CHAPTER III
ECOCRITICISM AND CALL FOR ECOLOGICAL HUMANISM

Discourse of Ecocriticism:

Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary study of literature that incorporates issues related to Nature and Environment. By nature Ecocriticism is part of Cultural Studies. Cultural studies analyse a Text as a field of social, political, cultural practices and semiotic representation of various discourses. One important development in recent Cultural Studies is its focus on various contemporary forms of globalization and resistance to capitalist culture, power play and hegemony. This also includes a criticism of the capitalist consumption patterns across the world. Marxism, Feminism, Race have contributed a lot to this field by their criticism of Culture and have paved the way for Structuralism, Post-structuralism and Post-Modernism. The Frankfurt School and later the Birmingham School played a major role in the circulation of such critical ideas. Race, culture, gender, identity, hegemony- these were the major areas of discussion during the 1970s to 90s. Major figures in these areas were Stuart Hall, John Clarke, Richard Dyer, Louis Althusser, Richard Hoggart, E.P Thompson, Raymond Williams, Paul Gilroy and many others. Their objectives were to understand culture with their complex power mechanisms against the socio-political contexts. They critique for an ethical evaluation of the Modern society. Anthropological and Ethnic Studies are also part of Cultural Studies. Ecocriticism has emerged as green cultural studies in the late twentieth century and has contributed to trans-disciplinary and transcultural discourses. It studies the transformation of
ecological processes and its impact on the world and pleads for a sustainable future of
the earth. It aims at a cultural ecology that advocates an interconnected worldview.

Greg Garrard in his work *Ecocriticism*, writes that Ecocritics tie their cultural analysis
to a ‘green’ moral and political agenda. Garrard writes,

Ecocritics generally tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a ‘green’ moral and
political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally
oriented developments in philosophy and political theory. Developing the insights of
earlier critical movements, ecofeminists, social ecologists and environmental justice
advocates seek a synthesis of environmental and social concerns. (Garrard 4)

Garrard also writes that an emphasis on the moral and political orientation of the
ecocritic and the broad specification of the field of study is essential. Ecocriticism is a
study of the relation between human and the environment and this field of study has
received greater importance due to its close relationship with the science of ecology
(Garrard 5). Garrard suggests that ecocritics must transgress the disciplinary
boundaries and develop their own ‘ecological literacy’. We must identify the
ecological problems as scientific problems. One way of ecocritical reading is to see an
environmental debate as rhetoric. Here Garrard gives examples of apocalyptic rhetoric
of Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring (1962)*. Garrard writes that Constructionism is an
important tool of cultural analysis and ecocritics must focus on the cultural
construction of ideas such as Nature (Garrard 10). The challenge for ecocritics is to
keep one eye on the ways in which ‘nature’ is always in some ways culturally
constructed, and the other on the fact that nature really exists, both the object, albeit
distantly, the origin of our discourse (Garrard 10). Garrard opines that ecocriticism
need not remain ‘parasitic’ on the natural science. It can play an important role to
make a diagnosis and resolution of ecological problems (Garrard 13).
In the postmodern culture, the reconciliation of the idea of ‘human’ has been given importance and the focus has been on the binary construction of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’. However, Garrard writes that many environmental critics are criticised by radical thinkers for making compromises with the ruling socio-economic order (Garrard 22). Hence, ecocriticism must extend its boundaries to include alternate models to seek solutions. Ecocritics must involve some practices that can make teaching of ecological ideas effective. Criticism will not be enough to handle the situation of ecological crisis. Hence this important discipline should act like a forum for teaching ecological values. Garrard traces the origin of the notion of ecocentrism in various religious systems of belief. He writes that the notion of ecocriticism has developed from beliefs derived from Eastern religions like Taoism and Buddhism and from the beliefs of St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1286) (Garrard 25).

In the Eastern religions, the human is also called Saviour, somebody who defeats the demons. So in such Eastern worldviews an ethical dimension is very distinct. We can discuss some of such practitioners who have contributed to ecological thinking.

Gautam Buddha: Gautam Buddha belonged to the period of fifth century B.C in northern India. Despite being a prince, Gautama abandoned his royal wealth for the sake of knowledge and enlightenment. Nature was a great source of inspiration for Buddha and he attained the status of Nirvana (Enlightenment) living in the company of sacred nature. He seemed to be less interested in urbanisation and material philosophy and understood the ‘interconnectedness of the bio community’ (Palmer 3). Buddha’s belief in karmic continuum actually represented the idea that humankind, the animal world and natural environment are distinctive manifestations of this karmic effect (Palmer 2). He preached compassion for all life forms. The Buddhist
environmental philosophy reacted against anthropocentric life philosophy and advised an ethical approach to life and culture.

Dalai Lama: In the recent past, another important contribution to ecological thoughts is made by the Tibetan Saint and preacher, Dalai Lama who advocated environmental compassion and talked about universal responsibility. He strongly critiqued human exploitation of nature, excessive population growth and unrestrained use of technology. He believed that the future of the planet is dependent on humanity. Some of his important statements are as follows:

Our planet is our house, and we must keep it in order and take care of it if we are genuinely concerned about happiness for ourselves, our children, our friends, and other sentient beings who share this great house with us.

Destruction of nature and natural resources results from ignorance, greed and lack of respect for the earth’s living thing. (Source: www.dalailama.com)

If we talk about Eastern influences on environmental thinking, we can remember the contributions of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindra Nath Tagore. They did not belong to any religious group, but their words and acts were for the good of humanity at large. Hence their contributions are remarkable.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941): Tagore was a great poet, who was awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize in 1913 for his composition Gitanjali. His environmental concerns had a spiritual dimension and he expressed his deep love for nature through his writings.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948): Mahatma Gandhi was against the craze for machinery. In Hind Swaraj Gandhi wrote,
Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is now knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of civilisation; it represents a great sin. (Gandhi 81)

Gandhi’s ecological thinking explained the holistic design of human, nature and the environment. He showed concern over growing industrialisation in the West and looked for an alternate model based on nature to challenge the Western model of machinery. Besides, Gandhi’s approach to environmental ethics was anti-anthropocentric. Gandhi’s ideas influenced the Deep Ecologists and Green Theologists. Gandhi’s preference for a simple living and reactions against consumerism contributed a lot to the environmental philosophy. In India many had attempted to raise their voice against exploitation of nature. For instance, Sunderlal Bahuguna campaigned to resist mass environmental destructions by governmental agencies and that movement is popularly known as the Chipko Movement. Similarly there was the Narmada Bachao Andolan in Gujrat (Guha 165). In the recent past, Ramchandra Guha has extensively written on this issue of ecological change and peasant resistance in the Himalayan areas in his landmark work on environmental history The Unquiet Wood. Here Guha has written about a sociology of domination and resistance and a landscape of resistance. He has expressed his views on Eurocentrism and its logic of domination. Guha wrote an article on Mahatma Gandhi’s contribution to this resistance movement. Guha wrote,

From the Chipko Andolan to the Narmada Bachao Andolan, environmental activists have relied heavily on Gandhian techniques of non-violent protest, and have drawn abundantly on Gandhi’s polemic against heavy industrialisation. (Guha 112)

In this sense we can say that Gandhi’s non-violent protests against injustice subsequently influenced the environmental justice movement.
Lawrence Buell in his essay “The Emergence of Environmental Criticism” writes that the discourse of environmental criticism had its root in ancient past. The Judaeo-Christian thoughts, medieval supernaturalism exhibited such worldviews and the ‘Idea of Nature’ has been a dominant discourse among scholars and intellectual historians (Buell 2005: 2). Buell expresses the need to correct the marginalised discourse of the environment. Buell opines that the discourse of the environment became more crucial during the last third of the twentieth century because of environmental disasters and crisis. This represents the post-World War II scenario and the testing of the nuclear weapons. The ASLE and ISLE had been influential enough in the promotion of such ecological ideas and discourses. However, Buell finds that a number of early ecocritic’s objectives were to rescue literature from the separation of readers from the text and text from the world that was proposed by the Structuralism. The revisionists of environmental criticism have absorbed a ‘socio-centric’ perspective (Buell 2005:8) the notion of ‘environment’ in Environmental Criticism has broadened from ‘natural’ to include the ‘Built’ environment and there is an increasing importance of the local and the global (Buell 2005: 12). Ecocritics have been aesthetic, ethical and socio-political then scientific in their approach to the environment. The term ‘ecology’, originally from Greek ‘Oikos’ means study of biological interrelationships and flow of energy through organism (Buell2005:13). Buell is known as a pioneer of ecocriticism who contributed his thoughts to environmental cultural studies. Buell’s important works are The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination (2005), The American Transcendentalists (2006) and The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture (1995).
We receive several important observations on America’s environmental crisis in his book *Writing for an Endangered World*. Buell believes that the problem of environmental crisis should be addressed with a coherent vision for common environmental good (Buell 2001:1). He says,

> The success of all environmentalist efforts finally hinges not on some highly developed technology or some …new science but on a state of mind: on attitudes, feelings, images, narratives. (Buell 2001: 1)

The legacy of colonialism and imperialism according to Buell, environmental imagination can perform fourfold function. It can create the reader’s engagement with the world and arouse the reader’s awareness about both human and non-human world. The readers can be transported to places where they otherwise would never go and allows imagination of possibilities for alternate futures.

