

A Study of the ‘*Christian Hermeneutic*’ in C. S. Lewis’s Novels

Dr.J.ARUL

*Assistant Professor of English
Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science
Coimbatore*

C. S. Lewis is a famous Christian apologist. His fiction represents a majority of the Christian Community living in *Paradise Lost*. The unction of this digressed path is to discover how to teach Christian doctrine to a sophisticated but unsuspecting twentieth century caught in modern utopianism or anti-utopianism.

Beginning at *Wellsian* science fiction and moving further from myth to satire, Lewis’s fiction finds itself returning to myth again. Yet his fiction, although anti-*Wellsian*, owes a heavy debt to Weils, because of Lewis’s genuine interest in science fiction. Lewis, however, was more interested in “*Spiritual Adventures*.” His first science-fiction novel, *Out of the Silent Planet* (1937), is a direct attack on “*Westonism*.”

Weston is the name of a character created in response to the imaginative cravings of a dream where *interplanetary colonization* takes place — an invasion into Planet Venus, destroying its inhabitants and settling there to “*Live on Forever*”. The hope of perpetuating the human race was not something Lewis took lightly. In other words, the scientific hope of conquering death was a real test to Christianity.

Lewis, however differs radically from other science-fiction writers, knowing Christian doctrine means fortifying faith laid principles — the foundation on which Christianity is built. *Perelandra* is a story told from the perspective of a character called Ransom. This self-portrait of C. S. Lewis is a depiction of his own spiritual or private life and hence pines on his sufferings, although thinned down, is not exposed completely.

However, to provide an answer to this criticism, Lewis gave a detailed outlook of Ransom’s mind in the sequel, *Perelandra*, where characterizations are more successful than in other space-travel novels. There remain three characters - Ransom, Weston, and Eve. Eve is delightful.

Weston is oppressed by demons. Ransom is characterized by fear, insecurity, doubts, and humanism.

Portraying Christian virtues of humility, spiritual promptings, Christian obedience, which recur in the works of Lewis establish a strong parallelism between Ransom and Jesus Christ. *Perelandra* has to be saved. Ransom descends into the Underworld and after a period of three days, rises again.

Appreciation for *Perelandra* largely dwells on the extent of space one can have within oneself to accommodate Christian doctrines. This novel considered by many to be a thriller is equally a treat for many Christians. *Hideous Strength*, the last of the Trilogy, represents Lewis’s likes and dislikes. For instance, his hatred of “*the inner ring*” or the small, elite group that assumes power in a school or other organization in the garb of the “*Progressive Element*.”

Lewis uses his book to attack the sterile and artificial-modern architecture, demolition crews, experiments on mental patients, scientific planning contrasting it with everything that is simply natural. Tortured animals contrasted with animals loved; Belbury, a tyrannical place with no room for non-conformists contrasted with Saint Anne’s, a place of healing that is welcoming of all individuals.

Lewis often experienced a conflict between his intuitive and rational sides and he gave precedence to the former one as it is that which never betrays one in his attempt to find God’s will. The Great Divorce was one such work — the result of Lewis’s interest in the nature of spiritual choices. *Till We have Faces* is a retelling of a mythical story (of Cupid and Psyche). The life of C. S. Lewis and his works, is unusually interesting because it shows us how adolescent Lewis drifting from atheism towards Christianity realized: “*God is not cruel but man is.*”

The *Problem of Pain* and the *Problem of Evil* (the concept of God as “Evil” — as an entity indifferent to pain and suffering) dominated Lewis’s thoughts. Lewis went on to become a staunch believer of Christianity and into one of the most influential and formidable writers on Christianity in the twentieth century.

This transformation or journey to discover the “truth” and the “ways of God” was not an easy one. After a period of struggle, his unwavering faith intact, self-realization and soul-stirring pangs of guilt at various levels of his life for various reasons, broadened perspectives and acceptance of suffering cheerfully. Lewis understood God can and will redeem even the most horrid things of life. Even Christ’s death upon the Cross becoming the penultimate act that saved humanity.

The reality is that God actually felt Pain. Lewis based his sci-fic writings on one myth or the other and it was considered unique. And realizing that myth is not false and only helps participate in the process of truth. These story lines with mythical plot structures reflected truth. Unbiased syncretism drawn from Greek philosophy weaved into true realities of Christian doctrine and Faith (*Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection*) is depicted in some of his stories.

Lewis did not believe in something up in the sky or perhaps even a dream. He simply believed in real things brought down to earth by God. And God's Son truly became a man. *From Heaven to Earth*. Lewis's idea was that myths and mythological figures represent the corrupted form of spiritual realities found in a purer form in planes less fallen than ours. Hence Lewis was in search of those planes, perhaps lying on the other side of our own planet.

Works Cited

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