Appendix Foxtrot: The Space Trilogy Revisited

Some years ago, I wrote a piece on C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy (published in *That Old Science Fiction*), and more recently I did a comparison between it and E.E. "Doc" Smith's first three "Skylark" novels (soon to be published in *Writers of the Purple Page*). Like Highway 61, which Bob Dylan famously revisited in one of his early albums, I think these books bear looking at again.

Before beginning, a personal statement: I am, except for a brief flirtation with modern Paganism, a lifelong Christian of the Episcopalian variety. My mother introduced me to the books of C.S. Lewis at an early age with some of the Narnia books and gave me copies of *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength* when I was confirmed into the church. Since that time, I have gained much intellectual grounding for my faith from Lewis's nonfictional writings on Christianity.

That said, I don't always agree with him. My disagreements stem mostly from my having been born half a century after Lewis, and also from my grounding in science, technology, and mathematics.

The plots of the three novels, not to mention their overall plot as a trilogy, are of secondary importance to me. The settings, as well-built as they are, also sit on a back burner. It is true that Lewis did a better job of creating welcoming versions of Mars and Venus than did such authors as Edgar Rice Burroughs and Robert A. Heinlein. Were I invited there, I'd much rather visit Malacandra or Perelandra than, say, Burroughs's Barsoom or Amtor, as I am no swordfighter, and the etiquette of both those worlds is deadly if transgressed.

What makes this trilogy for me is the characters—their natures, their motives, and their actions. The cast of *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938) is small, and its principal characters (Elwin Ransom, Edward Weston, and Richard Devine) recur throughout the trilogy.

Ransom is the protagonist of the first two books, and the most prominent supporting character in the third. He is single, a philologist, and a veteran of the trenches in World War I. He enjoys taking walking tours during the summer holidays between terms at his college, and it is during one of those that he runs afoul of Weston, a mad scientist, and Devine, his financier, at the beginning of the first book.

He becomes involved with those two scoundrels by attempting to get them to release their employee, a youth of subnormal intelligence, to go home for the night—the lad's mother is worried. He succeeds at this but is abducted by Weston and Devine to travel to Mars in their employee's place. During that month-long journey, his captors' second, he overhears them discussing their intent to turn him over to some beings called *sorns*, who in turn want to take him to someone greater than they.

Ransom, like Weston and Devine, interprets this as human sacrifice, and he has no desire to become that kind of victim—kidnapping was bad enough. His chief motive becomes raw survival, beginning with escape.

He manages this shortly after arrival, and soon discovers a native who is definitely not one of the fearsome *sorns*. He is a *hross*, his name is Hyoi, and he is willing to be friends with Ransom and teach him his language. Ransom's motive shifts to enjoying life with his newfound friend and his people, while avoiding future contact with Weston, Devine, the *sorns*, or the horror they serve.

An aside here: unlike most space opera, Lewis takes great pains with language, and does not short-cut the process of a character learning a new tongue. He also takes care that alien language should complement alien culture (and vice versa). Most authors, not to mention producers of cinema and video, totally ignore this.

While hunting with his friends, Ransom is informed that he is supposed to leave to meet with the *Oyarsa*, the ruler of Malacandra (the name for Mars in Old Solar, the universal language of the entire Solar System, excluding Earth), and that he is already late for that appointment. The hunt ends with the murder of Hyoi by Weston and Devine, who have tracked Ransom down. The unfortunate philologist once more runs for his life, as both friend and foe now want him to go to the same place and person.

Survival drives him into the mountains, where he develops a good case of hypoxia. He is rescued by Augray, a *sorn*, and Ransom learns from him that neither *sorns* nor the *Oyarsa* are anything to be afraid of. With some trepidation, he lets Augray carry him to Meldilorn, the place of meeting with the *Oyarsa*.