Buell writes that the ‘natural’ and ‘human built’ environmental realms have been made indistinguishable by human transformations of physical nature. Besides, the process of modernization can be viewed from the nature-culture dichotomy created by modern civilization (Buell 2001: 3-5). To make a more comprehensive approach to the problem of environmental crisis, environmental imagination must focus on the historical landscapes, landscape genres and environmental discourses (Buell 2001:8). Mere focusing on pastoralism, wilderness will not help in this respect. An all-inclusive approach which Buell calls ‘a myth of mutual constructionism’ can shape ecological consciousness in people (Buell 2001: 9). In the essay “Toxic Discourse”, Buell discusses the premises, impact and cultural significance of toxic discourse and brings reference to Rachel Carson’s text *Silent Spring*, a book that created awareness about degrading environment. The word ‘toxic’ means poisonous which means that living world is on the verge of death. This perceives a kind of serious threat to the world due
to chemical modifications and prospects of industrial culture. Importance of toxic discourse grew due to many historical catastrophic events across the world. The Western legacy of progress received a blow after the two World Wars and the devastations that followed were irreparable. Other such catastrophic events were- Hiroshima- Nagasaki bomb menace, Bhopal gas tragedy in India and the Cold war in the West. Recently, the chemical attacks in Syria have further increased the threat to the environment. Now the world is preparing for a third world war and undoubtedly, this may bring serious repercussions to the whole world. Rachel Carson in her book *Silent Spring* narrates such a toxic discourse and experiences and called it ‘a Fable for Tomorrow’. The image of the ‘poisonous community’ largely pictures the post-industrial toxic communities around the world. Apart from Carson, Leo Marx in his book *The Machine in the Garden* has elaborated on the issue of toxicity and environmental problems. Both Carson and Marx write about lost paradise and ‘betrayed Edens’. About Marx, Lawrence Buell writes,

> For Marx, traditional mainstream American culture was marked by a naïve double think that allayed incipient anxieties about the techno-economic progress to which national policy has always been committed with escapist fantasies of inexhaustible natural beauty. (Buell 2001:37)

Toxic discourse deals with the sense of ‘disenchantment for the illusion of the green oasis’ and thus environmental justice movements has pervaded popular culture through many apocalyptic narratives. A consequence of such attempt was that President John F. Kennedy warned the United Nations against using chemical pesticides and this happened just before the publication of Carson’s *Silent Spring*. John F. Kennedy supported her campaign against environmental degradation. In the recent past, during the conference on world environment, a decision was taken that
each country will minimise the use of air cooler and refrigerators as they have been the major source of Chemical carbons that destroy nature’s health. But some of the countries refused to compromise their life style. Hence all should stand together against such a global crisis. The solution of the problem totally depends on people’s understanding of the problem. Then only environmental justice movement can provide ‘grass root resistance’ to unrestrained human activities and exploitations of nature (Buell 2001: 41).

Leo Marx recounts the experience of change in the American environment after the entry of the machine. He traces the long tradition of protest against environmental degradation. Marx refers to the tradition of Theoritus (the first pastoral poet) and Virgil (writer of Eclogue) who discovered ‘Arcadia’, a symbolic landscape and ‘a delicate blend of myth and reality’ (Marx 19). Marx traces this pastoral design in different American narratives and poetry and considers it as an ‘Idyllic Vision’ and a ‘counter force’ (Marx 25). In Marx’s words,

> The term counterforce is applicable to a good deal of modern American writing. The anti-pastoral forces at work in our literature seen indeed to become increasingly violent as we approach our own time. For it is industrialisation, represented by images of machine technology that provides the counterforce in the American archetype of the pastoral design. (Marx 26)

Marx distinguishes between two kinds of pastoralism—one is the popular and sentimental kind and the other is the imaginative and complex (Marx 5). According to Marx, the first one is difficult to define because it deals less with thoughts and more with emotions. Such pastoralism is diffused in American culture and behaviour and such pastoralism is ‘flight from the city’ (Marx 5). A nostalgic experience is also associated with such pastoralism. Marx’s complex kind of pastoralism is an
experience that promote the theme of withdrawal from society into an idealised landscape and that experience is shared by writers like Melville, Faulkner, Thoreau and Frost (Marx 10). Marx, however, opines that the urban myth of civilisation was consistently at work to displace the myth of pastoralism. By portraying an idealised landscape, an attempt is also made to hide the industrial realities. Marx recounts the rich pastoral connection with America in the following lines,

The pastoral ideal has been used to define the meaning of America ever since the age of discovery and it has not yet best its hold upon the native imagination. The reason is clear enough. The ruling motive of the good shepherd, leading figure of the classic, Virgilian mode, was to withdraw from the great world and begin a new life in a fresh, green landscape. (Marx 3)

In the nineteenth century, the famous American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson took the ecological view that people should live in harmony with nature. Emerson identifies a divine design in the whole working of the universe. As he says,

Nature, in its ministry to men, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result. All the parts incessantly work into each other’s hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapour to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the planet; the planet feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulation of the divine charity nourishes man. (Emerson 37)

He regrets that human is no longer in a sustainable relationship with nature. Emerson’s romanticism reacted to too much rationalisation and mechanization of the West. One of his major contributions to environmental thoughts is his book on Nature (1844). Emerson writes about celebrating our original relationship with the universe. This, according to him, can be done by reviving past traditions based on religious faith that good will be restored (Emerson 33). Emerson critiques the West for
breaking this sacred relationship with nature. He is, however, hopeful and expresses faith in new man and new thoughts. Emerson says,

All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature. We have theories of races and of functions, but scarcely yet a remote approximation to an idea of creation. (Emerson 33)

This refers to the fact that science represents a partial truth of the universe. It has not been able to address the whole idea of creation. Emerson believes that the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. In his words,

Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking therefore, all that is separate from us, all which philosophy distinguishes as the Not Me, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, Nature. (Emerson 34)

Emerson identifies a sublime relationship between human and the earth/ nature/ stars. Nature is an embodiment of youth and childhood pleasure which is divine. He says,

In the woods, is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. (Emerson 35)

These lines of Emerson found their expression in C.S. Lewis’s Fictional writings. These lines were published in 1836 and Lewis must have read these lines. Both Emerson and Lewis were transcendentalists in many respects and their approach to nature was somehow similar.

**Eco Theories and Principles:**

If we go to write about those pioneering figures that theorised Ecocriticism we have to mention the names of Cherryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. They edited a book
entitled *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* and the book was published in the year 1996. This book is the first collection of critical essays on literary ecology that explored the relationship between literature and physical environment. After this book Lawrence Coupe edited a book entitled *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism* with an Introduction by Jonathan Bate and the book located the rich tradition of green theories and practices. In the year 2011, the Cambridge University Press published a book by Timothy Clarke. The book was *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* which overviewed literary and cultural criticism of issues concerning the degrading environment. Hence, from the 1990s there seems to be a growing awareness towards the problem of environmental crisis and the writers and critics seemed to be more interested in theorising the principles of ecology and literature. The names of those above mentioned books clarify the point that these critics and theorists were concerned about the growing violence and exploitation of nature and the traumatic experience that followed. All of them are looking back to a traditional past which was once pastoral and resourceful. They stressed on the fact that a rethinking of nature is essential for curing the crisis of our earth.

