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Abstract
Contends that *Out of the Silent Planet* is a retelling of *First Men in the Moon* and *Perelandra* of *The Time Machine*, in which Lewis substitutes the triumphant values of "Old Western Man" for Wells's science/technology and socialism.

Additional Keywords
Lewis, C.S. *Out of the Silent Planet*—Relation to *First Men in the Moon*; Lewis, C.S. *Perelandra*—Relation to *The Time Machine*; Wells, H.G. *The First Men in the Moon*—Relation to *Out of the Silent Planet*; Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine*—Relation to *Perelandra*
What Lewis Really Did

to The Time Machine & The First Men in the Moon

Doris T. Myers

In his Cambridge inaugural address, delivered in 1954, C.S. Lewis asserted that the greatest division in historical periods was not the one between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but the one between the present age and all previous Western culture. The present age, he said, is defined by the change in religion, science, government, and the arts. In religion, the present age is post-Christian, a state far removed from both the paganism and the Christianity which preceded it. In science what Lewis calls "the myth of universal evolution" and the birth of the machine has produced the assumption "that everything is provisional and soon to be superseded" (21) by something newer and better. In government rulers have been replaced by leaders. And the arts reflect the breakup of previous Western values in their complete novelty of message and technique.

Lewis went on to claim that he was a throwback, a survival, of previous Occidental culture, an Old Western Man. The opposite of Old Western Man is perhaps best named in the title of the C.P. Snow novel also published in 1954, The New Men. And if Lewis is the most famous spokesman of Old Western Man, certainly his counterpart among the New Men is H.G. Wells. He was educated in science rather than languages and literature; he advocated socialism as a replacement of British capitalism and hereditary aristocracy; and he applauded the birth of the machine age, making remarkable predictions of technological advancements. In his scientific fantasies he explored the implications of the new age. Lewis was fascinated by Wells' fantasies, even though he disagreed completely with Wells' world view, and it was almost inevitable that his first science fantasy should be based on a Wellsian model.

Boening compares the relationship between Lewis' Out of the Silent Planet and Wells' The First Man in the Moon with the relationship between Chaucer's Troilus and Cres ende and Boccaccio's Il Filostrato (6). It is an illuminating comparison. If, as Lewis claimed, Chaucer re-medievalized Boccaccio, Lewis also re-Old-Westernized Wells. In addition to borrowing many surface details from Wells (Boening, 6-7; Hillegas, 135), Lewis used Wells' basic premise, the invention of an anti-gravity principle which would allow interplanetary travel. He also used Wells' plot outline. There is the separation of the space travelers, the killing of indigenous creatures, and finally capture. There is an audience with the planetary ruler and the ruler's horrified rejection of the earthlings because of their propensity for war and bloodshed.

The relationship between Silent Planet and First Men has long been recognized, but the comparisons have not demonstrated clearly what was involved in Lewis' recasting of Well's story. In First Men, Wells raises the problem of how to balance the efficient economic functioning of a society with the happiness of individuals. Lewis' Silent Planet changes the story enough to answer New Man's question, but accoring to the values of Old Western Man, Lewis does the same thing when he recasts The Time Machine as Perelandra, a relationship that has been less often recognized. A point-by-point analysis of the two pairs of fantasies will highlight not only the opposing world views, but also the creative genius of both men.

Wells' purpose in writing First Man, as stated in the preface to Seven Famous Novels of H.G. Wells, was "to look at mankind from a distance and burlesque the effects of specialisation" (ix). According to Williamson, Wells carried out this purpose partly in the contrast of Cavor the specialist with Bedford the generalist (116-117). Cavor the scientist lives to make discoveries about the physical universe. Bedford the entrepreneurial non-specialist lives to make money. He is interested in Cavor's discoveries primarily because he sees a commercial application. It is, of course, the interaction of these two types that has given the age of the New Men its amazing technological advances.

For both of these men, life is centered on material things. Lewis highlights this fact by explicitly relating materialism to power. Weston the scientist, his Cavor, lives to find out things about the physical universe so that man can conquer other planets, other lifeforms. Devine the promoter, his Bedford, lives to get money so that he can exercise power over other men. But Lewis adds a third space traveler -- Ransom the philologist, who introduces still a third reason for living. He lives to study language and thus the literature and life of the people who speak it. His way of relating to the universe is not the way of scientific or entrepreneurial materialism, not the way of power, but the way of imagination and empathy.