During his time with the *sorn*, he finds that Malacandra has three distinct intelligent species. The *hrossa* are farmers, fisherfolk, and poets. The *sorns* engage in the pursuit and preservation of knowledge, and a third people, the *pfifltriggi*, are technologists and artisans. The planet's archon, the *Oyarsa*, is not a material being, but a spirit, and he has numerous lesser spirits, called *eldila*, as his assistants and messengers.

One thing about Weston and Devine that Ransom is uncomfortably aware of is that they hunger for the gold that Malacandra has in plenty—the three native peoples only appreciate it for ornaments. In addition to survival, he now wants to somehow keep the planet safe from these greedy predators from Earth.

On reaching Meldilorn, he observes many *hrossa* arriving with Weston and Devine in custody—they are in the dock for three counts of murder, which the *Oyarsa* must judge. As they are incapable of speaking Old Solar as more than a rudimentary pidgin, they ask Ransom to interpret for them. He does so, although he is disgusted by much of what they have to say—the two rotters spout large amounts of the worst excuses used by British imperialists to justify their conquests.

During this tribunal, Ransom discovers that each planet in the Solar System has its own *oyarsa*; Earth is called Thulcandra, meaning "the Silent Planet," because its *oyarsa* has revolted from the rest, and does not communicate with them. Earth's *oyarsa* is called "the Bent One" by the *oyarsa* and peoples of Malacandra— "bent" is their word meaning "evil." In other words, our planet has literally gone to the Devil.

During this job, Ransom realizes that Weston's and Devine's motives are far worse than simple gold-lust—they are imperialists of the worst sort. Their goal is to subjugate every planet upon which humans might live, exterminate or enslave the natives, use up all its resources, and move on to the next one. They might not be under the influence of the Devil, but possession by the spirit of that English archfiend, Cecil Rhodes, is bad enough. Ransom is ashamed that humans can be this bad.

For their crimes, Weston and Devine are sent back to the Silent Planet, their ship to be under the power and direction of the *Oyarsa*'s *eldila*. Despite his cordial disgust and contempt for these, his fellow Earthmen, Ransom chooses to return to Earth with them. The *Oyarsa* has the spaceship refueled and reprovisioned for the return journey, at the end of which the ship will self-destruct.

It is in the last chapter that an unexpected character walks onto the stage: C.S. Lewis himself. In the early days of SF, it was a commonplace for authors to write themselves into their stories as recipients of weird, uncanny tales—this business of being "visible ghostwriters" was popular then. Edgar Rice Burroughs was particularly fond of this literary framing device, although few have done a better job of it than Lewis.

Lewis's part in this is not just that of ghostwriting, but of collaborating in a conspiracy against the dark forces threatening Venus, Mars, and Earth itself. The fear he shares with Ransom is that the threat might be cosmic, as well. In this, he profoundly outdoes Burroughs—his motive is not to merely tell a tale, but to act against the Darkness that would otherwise doom our world.

Lewis, Ransom, and Weston appear again in *Perelandra* (1943), a novel with a tiny cast—Ransom and Lewis initially, with Weston coming onstage later. It is clear what Dr. Lewis's motive is in all this. Never mind in for a penny; he is in the conspiracy for as many pounds as it takes to do the job, as is Ransom.

How difficult this can be is shown as Lewis faces down one distraction and doubt after another as he approaches Ransom's house. The *eldila* working for the bent *oyarsa* of Thulcandra almost succeed in deflecting Lewis from his goal, but he finally makes it through and is able to assist in preparing Ransom for his second interplanetary journey, for Ransom's aid has been enlisted by the *oyeresu* (plural of *oyarsa*) of the Solar System in dealing with a problem on Perelandra, otherwise known as Venus.

Perelandra is all wet—it's downright flooded, an ocean planet, one of several ideas about Venus proposed by astronomers prior to the advent of space probes. There are many floating islands upon the sweet-water ocean's surface, as well as one or more fixed islands (we are shown only one in the tale).