Lynn White in his landmark article “The Historical Roots of Ecological Crisis” wrote that the Baconian creed: ‘scientific knowledge means technological power’ was accepted as a normal pattern by the eighteenth century and it was marked as the greatest event in human history since the invention of agriculture (Glotfelty & Fromm 4-5). White’s article clarifies the points that there was a historical root behind the present Ecological crisis and something went wrong in that history. White found that
the ecological crisis of the twentieth century had its roots in a democratic culture. The point will be clear after following the observation mentioned below,

Science was traditionally aristocratic, speculative, and intellectual in intent; technology was lower-class, empirical, action-oriented. The quite sudden fusion of these two, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, is surely related to the slightly prior and contemporary democratic revolutions which, by reducing social barriers, tended to assert a functional unity of brain and hand. Our ecological crisis is the product of an emerging, entirely novel, democratic culture. The issue is whether a democratized world can survive its own implications. Presumably we cannot unless we rethink our axioms. (Glotfelty & Fromm 5-6)

White points to the political structure of the West in the nineteenth century and holds it responsible for ecological crisis. White was not wrong when he said this because West’s concept of nation-state and its oppressive principles were highly responsible for the break down in social structures and ecological values. Twentieth century was a time of decline in many respects: decline of historical consciousness, spiritual consciousness, humanitarian consciousness and ecological consciousness. This was a menacing consequence of a culture that subtracted all that were essentially humane. Nature and Nation should grow hand in hand. Without their harmony progress is impossible. In the current political terminology we come across terms like ‘Organic nationalism’ and ‘Political Ecology’ and this is an encouraging sign and that implies that Nature is given importance. Paul Hamilton, a Scholar in Political Science argues in his article entitled “The Greening of Nationalism: Nationalising Nature in Europe” that Nationalism and Ecologism are important in contemporary political discourses and they must be given due importance. In the article Hamilton referred to contemporary nationalist movements in Scotland and Wales to clarify the point that environmental goals can serve the civic nationalist goals. Hamilton discusses a very
important point of similarity between the two. Both Ecologism and Nationalism are concerned with the notion of ‘place’ (Hamilton 27). Hamilton writes that in the discourse of International Relations, centrality of environmental sources of conflict is frequently explored such as conflict in Syria, in the Middle East, the Cold War between Britain and Iceland had environmental issues at the root. Hence the relationship between nationalism and Ecologism can be discussed under the heading of Green Political Discourse. This incorporates the question of non-violence, social justice, decentralization, racial equality and human rights (Hamilton 29). Nationalism can be discussed as a discourse of human social relations and there also it shares similarities with ecological discourse that takes into account the ecological relations. These two ideas are brought together because both are concerned with question of identity. One deals with national identity (territorial identity) and the other deals with ecological identity. Hamilton also mentions that on the point of Diversity also they share similarities. Modern Ecologism gives a priority to diversity (we may call biodiversity and social diversity). The area of Nationalism also deals with issues of multiculturalism and ethnic equality. Hamilton writes,

Threats to cultural diversity mirror those threats to ecosystem diversity and individual species. In fact, the same threats are often implicated in the decline of both human and environmental diversity. (Hamilton 33)

Here Hamilton has showed concern over the gradual decline of cultural diversity and biodiversity and opines that there is a connection between the two. Hamilton is hopeful that change and insecurity will encourage political experimentation. He writes,
Change and insecurity encourage political experimentation. With globalisation, environmental destruction and economic change new ideological partnership will certainly emerge. (Hamilton 43)

Hamilton’s argument also clarifies Lynn White’s argument that the historical past is responsible for the present crisis of the environment. Lynn White in the article mentioned above, has written that man’s relation to his earth has changed across time and such attitude towards nature dated back to 830 A.D in Western illustrated calendars when people used to coerce the world- ploughing, harvesting, chopping trees and butchering pigs and thus man began to behave like a master. While tracing the roots of environmental crisis, White also finds that Judeo-Christian teleology is also responsible behind such a crisis. He critiques Judeo-Christian teleology and its faith in progress. White writes,

The victory of Christianity over paganism was the greatest psychic revolution in the history of our culture. It has become fashionable today to say that, for better or worse, we live in “the post- Christian age”. Certainly the form of our thinking and language have largely ceased to be Christian, but to my eye the substance often remains amazingly akin to that part of the past. (Glotfelty & Fromm: 9).

White observes that human ecology is conditioned by human’s beliefs about their nature and destiny which is termed as religion and it depends on how human thinks about himself in relation to other things around them. Here, White raises certain objections. According to White, the rise of the West was accompanied by “the post-Christian age”. Paganism was replaced by a technocratic culture based on progress. Paradoxically enough, the Christians were the first to bring that faith in progress and the subsequent post-Christian ideologies in the West. White argues that Christianity carries the burden of guilt because it established a duality between human and nature and justified human exploitation of nature for his proper ends by destroying pagan
animism. He mentions the Christian dogma of creation in the Bible and his main point was that the Christians destroyed the religion by removing its pagan essence. It became an anthropocentric religion.

Thus White traces the historical roots of ecological crisis in the West. The discussion so far reveals that the distance between the past and the present has increased to a great extent due to changing nature of human values and their interpretations. White however, writes that an alternative vie can really solve the matter. White is referring to a new religion or a rethinking of the old one. White writes that an affinity between Christianity and Zen Buddhism supports such a new religious tendency. A radical Christian view of life like that of Saint Francis of Assisi, the greatest saint of radicalism in Christian history, can be embraced as a remedy of the ecological crisis (Glotfelty & Fromm 12-13). White favours Francis’s religious stand because he did not follow the popular left-wing followers of Christianity who preached domination. Saint Francis’s faith was based on the virtue of humility, democratic ideals. White writes that Saint Francis fought against the Western dynamics of science and technology. In White’s words,

What we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man- nature relationship.
More science and more technology are not going to get us out of our present ecological crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink our old one. (Glotfelty & Fromm: 12)

White believes that an alternate Christian view can be reformatory and destroy the old progressive ethos of left-wing Christianity. White identifies this religious root of ecological crisis and seeks a solution. He writes that the solution should be essentially religious because the root of the trouble is largely religious. One must rethink one’s destiny and nature (Glotfelty & Fromm 14).
The observations made by White are very important because they address two important problems of the West, one is the problem of orthodox Christianity and the other is ecological crisis. In both the cases spiritual degradation and crisis of human is the core point. Hence White advocates that a rethinking of the past is necessary.

Christopher Manes in his essay “Nature and Silence” writes that there is a necessity of a viable environmental ethics to confront the silence of nature (Glotfelty & Fromm 16). Manes writes that nature is being silenced and dominated by human for their own selfish desires. Manes also brings the issue of marginalised minorities such as women, children, prisoners and insane in the society. Manes writes that the language we use today, the idiom of Renaissance and Enlightenment humanism are cut off from the natural (Glotfelty & Fromm 15).

Here Christopher Manes has pointed out that language can be deceptive as it hides the real processes of nature owing to cultural creeds or obsessions. This implies that nature is manipulated and its meaning is altered or reduced to meet cultural needs. Nature is compressed as a single epistemological entity. Manes writes that human culture and animistic culture are always together. However, human is becoming a part of the process of silencing nature. Manes also writes that due to the advent of two powerful institutional technologies: literacy and Christian exegesis, animism broke down as a coherent culture in the medieval period (Glotfelty & Fromm 18). This happened under the spell of aristocracy and the Church. In the Middle Ages, Nature was considered as the symbol for the glory and orderliness of God. This was as per the model of the Great Chain of Being in the Psalm. According to the great chain of being, human’s place was higher to that of beasts and a little less than angels. Manes argues that this idea of great chain of being (scala naturae) received a new configuration after
the Renaissance and it began to mean supremacy of human over the natural world. Humanism altered the concept and set a dichotomy between human and the rest of the species (Glotfelty & Fromm 20). Thus humanism and its anthropocentric enterprise devalued nature and human relationship and set a boundary between the two. Since then Human became a distinctly civilized phenomenon and individual subject. Manes writes,

Through humanism, the boisterous, meandering parade of organic forms is transfigured into a forced march led by the human subject. (Glotfelty & Fromm: 21)

Against such a transition and crisis, Manes has proposed several insights. The need of a viable environmental ethics for the logic of domination and ethics of exploitation are inhibited in the subjective ideologies of humanism. Manes calls it counter-ethics. He argues for the need to dismantle the historical use of reason. Man must re-establish communication with nature to relive the relation between the human and nature. Such communication is possible through a new language that draws upon past cultures. Manes prefers the medieval contemplative tradition for its sobriety, sparseness and modesty of speech. Besides, medieval social forms had a refined sense of human limitations, reverence for nature and otherness. This new language must be free from the directionalities and rhetoric of humanism. Manes is in favour of a ‘language of ecological humility’ that the Deep Ecologists are in support.