Alone and virtually defenseless on the planet, Ransom thrives because his trained ability to analyze a foreign language enables him to find a home with the hrossa. Lacking this interest in language as a key to the minds of those who speak it, Weston and Devine had completely misunderstood the viewpoint of the Oyarsa, so that they had made a completely unnecessary trip back to earth.

Weston and Devine in their lack of linguistic interest and dexterity repeat the disability of Cavor and Bedford, who are forced to fight the Selenites because they cannot communicate. When Cavor is left on the planet alone, a Selenite learns enough English to communicate with him, but he remains trapped in his own world view. His inability to empathize with alien beings leads to his death when he inadvertently reveals the human propensity for war. In contrast, Ransom learns enough of the language to have some insight into the Malacandrian view of death; his decision to tell the sorns about humanity's violence is an informed one (Silent Planet, 102).

But Ransom's superior ability to thrive on an alien planet is not simply propaganda for more foreign language study. Ransom was not interested in language simply because it is useful in dealing with foreigners, but for itself. He loved language. It was his joy, "and
while he still knew that he might be facing instant
death, his imagination had leaped over every fear and
hope... to follow the dazzling project of making a
Mapanese grammar (Silent Planet, 55). Thus Lewis
sets forth a non-materialistic goal in life — not to
control, but to understand, enjoy, and appreciate
contact with other rational beings.

Lewis makes his point more obvious by darkening
the characters of the two materialists. His Weston is a
much nastier person than Wells' Cavor. Weston is bent
on improving planetary imperialism while Cavor simply
wishes to find out whether his anti-gravity substance
will work. Weston ruthlessly captures first the
retarded boy and then Ransom to carry them to their
death; Cavor's crimes, and even the near-stripping
of the atmosphere from the earth, are the result of a
charming absent-mindedness. Weston scorns the
Malacandrians as primitive, inferior beings; Cavor
hopes to make friends with the Selenites by means of
geometric diagrams (First Men, 525-526). Bedford too,
for all his shallowness, cowardice, and shiftiness, is
less morally reprehensible than Devine, who has
cultivated his cynicism until his life has been twisted
into a perpetual sneer. Weston and Devine are New Men
at their worst; Ransom in his love of learning and his
ability to adapt to Malacandrian culture is Old Western Man.

In addition to using Wells' characters, Lewis used
the idea of a society composed of beings whose bodies
are shaped according to their function in the social
system. Wells created this society in order to explore
specialization in its extreme form. Williamson
suggests that this theme of specialization may be
traced to T.H. Huxley's pronouncement that a highly
specialized body forms to fit them to be herdsmen of
the atmosphere from the earth, are the result of a
perpetual sneer. Weston and Devine are New Men
in their worst; Ransom in his love of learning and his
ability to adapt to Malacandrian culture is Old Western Man.

The contrast between Selenite society and
Malacandrian society is telling. Selenite society
consists of labor and management. The laborers have
specialized body forms to fit them to be herdsmen of
moon calves, machinists, news announcers and so forth.
The managers have bodies that are almost all head. The
Selenites, whose whole life is determined by the kind of
work they do. In contrast, the Malacandrians are classified
primarily according to what they do for fun and only
secondarily by their occupation. The hrossa are devoted
to literature and the sport of panska-hunting, although
they also fish and grow vegetables. The seroni are the
scholars, the abstract thinkers, although they also
work as herdsmen. The pifflfrige are primarily artists
and jewelers, although they also manufacture some
needed objects.

Each type of Malacandrian enjoys, admires, and
makes fun of the differing viewpoints of the others.
Their easy tolerance of each other's contrasts(graphically with the specialization of Wells' Selenites. As Phi-oosays, the artist "love draw. No
other thing. Hate all who not draw like him. Angry.
Hate all who draw like him better. Hate most people"
(First Men, 600). Ransom's efforts to find out which
group is dominant fails because the Malacandrians
complement rather than compete with each other. And,
as the pifflfrige explains to Ransom, all of his people
share the dirty work that supports artistic achievement. The tool is an integral part of the
artist's understanding of his medium, and it is done
for love — obviously for the love of art, although the
pifflfrige jokes about the love of female (Silent
Planet, 115-116).