Ransom is carried to Perelandra in a box by the *eldila* and meets the woman of the planet's sole pair of natives—her husband is temporarily absent on another floating island. Once he arrives there, he has no idea what his mission is, just that it is important. He wants to carry it out, although the *oyarsa* of Malacandra fails to brief him—very poor form indeed, in either a military or a civilian management setting. With better preparation, he might have been able to perceive Weston as his direct adversary at once upon that wight's arrival, rather than when it was almost too late.

It is unclear what originally moved Weston to make his attempt on Venus. After his arrival in a familiar-looking spaceship, he is taken over completely by the bent *oyarsa*, or by one or more of that entity's retinue of bent *eldila*. Prior to that, it is most likely that he worked independently, but with some mental suggestion while preparing his expedition. This was probably funded by Devine, who prudently let his partner fly this one solo. One thing is clear: Weston arrives well-equipped with boat, tools, provisions, and a revolver.

When they meet, Ransom is wary of Weston, despite his claim to have reformed since returning from their journey to Malacandra. Ransom quickly discovers this to be a false claim. As they dispute, Weston loses patience and calls upon the bent *oyarsa*, who possesses him. Before he succumbs to this, he pleads with Ransom to set him free from his suffering—this is the last anyone sees of the real Weston.

For a time, the villain is incapacitated, and Ransom takes away his revolver and casts it into the sea. From this point on, Weston no longer exists as an independent being, and his motives are entirely diabolical. Ransom comes to mentally tag him as the Un-man and realizes that he means to corrupt one of whom he now knows to be the only two people on Perelandra.

For several days, the Un-man and Ransom talk with the woman, but Ransom's counterarguments are insufficient to persuade her—the Un-man insists that staying the night on a fixed island is permissible, while the *oyarsa* of Perelandra has forbidden this.

If the Un-man's purpose is abundantly clear, demonstrated in his every word and deed, Ransom's is not. A good part of the book is devoted to Ransom's internal arguments with himself as to what he might do to thwart the Un-man. He wrestles with his role, or rather with his perception of his role, once it becomes clear to him what it is and why he was sent to Perelandra in the first place.

He is supposed to prevent the Fall of the people of Perelandra, and all his attempts to out-debate the Un-man have proven futile. He slowly, painfully grows into the awareness that he was intended to be this planet's ransom, the payment which delivers a person from peril as a hostage. As a good philologist, he knows his surname ultimately derives from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "Ranulf's son," but realizes this meaning, in this setting, is secondary.

Since debate with the Un-man has failed, Ransom resolves to slay his adversary—a most difficult task, since he has no weapons, and nothing available locally which he might fashion into such. To protect himself and the people of Perelandra, he had already thrown away the only purpose-made weapon on the planet.

It is Ransom's determination to survive, while ensuring the Un-man does not, that gets him through the multiple scenes of unarmed combat which follow—the Un-man, formerly Weston, dies as hard as Rasputin. Ransom has naught but a bit of half-remembered boxing in his favor; the Un-man has even less. Lewis probably could have cut this long passage very short had either he or his protagonist known karate or its relatives, but that didn't become well known in the West until later on.

In the end, an exhausted Ransom kills his enemy and pushes his body into an active volcanic fissure. He then slowly makes his way out of the caverns in the rocky island where he slew the Un-man who had once been Edward Weston, and carves a grave marker for his fallen foe, remembering his original nature prior to his loss of will to the bent *oyarsa*. It is here that we see the only date-peg for any of the three novels, as Ransom states Weston's death date as 1942 (the events of *Out of the Silent Planet* are undated, and *That Hideous Strength* is set in a time a few years after the end of World War II).

In the end, Ransom lives to see Tinidril, the Woman of Perelandra, once again and meet Tor, her husband, for the first time. He then takes part in the Great Dance in celebration of the passing of sovereignty over Perelandra from its old *oyarsa* to Tor and Tinidril. Their thrones are set on the "fixed land," which is no longer forbidden to them. The Dance lasts until Venus and Earth once more align to permit travel between the two planets, at which point the *oyarsa* of Malacandra bears him back to Earth in a box. He arrives rejuvenated to a young man's state, but also with a heel wound, dealt him by the Un-man, which will not mend.