These views above exemplify the fact that humanism was responsible for the gradual decline of human rationality and morality in the West. The dreams and visions that Humanism and Enlightenment had after the Renaissance took a different shape in the form of irrationality and exploitation. This was also at the root of the silence of nature. Manes’ argument is in support of a dialogue between human and the no-human to
form a rational community. Thinkers like Murray Bookchin have also attacked on the irrationality of human reason.

Eirik Eiglad in his introduction to the book *Social Ecology and Communalism* by Murray Bookchin, writes that there is an urgent need to find political alternatives to deal with the social and ecological crisis and in this respect Murray Bookchin’s theories are very important (Bookchin 10). Bookchin belonged to a Jewish-Russian immigrant family and dedicated his life seeking rational alternatives to capitalist society and fought for social freedom. That was his radicalism after the Second World War. As Eirik writes, Bookchin was one of the pioneering figures of ecological thought and played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement and Anti-Nuclear Movement (Bookchin 10). Three of his important contributions are *The Ecology of Freedom, Towards an Ecological Society* and *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. The main objective of social ecology is to re-humanise the relationship between society and nature and to create a rational, ecological society (Bookchin 12). Bookchin defines Social Ecology in the following sentences,

Social ecology is based on the conviction that nearly all of our present ecological problems originate in deep-seated social problems. It follows from this view that these ecological problems cannot be understood, let alone solved, without a careful understanding of our existing society and the irrationalities that dominate it. To make this point more concrete: economic, ethnic, cultural, and gender conflicts, among many others, lie at the core of the most serious ecological dislocations we face today. (Bookchin 20)

Bookchin in the above statement has observed that the ecological problems cannot be separated from social problems. The way the human deals with other humans and other organic beings plays an important part in society. Irrational behaviour and activities lead to social conflicts and that enhance the ecological problems. The
hierarchical society is also responsible for cultural domination of the Natural world. Bookchin calls the present market society thoroughly ‘Impersonal’ and ‘self-operating mechanism’ (Bookchin 20). Bookchin also writes about the spiritual imperatives of social ecology. In his words,

Social ecology was among the earliest of contemporary ecologies to call for a sweeping change in existing spiritual values. Indeed, such a change would involve a far reaching transformation of our prevailing mentality of domination into one of complementarity, one that sees our role in the natural world as creative, supportive, and deeply appreciative of all the well-being of non-human life. (Bookchin 21)

Bookchin means a truly natural spirituality which is free from mystic regressions. This is possible through an emancipated humanity that consists of ethical agents who can diminish sufferings and restore ecology (Bookchin 21). According to this ethics of complementarity, the human will not act like a domineering agent but as a supporter of non-human life. However, Bookchin clearly states that the ideology of social ecology should not be confused with theology or pantheism (Bookchin 21). iv He writes that to understand social ecology and ecological crisis, we must understand Nature first and a dialectical, organic approach to nature is essential in this respect (Bookchin 23).

Human beings are rooted in their biological evolutionary history called ‘First Nature’ and then they produce a characteristically human social nature which may be called ‘Second nature’. In between there could be two directions. One that is anthropocentrism that places man at the centre and the other is bio-centrism that is, according to Bookchin, a meaningless and reductionist approach (Bookchin 27).

Bookchin writes that history of mankind is moving towards centralisation of human and that is problematic. He calls for an organic and developmental way of thinking to solve the ecological problems (Bookchin 29). This is an important explanation of the problem because it exemplifies the fact that human is responsible for the present
ecological crisis and being the most intelligent species, human has to think for remedial steps. But human’s irrationality and selfish desires and activities have distorted humanity’s unique capacities for development. The result is social conflicts, war and destruction, cyber-attacks in today’s world scenario.

C.S Lewis’s Medieval Model, Pastoral theology and Critique of Naturalism:

C.S Lewis is relevant today because in the mid twentieth century itself he foregrounded the principles of radical Christianity and the device that he used to spread those ideals was pastoral theology. He was a heretic in many sense. He was sceptical about the progress of science and technology and considered human spiritual crisis as a product of modern scientific and mechanical culture. Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, says that Lewis was not an academic theologian. He was a pastoral theologian- an interpreter of people’s moral and spiritual crisis. The idea of the pastoral is re-imagined by Lewis.

Pastoral tradition has a remarkable history in the West. Rooted in classical tradition, Pastoral trope has been very frequently used by Western writers to critique materialism, industrialism and naturalism. In the classic past, during Hellenistic period, the pastoral mode emerged as a mode of representation. As Greg Garrard mentions in his book Ecocriticism, there were two key contrasts from that period that ran through the tradition of the pastoral (Garrard: 2012, 39). They were –the spatial distinction of town (frenetic, corrupt, impersonal) and country (peaceful, abundant); and the distinction of past (idyllic) and present (‘fallen’)
The Alexandrian poet Theocritus (c. 316-260) composed the *Idylls* where those contrasts were highlighted and large scale urbanisation was critiqued. Virgil (70-19 BCE), another classic poet wrote about Roman civilisation and the growing environmental problems. Deforestation and subsequent loss of natural values, decline of human ideals were some of the themes discussed by those classic writers. Virgil remained influential as a forerunner of pastoral poetry in the post-classical era. Writers like Spencer, John Milton, William Wordsworth (Romantic Pastoral), and Matthew Arnold continued to write in the pastoral pattern. In the realm of environmental criticism, Leo Marx, Rachael Carson followed the pastoral design. Leo Marx, in his famous work *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) explored the pastoral tradition in American literature. Another writer who wrote exclusively on pastoral tradition was Raymond Williams whose *The Country and the City* (1973) was well received by readers.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the scientific revolution and Enlightenment, the idea of the pastoral was still accepted, but with a difference. That was termed as pastoral ecology. As Garrard writes,

> The Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries accepted the pastoral conception of nature, but refracted it through a new view of the universe as a great mechanism designed by God. This metaphor of nature as harmonious and stable machine remained at the heart of the new science of ecology as it emerged in the early twentieth century, and shaped the rhetoric of later environmental movements even as scientific ecologists became increasingly sceptical of the ‘balance of nature’. (Garrard 2012: 63)

C. S Lewis was one among those who used this pastoral ecological pattern in his writings and gave it a new shape. Lewis in his own innovative way combined the pastoral and the theological and presented his medieval model of the universe. As it
has been mentioned earlier, Lewis was not an academic theologian. He used this pastoral theology as a device to address the moral and spiritual crisis of his time. Pastoral theology is a genre that is moral and apologetic in nature. It deals with practical theology. However, Lewis used this genre not simply to preach theology, but to preach ecology. It is important to mention here that pastoral ecology has been used as a postmodern device to critique uncertainty and spiritual crisis of the human. This has become an important part of ecological discourse as the spiritual crisis is a result of environmental crisis. Lewis used this idea of the pastoral as a metaphor to address the contemporary spiritual crisis in the West. This is such a discipline where ethics, pastoral and spiritualism coincide.

