, post natural and post green. This new humanism explores the complex environmental relations and social- ecological and scientific networks. As the critic, Serpil Oppermann explains, post human ecocriticism throws light on the co-evolution of organisms and inorganic matters in their hybrid formulations. Opperman writes that there is a close connection between post humanism and ecocriticism as they focus on changing ways of life, materiality and concept of nature. Opperman writes about this new concept of post human ecocriticism in the following words,
The conceptual frameworks within which we have defined the human are now being replaced by interlinked posthuman and new materialistic viewpoints that not only delegitimizes the central position of the human among other species by acknowledging the permeable boundaries of species in the natural-cultural continuum, but also recognize the profound interconnections between different forms of life in the composite world where previously we had seen separations.

(Opperman 25)

Thus there is a new posthuman ecocritical turn in the critical history and this too critiques the anthropocentric pattern of western humanism and its theory of human exceptionalism and rethinks the relation between various forms of life on earth. However, Opperman is of the opinion that such post-human ecocriticism is not anti-humanism that dismisses human existence. Instead, it expects a post-anthropocentric discourse. In the next chapter an attempt is made to discuss Lewis’s new humanism and his ecocritical ideas.
Russell calls it ‘sensual errors’ (Mirandola xviii). Through disciplined reason and the will man can become kingly and angelic and this has been the hope of all true humanists (Mirandola xix).

In a religious context the word means builder of a bridge between Earth and Heaven, between the material and the spiritual, the human and the divine. Huxley also writes that the function of a literary man is to make available to the rest of the community the large areas of value and meaning (Ferrucci 3-4).

Foster refers to British philosopher of science Roy Bhasker to define philosophical materialism which comprises of ontological materialism, epistemological materialism and practical materialism.

It is interesting to mention here that in the late forties and early fifties many engineers and scientists participated in literary activities and wrote science fictions. Among such writers were Fred Hoyle, Issac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and Leo Szilard (Feenberg 44).

Unlike George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty Four and Huxley’s Brave New World Lewis’s novels projects an alternate worldview that believes in revelation and renewal.

The questions that bothered him were as follows: Why Bacon was commonly presented as the enemy within Green Theory?-Why was Darwin so often ignored in the discussions of nineteenth century ecology?-What was the relation of Marx to all this?
Work Cited:


Lithart, Peter J. “Apocalyptic in Ordinary” in First Things, 2017 @ www.firstthings.com

Lewis, C.S. *The Pilgrim’s Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism,* London: Dent, 1933


The Four Loves. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960

The World’s Last Night and Other Essays, Boston: Mariner Books, 1960


Porter, Roy (ed.) *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present.*


Edwin Cannan, ElecBook Classics