Williamson explains that Wells viewed the
specialization of the Selenites with fascination and
horror, seeing their "selfless conformity" as the only
alternative to "much selfish human disorders as greed
and war" (116). Lewis' picture of the way the
Malacandrians live together suggests that Old Western Man's emphasis on leisure pursuits would enable a
society to have economic efficiency without destroying
individualism. It would also be the answer to the
pathetic sight of Selenite workers sleeping under drugs
until they were needed again.

We may object that the organization of
Malacandrian society is not applicable to earth, marred
as it is by the operations of the Bent One. Nevertheless, Lewis believed that the New Men were
wrong in regarding ceaseless struggle for existence as the
very basis of life. As an Old Western Man trained
in literature and myth, he regarded joy as the basis of
life. He considered the grimness of materialistic
ideology as a basis of evolution at variance with commonsense observation. As he remarks in a letter to Barfield,

Talking of beasts and birds, have you ever
ever noticed this contrast: that when you read a
scientific account of any animal's life you
get an impression of laborious, incessant,
almost rational economic activity (as if all animals were Germans), but when you study any
animal you know, what at once strikes you is
their cheerful fatuity, the pointlessness of
nearly all they do. Say what you like,
Barfield, the world is sillier and better fun
than they make out.... (Letters, 217).

Silent Planet concludes with the words, "if there
is to be any more space-traveling, it will have to be
time-traveling as well" (160). In context, Ransom
obviously means that he will search for additional
information about the solar system and its angelic
beings in old books. Nevertheless, it seems clear that
Lewis was planning a sequel dealing in some way
with the nature of time. He began The Dark Tower, based on
the premise that a Wellsian time machine would be
physically impossible, but that someone might build a
crude time machine that functions differently. In this
work Ransom is a minor character. According to
Green and Hooper, Lewis abandoned this novel, probably
before 1939, when he began working on the university
lectures which later became A Preface to Paradise Lost
(166-168). Pereandra shows the results of both trains
of thought. It is a retelling of the Garden of Eden
story, but it is also a retelling of The Time Machine.
Most critics, of course, have concentrated on the
parallels with Genesis and Milton, ignoring the
parallels with The Time Machine.

Just as Silent Planet changes First Men in order
to reassert the viewpoint of Old Western Man, so does
Pereandra transforms The Time Machine in order to give
an Old Western answer to the problems raised by Wells
the New Man. The similarities between the two books are
striking.

For example, Lewis follows Wells in his handling
of narrative viewpoint. We see Wells' Time Traveler
through the eyes of a good friend, who hears him
explain the theory of time travel and discuss his
projected journey. The friend returns to the house the
next week, when the Time Traveler shows up with a
lame foot and a flower pickers' cart. He then
recounts his adventures. In the same way, we see Ransom
through the eyes of his good friend, the fictive Lewis.
Ransom invites Lewis to his home. He explains the
background to Lewis and discusses the projected journey. Lewis sees the coffin-like space capsule depart. A year later, Lewis returns to the house. Ransom emerges from his space capsule with a wounded heel and flowers from Perelandra. He then tells his story.

Ransom's experiences bear some resemblance to those of the Time Traveler. Both arrive at a second Eden in the midst of precipitation—hail for the Time Traveler, warm rain for Ransom. The inhabitants of both places live on fruit and apparently have no goal beyond leisure and play. Ransom's relationship with the innocent Green Lady recalls the Time Traveler's friendship with Weena, the simple, sweet Eloi woman. Both travelers are forced to fight underground, and both recoil from the unpleasant touch of the enemy.

Both stories raise the question of what is the nature and destiny of man. As one of the New Men, Wells accepted the theory of evolution as taught by Huxley, and he deals with the question from an evolutionary point of view. Time, as an 1895 reviewer pointed out, is the "most important of the conditions of organic evolution" (Hutton, 34), so that the premise of time travel is an excellent vehicle for raising this question. The mechanism allows the Time Traveler, and us, to follow man's destiny to the end. Thus it is fitting that the Time Traveler should be catapulted off his machine to face a colossal statue of the sphinx, the being who posed the riddle of man to Oedipus.