Lewis’s model of the universe dramatically presents the picture of exploitation of nature and suggests an alternate model for the future of our earth. For Lewis, Nature means both natural and supernatural forces that are at work. Lewis dreams of a community where there is respect for all, where nature is obeyed with devotion. Lewis celebrates the whole idea of Creation by god and expresses faith in its interconnectedness. Lewis also tells us how to look at Nature. In his book *The Four Loves*, Lewis writes that Love of nature is not like personal love. Love of nature does not simply mean love for beauty. The nature lovers are not concerned with individual objects. A Botanist may not be a nature-lover. It is the ‘moods’ and ‘spirit’ that really matter for nature lovers. Lewis writes,

> It is the ‘moods’ or the ‘spirit’ that matter. Nature lovers want to receive as fully a possible whatever nature at each particular time and place is so to speak, saying. The obvious richness, grace and harmony of some scenes are no more precious to them than the grimness, bleakness, terror, monotony or ‘visionary dreariness’ of others. (Lewis 1960: 35)
Here Lewis points to the fact that Nature must be viewed from different perspectives and from different angles. Nature lovers must not confine their love to worshiping nature or romanticising nature. Lewis critiques the pantheistic positions of Coleridge and Wordsworth for simply romanticising Nature. Lewis calls it incomplete moral philosophy. Lewis writes that Nature utters only one imperative—“Look, Listen, Attend”. But Lewis regrets that the enriching experiences of true love for nature have been debunked by the nineteenth century and the main imperative of Nature is misinterpreted. Lewis argues that modern people are engaged in ruthless competitions for the sake of sex, hunger and power and have no time for Nature (Lewis 1960:35). Lewis was against pantheistic treatment of nature and theologising of nature. He wants us to study the language of nature images,

What nature-lovers—whether they are Wordsworthians or People with ‘dark gods in their blood’—get from nature is an iconography, a language of images. I don’t mean simply visual images; it is the ‘moods’ or ‘spirits’ themselves—the powerful expressions of terror, gloom, jocundity, cruelty, lust, innocence, purity that are the images. In them each man can clothe his own belief. We must learn our theology or philosophy elsewhere. (Lewis 1960:36)

Here Lewis gives importance to study of language of the images and that carries an important significance. To understand nature it is important to study the language of the images that carry multi-meaning. By the word ‘clothing’ Lewis means ‘filling’ or ‘incarnation’ not metaphors or similes (Lewis 1960:37). Lewis’s main objective was to show that everything is dependent on the way we look at things. Nature cannot validate any philosophy, but philosophy can validate nature (Lewis 1960: 37). Lewis advises us that to understand Nature and God one must go back to their studies, to church and to the Bible. Nature- Religion, otherwise, may lead to nonsense (Lewis
1960: 38). This is so because love of nature is not confined to Nature Religion. Lewis writes,

This love, when it sets up as religion, is beginning to be a god—therefore to be a demon. And demon never keeps promises. Nature ‘dies’ on those who try to live for a love of nature. (Lewis1960:39)

Lewis was a great myth maker like his friend J.R.R. Tolkien who used storytelling as device to create consciousness among his readers about the impending danger and threats to the world because of scientism and exploitation of nature. Exploitation of nature also entails exploitation of human nature and in that way the process of dehumanisation accompanies exploitation of nature. The nineteenth and twentieth century crisis of nature was also a spiritual crisis by its nature. Hence Lewis tried to expose the factors behind such a crisis and sought solutions for it. For instance, Lewis critiqued the Enlightenment philosophy of science for its too much inclination towards machines and technological outputs in his book *The Pilgrim’s Regress*. In his science trilogies and the Narnia Chronicles, Lewis critiqued the Western model of industrialisation and progress.

Lewis presents two pictures of England in his autobiographical account in *Surprised by Joy*. On the one hand, Lewis presents England as an abode of natural beauty and resources while on the other hand, Lewis presents the picture of oppression and exploitation in England. He perceived the nature of oppression from two sides. When Lewis was at Wyvern and Bookham he noticed the beautiful side of England. But there he also noticed a forest of factory chimneys, gantries, and giant cranes at Belfast. Lewis writes,

Noises came up from it continually, whining and screeching of trams, clatter of horse traffic on uneven sets, and, dominating all else, the continual throb and
stammer of the great shipyards. And because we have heard this all our lives it does not, for us, violate the peace of hilltop; rather, it emphasizes it, enriches the contrast, sharpens the dualism. (Lewis 1955: 154-155)

In the quotation above, Lewis explains the dualism and contrasts that the two pictures present. The forests of chimneys symbolically represent the industrial rise of the West and the noises represent the picture of exploitation of the land. Lewis fictionally presents this picture of exploitation of earth in his second space trilogy That Hideous Strength where Lewis narrates about the sinning activities of a few intellectuals. In the novel, it is shown that even educated people are involved in crimes against nature and culture. In the name of science and progress, some sections of the society are exploiting the earth. Their anthropocentric enterprise, their irrationality is critiqued by the author.

Lewis also raised his objections against the public education systems in England.

Lewis writes in his Surprised by Joy,

But the essential evil of public –school life, as I see it, did not lie either in the sufferings of the fags or the privileged arrogance of the Bloods. These were symptoms of something more all –pervasive, something which, in the long run, did most harm to the boys who succeeded best at school and were happiest there. Spiritually speaking, the deadly thing was that school life was a life wholly dominated by the social struggle; to get on, to arrive on, having reached the top, to remain there, was the absorbing preoccupation. (Lewis 1955: 108)

Thus Lewis blames the whole education system for promoting competitive ides among the adults. Lewis was of the opinion that even education system is not free from social pressures and struggles. Modern people’s sense of frustration and anxiety is a result of such domination and oppressive systems. Lewis presents this sense of stress and frustration of modern man through the character of Mark Studdock in That
*Hideous Strength.* Mark was trapped in conspiracy at his workplace. This could happen because of Mark’s too ambitious nature, struggle for a stable career and his sense of irresponsibility.

From his childhood days, Lewis began to speculate over spiritual, social and religious issues. His whole life has been a struggle with faith and doubt. This was accompanied by a deep sense of pessimism in his life. Lewis spent long days of solitude at home and school and developed a great sense of longing for something he did not know. This was the time when he began to feel that the Universe is a menacing and unfriendly place. During his boyhood days, Lewis came into contact with many people who gave him directions to overcome pessimistic thoughts. During such time, Lewis developed a deep longing for music, nature and joy. Joy, as he defines, is not the kind of aesthetic pleasure. It was the opposite. When Lewis was in Wyvern, he started reading the Classics and they provided the source of joy. He consumed volumes of Norse Mythology, Celtic Mythology and works of Milton and Horace. From such mythical adventures in reading Lewis began to understand the real worth of life and religion. Lewis began to understand the relation between happiness and morality. His concept was that the first principle of practical reason is natural law and traditional morality. Stewart Goetz calls Lewis a natural law theorist because Lewis understood natural law as the idea of moral principles (Goetz 57). Such moral principles, according to Goetz, mean the laws that govern actions and arise out of the nature of individuals who are the objects and performers of such actions. Lewis’s objection was against the sinning humanity who out of irresponsibility do crimes against nature and humanity. Lewis in fact critiqued the Naturalism of the West and reintroduced the doctrine of Natural Law. For Lewis, such
natural law is the first principles of practical reason and sole source of value judgements.

Lewis’s concept of natural law is closely connected with his concept of Joy or Sehnsucht. Joy, according to Lewis, involves a special kind of desire, longing or homesickness that mean more than mere aesthetic pleasure. The concept of happiness and pain are closely associated with Lewis’s concept of practical reason and philosophy. This search for joy constantly inspired Lewis to speculate over life issues such as grief, alienation, desire, longing, freedom, pleasure, responsibility. It was this search for joy that made him explore the distinctions between the spiritual and the material, permanent and the temporary, entity and non entity. Reading Lewis is such a psychological adventure that leads us to rethink and relive.

