Conclusion
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This dissertation entitled, “The Craftsmanship of C.S.Lewis’ Science Fiction” strives to expound the use of the various literary techniques employed in the science fiction of C.S.Lewis to effectively communicate the theme to his readers. A series of three novels, namely Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra and That Hideous Strength indeed play a vital role in acclaiming the unique craftsmanship of Lewis.

Chapter I which is the ‘Introduction’ is a forecast of the dissertation. It deals with the growth of science fiction and the contribution of the various science fiction writers down the ages. It also gives a brief summary of the three novels, Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra and That Hideous Strength and throws light on the scope of the dissertation.

Chapter II entitled ‘The Design’ analyses Lewis’ design of the trilogy. The use of postscript and preface, the use of repetitions and the use of different points of view are dealt with. Lewis’ method of presenting the theme in a series of three novels gives adequate space for him to present the complete theological doctrines so effectively. The science fiction deals with the war in heaven that results in the fall of the rebellious angels in the novel Out of the Silent Planet, the attempt of the fallen angel to revenge God through his creation namely mankind in Perelandra and the call of the redeemed man to execute God’s mission on earth in That Hideous Strength.
The Postscript and the Preface promote the natural flow of thought in the novels and serve as a link between them. The use of the Postscript at the end of the novel *Out of the Silent Planet* helps the reader to review the novel when Ransom’s nostalgic Malacandrian experience calls the reader to visualize a world of spiritual discipline and a life of submission to Divine authority. Lewis uses the Postscript to highlight the real meaning of death through the hross funeral. The Preface of *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength* is used to forecast the plot of the novels and also provides a glimpse of the previous novels. It is used as an aid to establish the continuity in the trilogy. The reader is instantly able to connect the novels together even if he is newly introduced to any one of them.

Repetitions of characters, places and ideas are an integral feature of the trilogy. It helps the reader to keep track of the various characters and important episodes. The theological and scientific philosophies are often repeated. Repetitions of scientific principles and the efforts to create a new science oriented world is the recurring theme of the trilogy. Science being used as an evil agent against the Kingdom of God is also discussed. From the theological viewpoint, Lewis focuses on a life of surrender to the authority and headship of God. The use of science is another repeated phenomenon of the trilogy as required of a science fiction. Scientific facts, equipments and principles are analysed.

The design of the use of different viewpoints is a distinctive feature of the trilogy. The technique of point of view enables Lewis to retain full and complete control over the narrative. The use of first person point of view brings in an intimacy and a personal touch with the reader. Lewis employs the personal view
point to philosophize on abstract terms like the eldila and Oyarsa. He employs the third person omniscient point of view in *That Hideous Strength* and uses the limited omniscient point of view in *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*. The important themes of the trilogy are chiefly brought out from the stand point of different characters in third person point of view.

The war in heaven, the fall of Lucifer, the final war with the Bent or Evil eldila and the ultimate destination of the human race is well brought out from the view point of the Oyarsa. Ransom is the central character from whose view point Lewis presents the conflict within the soul that sets out on the spiritual warfare against the demonic forces. Ransom becomes a much sober, composed and spiritually matured person. A representative of Maleldil, he becomes a guide, mentor and a spiritual leader to others. His authority and power over the evil forces enables him to execute his mission as an ambassador for Christ. The technique of point of view is thus skillfully used by Lewis to achieve verisimilitude.

Chapter III entitled ‘The Artistry’ delineates the technique of dream visions, allegory, symbolism and the Old Solar Language. Dream vision, one of the distinctive literary genre is instrumental in the unfolding of the plot of the trilogy and maintains the suspense in the novels. Ransom’s *dream* of crossing the wall in *Out of the Silent Planet* features as a forecast of the trilogy. Weston’s *dream* of a dying man in *Perelandra* feature as a didactic element. It reveals the hidden mysteries involved in death and its consequences. The *many* dream visions of *That Hideous Strength* are studied in three categories. The dream visions of Jane which guides her in her personnel life, the visions that direct the Logres in the
battle against the evil forces and the visions that reveal the functioning of the NICE, are representative of the evil power.