His new mission is to work clandestinely against the bent *oyarsa* behind enemy lines, on Earth itself. For it is there that the bent *oyarsa* will make his final attack, after having been repulsed on Malacandra (easily done by its *oyarsa*) and on Perelandra (chiefly by Ransom himself).

It is his characters who drive Lewis's stories, rather than his plots, settings, or themes, and the best demonstration of this is in *That Hideous Strength* (1945).

Jane Studdock is a scholarly woman, reduced by her marriage to the state of a housewife. She slowly discovers she is a clairvoyant, which is frightening to her, as her visions all concern the evil doings of an unknown entity. She is inherently a good woman, and her interactions with Ransom lead her, in many small, trepid steps, into Christianity. Her goals in the story are, in ascending order, to complete her doctoral thesis (in the US it would be a dissertation), to rid herself of her troubling clairvoyant dreams, and to figure out what is wrong with her marriage.

The trouble with Jane's marriage lies in her husband, Mark Studdock, who is a sociologist and a social climber. He is a fellow of Bracton College, a peculiar research institute in the fictional small-university town of Edgestow, somewhere in the Midlands of England.

Professionally, he is all theory and no practice—the real-world society he lives in, apart from his narrow academic niche, is foreign to him. Until very late in the game, he lacks a moral compass, and he routinely casts off friends and family in his pursuit of becoming a member of the innermost circle of whatever group he is in.

He considers his wife to be an adjunct to his life and career, and he treats her emotionally in much the same way that modern colleges treat their adjunct professors financially. His thoughts, when they do not concern his social climbing, are centered in rationality and logic. When the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments is formed a few years after the end of World War II, he is drawn into it, as it has moved into Edgestow and purchased property from Bracton.

The NICE is anything but nice, and one of its leaders is Devine, now called Lord Feverstone, who is a fellow of Bracton and a member of Parliament. His NICE quickly shows itself to be a Nazi-like organization, with tentacles inside the British government and also extending into the US and other locations.

When Dr. Frost, one of the two men at the utmost center of the NICE, attempts to induct Mark into his tiny circle, Mark rejects the attempt as superstitious rubbish. Frost, you see, directs Mark to spit on a crucifix and then stomp it into fragments, an act utterly abhorrent to any believing Christian—and one which most non-believers would reject on the same grounds Mark does.

To understand why the key players in the NICE would require such an act of an initiate, we must examine that foul organization and its leaders, as well as a few people from Bracton, which enables the NICE to occupy the town of Edgestow.

Most of Bracton is quickly dismissed. Its forty fellows are divided into the sloppily organized "Progressive Element" and a loose band of traditionalists. Curry, the Sub-warden, is the functional head of Bracton, and is assisted by Busby, the Bursar, and both have been duped by the NICE. They are well-meaning academics with enough administrative ability to keep Bracton going, but they are incapable of understanding the NICE until it is too late.

The real leader of Bracton's Progressives is Richard Devine Lord Feverstone, former enabler of Weston and one of the driving forces behind the NICE. His ultimate aims are to gain as much personal power and prestige as he can, and to enjoy the privileges and benefits accruing from same. He doesn't care what truly moves the NICE, as long as there is a lot in it for him. He is a sociopath, and his every action illustrates this.

William Hingest, a fellow of Bracton and a chemist, discovers he does not fit into the NICE at all. He is justly proud of the standing he has earned among the world's chemists, and equally so of his noble lineage. His attempt to leave, once he finds the NICE is not the rationally-motivated and operated institution he thought it was, proves fatal to him—and his murder is used to frame Mark Studdock and shove him into a path leading to his induction into the innermost circle of the NICE.