Lewis was a strong critic of naturalism because it deals with the material worldview. Lewis believed that the process of reasoning entails a refutation of naturalism because it is a more than natural activity. Lewis identifies the problem in naturalism in his book *Miracles* where he says that naturalism involves no reasoning. Such reasoning involves a mental process which draws practical inference. Lewis considers Naturalism as false because nature cannot be reasonably explained in terms of material causes. Stewart Goetz expresses his views on Lewis,

> According to Lewis, then, the fact that we reason refutes naturalism, because reasoning consists in apprehensions and believing being casually explained by other apprehensions and believing. Reasoning consists of *mental-to-mental causation*. Reasoning is non natural or above nature. It is *supernatural*. (Goetz 84)

Lewis was aware of the fact that contemporary materialist philosophy was trying to disenchant the world by drawing a distinction between the material and the spiritual.
Nature was devalued and objectified by such naturalism of the West. Instead a more anthropocentric philosophy was promoted through naturalism and materialism where the human became the controlling agent, the authority figure. The anthropocentric enterprise of the West was largely responsible for the crisis and Lewis tried to debunk this myth of progress by his allegorical representations of the medieval past. The medieval model is placed in juxtaposition with the new or modern world in the fictions of Lewis and they are set in a dialogue. This dialogic mode in Lewis is very effective because it offers a comparative analysis of the two different worldviews. He uses anthropomorphism as a device to combat anthropocentrism. This is evident in his use of Talking animals in the Narnia books. Another important model that Lewis presents in his novels is the Apocalyptic narrative, but Lewis’s apocalyptic design does not aim at any kind of pessimism. Lewis’s aim was to locate the root of the crisis. His books also talk about Revelation which means restoration of faith and order. Lewis’s novels serve two very important purposes.

They address the problem of spiritual crisis of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Lewis was concerned about people’s diminishing faith on religion and worship of Mammon. This was due to men’s alienation from nature and God and the broken relationship between the two. Lewis made a theological interpretation of this relationship between human and God and nature and expressed that human has the solution for such a crisis. Human should protect this original relationship for a better future. This is Lewis’s New Humanism for a post-War world.

Lewis acts like a classicist and revives the model of the past as a possible source of solution. The modern myth of rationalism and mechanical progress is demythologised by Lewis because it is largely responsible for the environmental and spiritual crisis of
the twentieth century. Lewis was the romantic rationalist who tried to analyse that good and bad are the two clues to the universe. He discarded the model of Naturalism which is reductive in its interpretation of the universe.

In the CNN International Edition, Joseph Loconte, an Associate Professor wrote that C.S Lewis and J.R.R Tolkien responded to ‘Environmental Holocaust’. The Great War destroyed not only soldiers and civilians, but also their environment. Forests disappeared soon after the devastating war and the fields turned to crates. Both Lewis and Tolkien experienced the holocaust and fought against it. They showed concern over the growing encroachment of industrial life in rural England. An important point of similarity between the two was that both of them were officers at the British Expeditionary Force and experienced the traumatic situations. Both the writers discussed about nature in conflicts and both resented the conquest of nature by the industrial West. Lewis and Tolkien were among the Inklings group members. The other two were Owen Barfield and Charles Williams. The Inklings were like minded friends at Oxford and had worked together for something different. They were quite familiar with the classic mythologies and medieval literature. They found that the modern myth of the universe has some defects and hence they thought about reviving the old traditions in an attempt to correct the defective model. They used to meet at a house known as The Eagle and Child and discussed various books and their stories. Debating was their main passion and they spent the whole night hours at the place debating and arguing. The members were interested in Paganism because Paganism preceded Christianity and somewhere their roots lay in the Pagan world. Lewis believed that modern people are facing a separation from this pagan worldview and hence they must be made good Christians. This was also his steps against atheism. At
an early age Lewis was also an atheist. It was only after a debate with the Inklings that Lewis understood the significance of faith in Christ. They propagated a concept known as Mythopoeia which means ‘Worldview’ and it is a combination of Myth, Stories and poetry. This is such a worldview that made a holistic approach to life and world. For instance, in the Norse Mythology this concept of Mythopoeia was prevalent. It aimed at the full story of the universe-from the Creation to the Destruction, a full understanding of the universe. Their objective was to create a sense of wonder and enchantment among the readers. They tried to introduce the old pagan model to the Modern world and made an attempt to restore the lost faith in the Biblical worldview. Lewis and other Inkling members chose to use this Biblical Model to communicate the ‘true myth’ of Christ. According to the Biblical Model, the good is always restored and evil is defeated. This is also an expression of faith in the system that the Virtuous always wins over the Evil. Hence they were in search of some reform in the modern worldview that was irrationally rationalistic, anthropocentric and absurd.

In the chapter “The fall of Man” in Lewis’s *The Problem of Pain* Lewis explains the nature of the fall of man,

From the moment a creature becomes aware of God as God and of itself as self, the terrible alternative of choosing God or self for the centre is opened to it. This sin is committed daily by young children and ignorant peasants as well as by sophisticated persons, by solitaries no less than by those who live in society: it is the fall in every individual life, and in each day of each individual life, the basic sin behind all particular sins: at this very moment you and I are either committing it, or about to commit it, or repenting it. (Lewis 1940: 70)
Lewis identifies that the act of self will is the only sin against God’s will. Self-idolatry is the sin of the Paradisal man. Lewis also writes about the consequences of such a fall. By the fall, man lost his original specific nature and status as a species.

The fall was due to our own pride, ambition, unrestrained desire and lust. This is the emergence of a new kind of man after the fall, a new species, never made by God, a sinner. Lewis calls it a ‘spiritual degradation’ of man. Hence pain and suffering are part of their existence. This is an act of perversion on the part of the fallen human. Lewis writes that man had undergone a change in the form of some ‘integral perversion’ (Lewis 1940:79). Lewis writes,

> Our present condition, then, is explained by the fact that we are members of a spoiled species. I do not mean that our sufferings are a punishment for being what we cannot now help being nor that we are morally responsible for the rebellion of a remote ancestor. If, nonetheless, I call our present condition one of original Sin and not merely one of original misfortune, that is because our actual religious experience does not allow us to it in any other way. (Lewis 1940: 81)

Lewis incorporates the story of fall in almost all the novels and shows the conflicts between good and evil. Lewis observed that man’s conquest and domination of nature was like an act of sin and nature was under crisis since the day of man’s sinning. Lewis was facing great dilemma due to the destruction and horror that followed after the World Wars. He became a prisoner of his thoughts. He also joined the war as he considered it as his duty to fight for his country. When the war was over, he came back to Oxford and started speculating over these issues. In the poem “Death in battle’, Lewis expresses his sense of frustration and dilemma. He was in search of peace and serenity and began to pray.
When I find thee,
O Country of Dreams!

Beyond the tide of the ocean, hidden and sunk
Away,
Out of the sound of battles, near to the end of
Day,

Full of dim woods and streams (Lines: 25-35)

Lewis raised his voice against erosion of the environment in his poems also. As a
writes, Lewis was first interested in writing poetry. Later on he dedicated his service
to fictions. In the poem “The Future of Forestry”, Lewis asks a rhetorical question,
How will the legend of the age of trees
Feel, when the last tree fails in England? (Lines: 1-2)

…

Simplest tales will then bewilder
The questioning children, “What was a
Chestnut? (Lines: 10-12)

In the poem “On Being Human”, Lewis invites the Angelic minds, the intelligent
beings to behold the forms of nature, its bounty and glory. In the poem “Here the
Whole World”, Lewis writes about apocalypse and renewal.

Here the whole world (stars, water, air,
And field, and forest, as they were
Reflected in a single mind)

Like cast off clothes was left behind

In ashes, yet with hopes that she,
Re-born from holy poverty,

In Lenten lands, hereafter may

Resume them on her Easter Day.

In “In Praise of Solid People”, Lewis thanks God for the presence of the solid folk who take good care of nature and who are responsible and innocent.

Thank God that there are solid folk

Who water flowers and roll the lawn,

And sit an sew and talk and smoke,

And snore all through the summer dawn.

Who pass untroubled nights and days

Full—fed and sleepily content,

Rejoicing in each other’s praise,

Respectable and innocent (Lines: 1-8)

Lewis calls them ‘happy people’.

In the book The Abolition of Man, Lewis throws his observations on man’s interpretation and treatment of nature. Lewis writes,

Nature seems to be the spatial and temporal, as distinct from what is less fully so or not so at all. She seems to be the world of quantity, as against the world of quality; of objects as against consciousness; of the bound, as against the wholly or partially autonomous; of that which knows no values as against that which both has and perceives value; of efficient causes (or in some modern systems, of no causality at all) as against final causes. (Lewis 1943: 45)

Here Lewis argues that human failed to interpret Nature as the world of quality and autonomous entity. Nature is thought as an object of domination. Lewis writes,
We are always conquering Nature, because ‘Nature’ is the name for what we have, to some extent, conquered. The price of conquest is to treat a thing as mere Nature. (Lewis 1943: 46)

Lewis warns us against such a misconduct and calls it the ‘magician’s bargain’ and a dehumanizing act of conduct. Lewis argues that a change in the conduct depends on the mind power of the man.