As a Christian, Lewis believed that the answer to the riddle of the nature and destiny of man was to be found in his beginnings—in original sin. Thus Ransom finds himself, during his first moments on Venus, re-enacting the birth experience. He floats in the sea water as if it were amniotic fluid, experiences a birth-like storm, naively looks at the world around him, and takes his first toddling steps.

These opening images are repeated in each book. In The Time Machine, the Time Traveler returns to the sphinx and finds his machine inside its base. The machine enables him to escape the trap set for him by the Morlocks, but it takes him to another trap—the dead end of the final blackening and cooling of the earth. In Perelandra, the birth imagery is repeated when, after the destruction of the Umman, Ransom is carried by the underground stream through the birth canal of the cave out into the open. There, weak as a baby, he nourishes himself effortlessly as the planet itself seems to suckle him, and stays there until his ceremonial meeting with all the creatures of the planet.

As John Huntington has pointed out in The Logic of Fantasy, the structure of The Time Machine rests on the Time Traveler's different hypotheses about the future of man. In Perelandra, each of these hypotheses becomes the central point of one of Ransom's conversations with the Lady.

The Time Traveler's first hypothesis concerns evolution and man's place in the history of the universe. The Time Traveler first believes that the Eloi are feeble and childlike because some time in their past, civilization had succeeded in making life so secure that strength and intelligence were no longer needed. According to the evolutionary principle, anything unused and unneeded will wither away. The Eloi are not fierce because they do not need to fight, they are not possessive because there is plenty for everyone, and they are not lustful because the population is relatively naive. Huntington characterizes the Time Traveler's emotions as "regret at lost keenness" but "joy at escaped hardship" (41).

Even before Ransom's first conversation with the Lady, his experiences refute the idea that ceaseless struggle for survival is the only possible source of keenness in a human being. His first day on the planet of Venus, goddess of pleasure, is devoted to learning what pleasure can be. Walking is fun, falling is fun, eating is fun, taking a shower among the bubble trees is fun. Even his loneliness and terror add "a razor-edge to all that profusion of pleasure" (p. 43). He focuses, not on survival, but on being: "To be the figure that he is in this unearthly pattern appeared sufficient" (47).

His first conversation with the Lady focuses on evolutionary ideas of the nature of time and the survival of the fittest. The Lady refutes Ransom's previously-unexamined evolutionary assumptions. She says that the furry people of Malacandra are not inferior simply because they will not survive, because "there is no ethical conclusion which he believed were wrongly drawn from the scientific theory of evolution. In "The Funeral of a Great Myth" Lewis summarizes the popularly-accepted evolutionary story of the universe as follows: "by some millionth, millionth chance" the right combination of conditions produced organic life. Life moves upwards and onwards, producing better and more complex forms, until it finally produces first Cave Man and then True Man. Man learns to control nature, then human nature, and finally becomes God. But then the universe runs down and all ends in nothingness (Christian Reflections, 86-88). The evolutionary myth, says Lewis, is not the logical result, but the imaginative result, of scientific discoveries; it survives because it meets our emotional needs, some of them very reprehensible (Christian Reflections, 82-83, 91-93). So that we will not miss the point, Lewis shows us that it was belief in this myth and surrender to the Force behind it, popularly called the Life Force, that motivated Weston to open his personality to the control of the Tempter.

One of the uses of the evolutionary notion of survival of the fittest was to explain class distinctions. Thus the Time Traveler's second hypothesis about the nature of man in 802,701 is that the 19th century class distinctions have resulted in the division of mankind into two races, with the Eloi having developed from the aristocrats and the Morlocks from the lower classes. By carrying class distinctions to their ultimate absurdity, Wells expresses the New Man's preference for socialism.

The second conversation of Ransom and the Lady...
This seeming contradiction is important to the whole scope of the story. To Lewis, the question of what can be accomplished by technology is subsequent to the question of moral choice; it is not until the moral question is settled that the King is free to pursue science and technology. Just as Lewis changed the thrust of Silent Planet by adding a philologist to the two original characters of First Men, so he changes the thrust of Perelandra by adding to The Time Machine a prolonged struggle in which the Lady answers the question about the nature and destiny of humanity by choosing one set of values over another.