The cigar-chewing Miss (or Major) Hardcastle is one of the most bothersome characters in the tale. She runs the NICE Gestapo with an iron fist, and is a sadist, especially in her interrogations of women. Jane Studdock falls

into her clutches briefly but escapes due to a lucky break caused by a widespread riot which Miss Hardcastle fomented herself. Hardcastle is a poorly drawn caricature of a lesbian. As Lewis was largely ignorant of women at the time of writing, it is hardly surprising his ideas of lesbians would be informed by a few stupid stereotypes which he probably got from army barracks or academic common rooms.

Then there is the Head of the NICE, which is the severed head of Francois Alcasan, a convicted murderer guillotined by the French. The NICE gained possession of this head, which was kept alive by Dr. Filostrato, who was able to keep the Head in a state in which it could speak. Filostrato wished to free humans from mortality by means of keeping their heads (and, later, their brains) preserved and living independent of bodies. He thinks Alcasan is still alive and conscious, although what has happened is that the Head only speaks (and thinks) as a mouthpiece of the Macrobes.

The Macrobes are no more and no less than the bad *eldila* following the bent *oyarsa*, who is referred to sparingly by Dr. Ransom as "the Hideous Strength" and never mentioned by anyone in the NICE at all. Only the innermost circle of that noisome group has communicated with the Macrobes, and few others have even heard of them. Feverstone knows of them but dismisses them as nonsense. That tight circle is limited to two persons—John Wither, the NICE Deputy Director (the titular Director is a nonentity who remains offstage until the end), and Augustus Frost.

Frost and Wither are under the control of the Macrobes much of the time, and their goal is to expand the influence of their group by recruitment and initiation. During the story, they have two candidates for this: Reverend Straik and Mark Studdock.

It is easy to see why Straik has been chosen for this. Called the "mad parson" by others in the NICE, he believes all power, in any form, is a manifestation of God. He wishes to purify human society of sin by eliminating all human society. And yet, Straik was once, according to Ransom, a good man, deranged by the death of his daughter.

It is much harder to understand Studdock's candidacy. He is not a good man gone wrong; he is instead a neutral man who never went right. Until his life and soul are saved by his rejection of Frost's crucifix test, followed by the destruction of the NICE, he is the Perfect Fool. His redemption, which he begins by his unwitting rejection of the Devil and all his works, is the primary theme of the book, just as the redemption of Rick Blaine is the main point of the movie *Casablanca*. This redemption is completed by his unconditional return to the love of his wife and the remaking of his marriage to her (it is perhaps fitting that I write these words on the feast day of St. Valentine).

It is likely that Frost saw in Mark Studdock a blank slate, upon which he could write whatever he wished, a man with no moral compass and no desire to be anything but one of the innermost of the in crowd. If so, this returned to bite him, as his own doings to Mark, plus other influences, transform Mark into his enemy.

Against the NICE is ranged Dr. Ransom's small group, called the Society of Logres (Logres is an archaic name for Britain, and is supposed to represent the

deep spirit of that isle). Ransom is its head, and he is in frequent contact with the *oyeresu* of the Solar System. He goes by the name of Mr. Fisher-King, and as its chief he is the seventy-ninth Pendragon of the order (Uther and Arthur were the first and second Pendragons). His heel wound continues to refuse to mend, making him the analog of the maimed Fisher King of Arthurian legend.

Caring for Ransom is Grace Ironwood, a no-nonsense physician and psychological counselor. Jane Studdock is drawn into the group because they can help her manage the frightening visionary dreams that haunt her. Ironwood passes the content of Jane's visions to Ransom, as these all concern the doings of the NICE. She also provides Jane with considerable advice, much of which Jane has difficulty accepting.

Caring for much of the gardens, livestock, and physical plant of Ransom's compound is Andrew MacPhee, a Celtic rationalist and skeptic. Ransom never allows him to go out on any mission that might expose him to the evil they all face, as although MacPhee has immense courage, and from his words and deeds must have God in his heart, he does not accept Him with his mind. For his archetype one need look no further than the Twelve Apostles: Doubting Thomas.