It is the magician’s bargain: give up our soul, get power in return. But once our souls, that is, ourselves, have been given up, the power thus conferred will not belong to us. We shall in fact be the slaves and puppets of that to which we have given our souls. It is in Man’s power to treat himself as a mere ‘natural object’ and his own judgements of value as raw material for scientific manipulation to alter at will. (Lewis 1943: 46-47)

This is, indeed, a warning for the future. Everything is dependent on Man’s choice and judgements. Lewis’s criticism was not against science and its progress. His objection was against reduction of values of Nature and Human. He was concerned about the dehumanized effect of science its ethos of progress. Such process of dehumanization may bring fatal consequences to the existence of life on earth and the damage may be irreparable. The process and systems must be checked. Lewis writes that a dogmatic belief in objective value is necessary to the very idea of a rule which does not mean tyranny or slavery but obedience. Here Lewis mentions the importance of the values of Tao which shares a common human law of action. In his lecture entitled “The Poison of Subjectivism”, which is included in Lewis’s collection of essays Christian Reflections, Lewis warns the people against the danger of subjective morality. In the essay, Lewis writes that sometimes false philosophy causes misery to people and Lewis believes that philosophies like Subjectivism were behind the promotion of power philosophies. Lewis writes that human started studying himself
after studying his environment. Earlier reason was used to see all other things. But later reason itself became the object of study. This, according to Lewis, was a result of a blind evolutionary process. His subjective logic cannot yield truth. This is actually a reductive view of truth and Lewis was against it. Lewis writes that modern view of practical reason does not consider value judgements as judgements. In Lewis’s words,

The modern view is very different. It does not believe that value judgements are judgements at all. They are sentiments, or complexes, or attitudes, produced in a community by the pressure of its environment and its traditions, and different from one community to another. (Lewis 1967: 1)

Hence it can be said that modern rationalism was a fragmented rationalism and has no respect for value judgements. Under such environments, in the absence of objective standards, moral philosophy becomes meaningless. Hence, the focus is on objective values and standards. Lewis was concerned with a common human action and morality. For that purpose, one needs ‘real common will’ and ‘common reason of humanity’ (Lewis 1943: 48).

Lewis’s point was that science is applied to subdue reality to human needs through techniques and this, according to Lewis, was not proper knowledge. Lewis mentions the case of Dr. Faustus who had thirst only for gold, guns and girls, not knowledge. Like a magician, human’s objective was to get the power to fulfil his wishes. However, Lewis was not pessimistic about the future of science. He said that science can cure this disease (Lewis1943:48). He was not against science, but against scientism and scientific materialism. He was against the dehumanizing impulse of scientific culture. He was against the exploitation and commodification of nature and culture. Science’s dream was to create a new age of equality, liberty and fraternity. But on the practical ground this is not realised. Lewis writes that ‘love of truth’ was
gradually replaced by ‘love of power’. Lewis writes that science was born in an ‘unhealthy neighbourhood’ (Lewis 1943: 50). Lewis writes that such a triumph can be at the cost of some high price like repentance (Lewis 1943: 50). Lewis was looking for some new philosophy in the form of some alternative. He writes,

Is it, then, possible to imagine a new Natural Philosophy, continually conscious that the ‘natural object’ produced by analysis and abstraction is not reality but only a view, and always correcting the abstraction? (Lewis 1943: 50)

Here Lewis is expecting a philosophy that makes an all-inclusive approach to life and nature—both the ‘part’ and the ‘whole’, where there is no matter of ‘reduction of conscience’ (Lewis 1943: 50). This is also according to the concept of Tao. Lewis writes that the whole point of seeing through something is to see something through it (Lewis 1943: 51). Lewis’s notion of progress was different. He warns all against unchecked progress. Progress for progress’s sake would not be beneficial. In the book *Mere Christianity*, Lewis writes,

We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place you want to be and if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. Progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive. (Lewis 1952: 34)

The term Environmental Humanities deal with the environmental philosophy, history, cultural anthropology and ecocriticism. The concept has the potential to promote humanistic research on cultural and environmental issues in an interdisciplinary way. The Environmental philosophy had its theoretical development form the 1970s as a distinct discipline and eco-criticism, as an environmentally oriented literary and cultural studies established itself from 1990s onwards. Their philosophy rested mainly upon the concept of human and nature relationship. A change in the approach of eco
critics can be noticed if we compare the earlier ecocritical works with the later ones. Earlier ecocritics made a sympathetic analysis of Romantic representations of nature in British and American writings. Later the focus shifted to issues of environmental justice, urban nature at the global environmental context. In this respect we should acknowledge the efforts of different research centers, networks and journals in encouraging the researchers across the world. We cannot forget the contributions made by such classic environmental writers as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson to the environmental thoughts and philosophes. They showed concern over the changing and degrading environmental values (the way nature is tamed and domesticated by human for selfish desire) and pleaded for a better world where human and nature can enjoy a symbiotic relationship. Recently the post-humanist turn in environmental philosophy critiques the human-centric humanism that marginalised other species and systems. In a direct or indirect way such new philosophes have challenged the traditional humanistic thoughts and practices.

Environmentalism flourished in the mid and late twentieth century and critics like Lewis Mumford, Rene Dubos and Murray Bookchin have critiqued industrial capitalism and deforestation. They critiqued the Baconian enterprise of mastering nature and Cartesian dualism that paved the ground for industrial capitalism and subsequent Anthropocentrism. The tenets of such Ecological Humanism are – rejection of anthropocentrism and steps towards eco-centrism; identification of an organic link between people and other forms of life; critique of techno-centrism and scientism; critique of Industrial capitalism; belief in human potential to change the system with respect, imagination and intelligence; and the protection and conservation of the environment.
The Call for a New Humanism:

Historic or traditional humanism sought to resolve the conflict between tradition and modernity and stressed on individual rights. Humanism evolved as a great cultural and liberal and spiritual movement which attempted at transformation of civilization and progress of humankind with an expansion of territory and accumulation of wealth. Hence the material growth found prominence as a step towards socio-economic progress. Humanism also has a strong moral foundation and it continues to exert its influence upon human civilization. However the secular and materialistic turn in humanism produced an imbalance in the society. Such imbalances necessitate a rethinking of the moral, intellectual and political foundations of globalization and this paves the way for a New Humanism. This New Humanism celebrates diversity of identities and heterogeneity of interests and underlines an all inclusive approach and expresses faith upon the transformative powers of education, sciences and cultures. It advocates a collective effort that aims at a sustainable society based upon economic, social and environmental progress. Sustainable development has become an international discourse and offers a critical reflection upon the reorientations of developmental policies. The three pillars of sustainable development are- economic, social and environmental. The UN summit in 2015 took an agenda to work according to those lines. New Humanism aims at social development through education and environmental development through sustainability. It pleads for a strong revival of the humanist society. Besides, it also aims at economic sustainability for a just and equal society and towards equal distribution of wealth and growth (D’Orville @cadmusjournal.org).
Lewis critiques this notion of progress in the Space trilogies. In the book *The Pilgrim’s Regress* also Lewis argues against scientific materialism and progress. Lewis was against materialistic philosophies and its reductionist worldviews. Materialistic philosophy is based on individualism and subjectivism. Such views are abundant in politics and social sciences. Lewis believed that such reductionist views cannot explain the complete truth of human life. Lewis attacks such material subjectivity and irrational rationality in the book *The Pilgrim’s Regress*. The book is also an allegorical presentation of modern life and philosophes and it is inspired by the structure of John Bunyan’s famous allegory *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. As the title of the book says, the word in Lewis’s book is not Progress but Regress which is just the opposite of the word. Regress means moving backward to primitive positions. Lewis writes about the illusion of modern utopia. The book was first published in the year 1933 and this was his first book after his conversion. The book is autobiographical in nature because it allegorically presents Lewis’s own search for faith. But more than that, the book critically comments on the politics, philosophy, ideology and aestheticism of the twentieth century. The book is presented in the form of a Dream Allegory because the narrator actually narrates whatever he saw in his dreams. A boy named John undergoes a series of adventures following his vision of an island of his desire. The boy experiences mental conflicts between the rules of an unknown Steward and his desire for the island. He starts from a place known as Puritania, the land of Rules and moves forward to various places like Zeitgeistheim, Dialectica, Eschropolis and Pagus. There on the way he meets several figures with names such as Mr. Enlightenment, Mr. Sensible, Mr. Neo Classical, Mr. Humanist, Neo- Angular and Mother Kirk. Besides them, he also met Vertue, Media Halfway
and Mr. Mammon. There is also a reference to two cities Thrill and Eschropolis and a valley called the valley of Humiliation. Lewis was the great Medieval and Renaissance Scholar who chaired at the Cambridge. The book uses two very important classical methods. One is allegory and the other Dialogue. The protagonist, John is in dialogue with many allegorical figures and he is trying to clarify his knowledge about the Rules and the mysterious island. John was informed by Mr. Enlightenment that there is no Landlord and Rules. Here Landlord means the creator of all rules that is, God. But Mr. Enlightenment simply denied it and tried to convince John that the Landlord was just an invention of the Stewards to keep the rest under its thumb (Lewis 1933: 20). He further said that the Steward’s account of faith was only a cock and bull story. This was because they had knowledge of modern science. He tried to explain that there were no such things as Rules. There was only free will for all. He further said that the absence of the landlord was proved by the great discovery of Christopher Columbus and Galileo, invention of printing press and gunpowder. Mr. Enlightenment warned John against misconceptions that he had carried with him from Puritania. During their conversation, Mr. Enlightenment pointed to a city called Claptrap. But John could see only a flat, plain without any trees, a huge collection of corrugated iron huts. Mr. Enlightenment Explained,