Although Lewis believed that the literature and culture of Old Western Man formed a less hostile environment to rational moral choice than the materialism and empiricism of the New Men, he denied that literature or humanistic studies alone could lead to a clear set of moral values. Thus the Unman begins his temptation of the Lady by introducing the concept of poetry: "things that have never happened and places that never were; beautiful words, well put together" (104). He uses poetry and history to corrupt her imagination — to build up in her mind the image of herself as a noble queen of tragedy, "The picture of the tall, slender form, unbowed though the world's weight rested upon its shoulders" (126).

The values that the Lady chooses are to reject this corruption of her imagination, to accept the hierarchical structure that makes her always "younger" than her husband the King, and to reject all forms of egoism and self-centeredness. Ransom's physical struggle with the Unman ratifies her choice, and his mental struggle before the fight asserts the importance of choice against the evolutionary myth of a Life Force operating inexorably. Ransom realizes that "either something or nothing must depend on individual choices. And if something, who could set bounds to it?" (142).

Ransom also rejects the attempts of the Unman to corrupt his imagination by speaking to him of death with the voice and personality of Weston; he rejects "The Empirical Bogey" of "mere bigness and loneliness," (165) and finds that the underground world is "for something," (183), though not for man. His victory over the Unman is followed by his rebirth form the depths of the planet.

Ransom's victory leads to the ceremonial investiture of Venus' first man and woman with a new kind of dominion over their world. It expresses pictorially Lewis' final answer to the riddle of the nature and destiny of man. It takes place in a mountain valley shaped like a cup, red with delicate flowers, a valley in which the Lady and her husband glow like emeralds. It is analogous to Wells' picture of the end of time: the harsh red of the aging sun, the green of slime, the last clawed creatures, and finally blackness, silence, and bitter cold.

Lewis' scene exalts man as "the resolution of discords, the bridge of the chasm in creation, the keystone of the whole arch" (207). Against the popular evolutionary concept of ceaseless competitive struggle Lewis places the Old Western tradition of the Great Chain of Being, with its concomitant ideas of hierarchy and obedience. He shows that a world in which each species has its own place is not static and dull, but an opportunity for exhilarating progress. As the Lady says of the animals, "We make them older every day. Is that not what it is to be a beast?" (65).

Against the bitterness and jealousy of the New Men in their struggle to establish socialism, Lewis

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eighth-part serial on Home Service Sunday evenings [BBC Radio]. It has struck ... renewed force... what an important part awareness of landscape plays in the original—a landscape that is watchful, wide and more than a little menacing." The story becomes a succession of events, Gandalf is misconceived, and the music sometimes has an effect of empty sonority.] B 719

Walters, Raymond, Jr. "Say it with Paperbacks". New York Times Book Review, 4 Dec. 1960, p. 60. [A brief account of Ballantine's success with the boxed set of LOTR which "sold more than 50,000 copies within a few months." The list of "Paperback Best Sellers" (p. 60) shows LOTR as No. 1.] B 700

Weir, Arthur R. "J.R.R. Tolkien—A Brief Survey, and a

Furthermore, his questions about the nature and destiny of Western Man. It is a world view characterized by a sense of inferiority not something to be seized. Each being rejoices in submitting to others and serving them with gifts. The angelic guardian of the planet joyfully turns it over to the young humans and receives it again as their gift. For the King receives the rulership of his world by the gift of Ransom and the Queen, who won it for him by their sufferings at the hands of the Uman. The magnificent singing beast receives life from the female of another species, submitting to her until it is weaned.

Only when these issues are resolved, according to Lewis, can there be a place for scientific knowledge and technology. The matches fail the Time Traveler as often as they help him because his use of technology is not governed by a consistent set of values. Furthermore, his questions about the nature and destiny of man remain unanswered. His Time Machine allows him to escape the trap set for him inside the sphinx, but it takes him to another trap—the dead end of the final blackening and cooling of the earth. On his second excursion into time he disappears, leaving the narrator to stare into a future "still black and blank... lit at a few casual places by the memory of his story."

"What Lewis really did to Wells' brilliant fantasies, then, was to re-assert the world view of Old Western Man. It is a world view characterized by a sense of fun derived from seeking empathy and appreciation rather than domination; by a sense of security derived from believing that mankind has its own place between animals and angels in the Great Chain of Being; and finally, by a sense of joy derived from perceiving that the universe is "sillier and better fun than they make out."