Also in the group are Cecil and Margaret Dimble, an elderly couple who are friends of Jane's. Cecil is a professor at Northumberland, another college in Edgestow University, and both are practicing Christians. They move in when the NICE turns them out of their house. Similar evictions bring Ivy Maggs, once Jane's housekeeper, Arthur Denniston, one of Mark's castoff friends, and Arthur's wife Camilla from being occasional associates of the Society of Logres to residents in its compound.

The members of Logres, each in their own way, wish to lead good, fulfilling lives, to be good to their neighbors, and to stand and work courageously against whatever might be behind the NICE.

In short, they are all good human beings, with one remarkable exception: Mr. Bultitude, who is a very good person, but who cannot be a good human because he is, literally, a bear.

Added to the Society of Logres at a critical juncture is Merlinius Ambrosius, recently reawakened from a centuries-long sleep under the earth. What drove him to rise again from sleep and drives him to work with the fellowship of Logres is the need to save Britannia from the direst threat it has ever faced—after which he will earn his eternal rest.

Central to the struggle between the NICE and Logres is access to Merlin's Tomb, located in the property purchased from Bracton. Both Logres and the NICE attempt—futilely—to discover and wake him. By his own conscious effort, he locates Logres, while the NICE forces locate an itinerant tinker whom they mistake for Merlinius. The tinker ends up with Mark caring for him in NICE custody, and he plays dumb to all attempts (other than Mark's) to speak to him.

Ransom and his colleagues persuade Merlin to take their side and act as their agent, infiltrating the NICE when that group needs someone skilled in ancient tongues to speak with the tinker (whom they still think is Merlinius). Ransom's

group hopes he will hold to his promise, but any operation involving secret agents is inherently risky, due to discovery or outright betrayal.

In the climax, Merlinius remains true to Logres and sows confusion and destruction in the NICE headquarters. Mr. Bultitude puts the Head out of its misery and finds his way out of the disaster. Mark Studdock, the tinker, and a few other innocents also escape as the HQ and all the rest of Edgestow fall into a suddenly opened chasm.

Curry, the Sub-warden of Bracton, reappears briefly after he lives through the catastrophe at Edgestow. He admirably resolves to rebuild his college somehow, after locating other surviving fellows.

Ransom is taken up by the *oyarsa* of Perelandra to return there to be healed, while the Studdocks are reunited, and the little Society of Logres continues its secret guardianship of the isle of Britannia.

After considering Lewis's cast, it is time to approach his ideas and themes. Overall, there is a smell, not of William James's fried onions, but of High-Church Anglican incense. Lewis was a convinced Anglican, of the Christian humanist persuasion, and most of his writings reflect this. It is usual for Christians to argue among themselves over interpretations of scripture and faith—in that, I am no different in my parting company with Lewis on several points in these books.

I have little trouble with *Out of the Silent Planet*. The idea of the lone researcher backed by a friend with unlimited funds was a literary commonplace for a long time, and in real life was epitomized by Robert H. Goddard, the lone-wolf rocket scientist. Dr. Goddard hid his work under a security blanket the Soviet Union would have been envious of. As for Weston's nefarious ideas, they gave Lewis a sounding board for his critique of British imperialism. He had seen its effects firsthand, having grown up in England's oldest imperial possession, Ireland.

Perelandra fills me with doubts. As I mentioned earlier, I consider it folly for the *oyarsa* of Malacandra to send in a secret agent with no briefing as to his mission. It was as if M had sent James Bond into Upper Ruritania with no information as to what to do there or what to look out for, allowing him no equipment but his wits and his bare hands.

What bothers me most about the tale is the impracticality of the place and of its inhabitants. Tinidril emphasizes how good it is to live for the moment, caring nothing for the past or the future, making no plans, and never even storing food against the morrow. I am sure Lewis was aware how foolish this approach to life is, as Ransom himself thought this to be folly, were it practiced on Earth.