“That is the city of Claptrap. You will hardly believe me when I say that I can remember it as a miserable village. When I first came here it had only forty inhabitants: it now boasts a population of twelve million, four hundred thousand, three hundred and sixty-one souls, who include, I may add, the majority of our most influential publicists and scientific popularisers. In this unprecedented development I am proud to say that I have borne no small part: but it is no mock modesty to add that invention of the printing press has been more important than any merely personal agency. If you would care to join us.” (Lewis 1933: 23-24)
Here Mr. Enlightenment is taking pride over increasing population and loss of village life. John was not convinced by his boastful announcements and continued his journey. John, however, was delighted to learn from Mr. Enlightenment that there was no Landlord. John was afraid of the Landlord because he didn’t like to be bound by rules. He wished to enjoy freely and was desperately in search of the island of his desire. This island that John visualised symbolises desire for freedom. One the way John met a girl, Media Halfway who urged him to fall in love because love, according to her, was the way to the island. Lewis shows in the book that the moderns considered machines as objects of beauty. Mr. Halfway’s son, Gus whom John met on his way pointed to a machine and called it ‘the daughter of the spirit of the age’ (Lewis 1933: 33). He informed that Apollo’s beauty is incomparable to that of the daughter of the spirit of that age. He even blamed his forefathers for worshipping gods and goddesses. Gus represented that section of the modern society who had blind faith on the power of machinery. It is seen that both Mr. Enlightenment and Gus were trying to convince John that they were making great progress after the invention of the machines.

In the chapter “Eschropolis”, Lewis critiques the modern life-styles of the ‘silly twenties’. Their vulgar tastes and irrational rationality, their insensitivity and lack of responsibility are critiqued. This, according to Lewis, was a diseased generation with awkwardness and absurdities. John was totally disappointed by the degraded tastes of the ‘Dirty Twenties’. A singer presented a song and John was surprised by his song because that was not what he wanted. He was disappointed by their filthy nature. Their sense of music and literature was utter nonsensical. One woman explained to John,
“You are still thinking of your island. You have got to realise that satire is the moving force in modern music”. (Lewis 1933: 37)

Another said that it was the expression of a savage disillusionment. One fat boy, who was drunk, said,

“Reality has broken down”. (Lewis 1933: 41)

In the meantime a young Clever said to John,

“We lost our ideals when there was a war in the country. They were ground out of us in the mud and the flood and the blood. That is why we have to be so stark and brutal.” (Lewis 1933: 41)

Lewis critiques these filthy people and the hopeless generation but their sense of unhappiness with their lives clearly indicates the kind of devastation that the two wars brought to the West. Their sense of disillusionment and loneliness was a result of the devastating wars. It indicated the spiritual conflicts of the age and cultural neurosis. This was the intellectual climate of the twentieth century. John’s search for the island was obstructed by the conflicting intellectual climate of that period. John called the country of Eschropolis a flat country. In his next step John met the figure who was the motivating power of the people of Eschropolis. He was Mr. Mammon. Mr. Mammon refused to give shelter or any bread to John because it would be against the rule of Eschropolis. John continued his journey; he met the son of old Mr. Enlightenment. He informed John that he had a quarrel with his father and that his father was an ignorant man. He also instructed John to throw away the idea of escaping to the island. He led John to the place of the Giant, who was the spirit of the age. There he was imprisoned and put before the Giant. However, luckily Reason appeared before them and killed the Giant spirit. John accompanied Reason after that incident. Reason rationally explained to John the nature of one’s inwards. However, reason also talked about the
landlord’s presence which made John uncomfortable. John came to know that the landlord made the perfect roads, but they were distorted later. Mr. Sensible told John that Human nature always remains same. John came to know from Mr. Humanism that they had abandoned the ideas of old Romantic landscape gardeners. Lewis conveys the fact that there is a total loss of old values and the post war generation was a savage, brutal and unfeeling generation. He calls it the ‘Fool’s Paradise’ (Lewis 1933:102). Under the impact of that brutality, Virtue became confused and lost his conscience. John finally meets Mr. Wisdom and he undertakes to study Metaphysics. Wisdom explained to John about the finite nature of the world and difference between real and the illusionary. He began to understand the great design of God and the relation of ‘I’ with ‘Thou’.

Thus Lewis’s *The Pilgrim’s Regress* is a journey from ignorance to experience and knowledge. By critically looking at the nineteenth and twentieth century progress, Lewis has explored an alternative worldview which has faith at its base and which understands the presence and significance of the other. The book asks the question—Have we really made Progress? And the answer is not easy to find. In my next chapter I have made an attempt to present how Lewis rethinks the lost connections through his fantastic narrative.

To sum up, humanistic philosophy is critiqued for its anthropocentric and materialistic approach to life and nature. Democracy was the base of humanistic thoughts. But in the name of democracy, humanistic philosophy was mostly concerned with narcissism and inequalities. This was mostly inspired by capitalistic and colonial ideals. Humanism was rooted in moral philosophies and rationality. But in Western Humanism there was a breakdown of such a moral philosophy. God and religion
became irrelevant to humanistic enterprise. The church lost its original place and scripture was distorted. Humanism was mostly concerned with protection of human rights. Rights of non-human other and nature were ignored. Lewis develops a critical attitude against such reductionist outlook of Humanistic philosophy and rethinks the lost connects with nature and culture. Lewis’s Ecological Humanism provided an alternate thought for humanism. Lewis’s fictional accounts are representative of such an alternate philosophy.
END NOTES:

i Garrard rightly says that environmental problems require analysis in cultural and scientific terms because such problems are the result of human activities and ‘cultural infection’ (Garrard: 16).

ii Buell also views that hegemonic oppression was key to toxic discourse by which he meant threats was a legacy of exploitation of nature. For the sake of power and wealth Britain extended its territories to different lands and shaped the great Empire of the West.

iii Marx writes that such pastoralism is found in the writings of Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, Robert Frost and many others. In all these narratives there is an yearning for a simpler, more harmonious way of life, an willingness to live ‘close to nature’ (Marx 6).

iv Bookchin believes that the impact of an aggressive hierarchical society and exploitative class society must be taken up seriously and that the ecology movements must make a grip with reality (Bookchin 22).
Work Cited


Leith, Sam. “C.S. Lewis’s Literary Legacy: ‘dodgy and unpleasant’ or ‘‘exceptionally good’? published on 19th November, 2013@ The Guardian.com


Loconte, Joseph. “How C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien responded to ‘environmental, Holocaust’”. @CNN (Cable News Network), 2017


Websites:

www.mkgandhi.org

www.dalailama.com