I think Lewis may have been conflating the idyllic, mythic story of the Garden of Eden with Rousseau's idealization of humanity in a state of Nature. Against that, I agree with Hobbes that human life in a state of Nature is solitary, impoverished, nasty, brutish, and short.

To a lesser degree, I have some difficulty with the tri-species utopia on Malacandra, but it appears to be stable, by Lewis's description. I just wonder how long it could survive in that state, if communications with any other world were opened. His *hrossa* love creating and listening to poetry—what effect might Shakespeare, Pushkin, or Goethe have on them? What about T.S. Eliot?

That Hideous Strength also gives me pause on occasion—not the core of the tale, but side issues. One is Lewis's medieval attitude towards women—he was as squarely on the side of patriarchy as any feudal lord. This may have been partly due to ignorance, as he wrote the Space Trilogy long before he was surprised by Joy, the woman he later married.

Related to that is the tradition of Christian marriage, in which the husband rules the family and the wife's most important role is that of homemaker. I also note that some of the Un-man's arguments to tempt Tinidril in *Perelandra* were couched in terms of feminism, which indicates to me that Lewis thought poorly of that movement.

To be fair, I must state my personal, experiential bias regarding the previous paragraph. Christian marriage is one of many ways to do marriage and is ideal for many couples. However, I was husband for forty years in a marriage that could not remotely be Christian—my wife was a convinced Buddhist, and we organized our relationship on egalitarian lines. It worked very well for us—and had I attempted Christian marriage, we would never have gotten married in the first place. As a transwoman, I also believe firmly in the equality of the sexes and the genders.

Through a couple of statements of Merlinius, it is clear to me that Lewis also thought little of the idea of intentionally childless marriage, or of limiting the number of one's progeny to a sensible count. It is one thing to tell Tor and Tinidril, or Adam and Eve for that matter, to be fruitful and multiply. It is quite another to keep this policy up during the 20th and 21st centuries. I don't think Lewis was ever aware of the problems created by overpopulation, environmental pollution, or resource depletion, although ample evidence for those was available during his lifetime. I do not fault him regarding anthropogenic climate change, as that was not known to science in his day.

Something that has been known since long before Lewis (and even before Darwin) is that a beginning gene pool of two individuals is a recipe for genetic problems and eventual extinction. This was discovered by breeders of domesticated plants and animals. Like the original compilers of the book of Genesis, Lewis must have been unaware of this difficulty.

In all three books, Lewis exhibited fear and distrust of the sciences. Modern astronomical knowledge frightened him. He could not cope with the scale of the Universe as it was known a hundred years ago—never mind modern astronomy, with its black holes, expansion, dark matter, quasars, Big Bang, and other interesting features. The only sympathetic character from the physical sciences in the trilogy is William Hingest, a chemist.

He also extended that timid attitude to cover all of the social sciences except history. He showed Mark Studdock's profession of sociology in a most negative light, and examples of psychologists and economists in *That Hideous Strength* were scarcely better.

There is also the matter of jealousy. Ransom states at one point to Jane Studdock that God is jealous, which is a piece of theology going all the way back to Moses (see the Ten Commandments). My problem with this is that Moses, as well as everyone else who has propounded this notion since, was ascribing a major human fault to God. I could go on for a page or two on this one, but to

sum up my thoughts, the Lord my God does not have human faults, and is therefore not jealous.

This is not to say that I reject any of Lewis's fiction because I have disagreements with parts of it, most of which come from Lewis's being a man of his times. I am also a great fan of Robert A. Heinlein, even though I disagree strongly with many of the socio-political ideas he expressed in his tales, some of which bordered on a Randite form of libertarianism and many of which stemmed from his Cold War fears.

I consider the Space Trilogy of C.S. Lewis to be worth a close read for anyone, and well worth rereading. I now own a single-volume edition of same in hardcover simply so it won't wear out easily.