The most powerful technique of the trilogy is the use of allegory. The science fiction itself is an allegorical masterpiece. Lewis exercises great skill in establishing a definite connection between the trilogy and the Bible. The allegory of characters is a prominent feature of the novel. Eldila, Oyarsa, Maleldil, Bent One and Ransom allude to angels, arch angels, Supreme God, Satan and Christ respectively.

*Perelandra* is a brilliant allegory of Satan’s temptation and the fall of man. The various stages of temptation and Satan’s strategy are effectively traced by Lewis. Perelandra, the sinless world pertains to the Garden of Eden and Weston, the Un-man relates to Satan who appears in the form of the Serpent in Eden. The temptation of Tinidril is allegorical to the temptation of Eve. The various stages of temptation and Satan’s strategy is traced. The chapter also delineates the tactics of the Un-man as follows. The Un-man’s craftiness to arrest the attention of Tinidril, his clever arguments against Maleldil, his eloquence, words of flattery and deceptions, idolatry, sense of pride and thirst for superiority are a few such tactics. His unfailing attempts to make her fall into sin are a vivid portrayal of Satan’s diplomacy and artful tactics. The fall of man is also beautifully traced through the character of Tinidril. Her shift of priority, vainful thoughts, misconception of the words of Maleldil, loss of peace and sense of fear are all consequences of transgression of God’s word that alludes to the stages of temptation of Satan.
Ransom in Perelandra allegorically refers to Christ who triumphs over Satan at Calvary. The turmoil and the mental agony have a bearing on the spiritual conflict of the soul that encounters the devil. The fierce battle and his triumph over the Unman echo Christ’s victory at Calvary.

That Hideous Strength is an allegory of the Tower of Babel, a symbol of man’s pride and ungodly efforts. NICE, a scientific institute represents the Babel Tower. They are ambitious, proud, headstrong, self-reliant and defiant to God. Lewis reiterates his views, that science can very subtly replace man’s priority for his Creator. He voices out that science can become an agent for the evil powers if not kept under control. On the other hand the Logres at St. Anne’s is allegorical to the people who are dependent on God and live a God centered life and execute His mission on earth. The chapter, ‘The Descent of the Gods’ is allegorical to the Pentecostal experience in the Bible when the Spirit of God descends on the disciples. The Logres are also filled with a new revival and are renewed with new energy to encounter the evil forces. The triumph of the Logres and the destruction of the NICE is the grand finale of the trilogy which alludes to the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The use of symbolism is commendable as it is an effective device for the exposition of the theme. The symbol of “the wall”, “the floating land”, “the bubble trees” are a few symbols in the trilogy. The wall refers to God’s protection and for the boundary that is set for human effort. Lewis warns the society that when man begins to venture beyond the will of God he loses God’s protection and is subjected to the evil powers. The symbol of the ‘bubble trees’ stand for the growth
of spiritual wisdom that also refreshes the soul. 'The floating land' that keeps moving stands for the spiritual life that should not be stagnant but is an ever moving experience. The destruction of the Perelandrian creature by the Unman is emblematic of Satan's hideous desire to destroy God's protection. The symbol of the fire, torch and the flowers stand for divine sanctification, the Spirit of God and the resultant happiness.

The Old Solar Language is the most exciting and innovative creation of Lewis. He calls this as the language of the universe, the language of Maleldil and His creations. The Old Solar Language vocabulary is an evidence of Lewis' skillful coinage of words and combination of sounds. It depicts Lewis' proficiency in medieval language. The Old Solar Language is used as the universal language of victory by the Logres and Ransom in That Hideous Strength. Lewis portrays it as a language of power for God's people in the war against the evil forces. The use of the Old Solar Language is indeed a unique feature of the trilogy setting it apart from any other science fiction.

Chapter IV entitled 'The Strategy' focuses on the figurative language, descriptive style, and the technique of flash back, use of story within story and the use of dialogues. Figurative language beautifies the descriptive and narrative style of the trilogy. Besides adding variety to the trilogy they also promote imaginative thinking and memory of the unfamiliar names. The similes and metaphors for various aspects of the trilogy like the landscape of the planets, the alien creatures, the characters of the novel and the celestial journey are dealt with separately. The descriptive style of Lewis is note worthy as it is of immense value to the trilogy.
Lewis’ strategy of the use of descriptive style is commendable. The descriptions of the alien creatures of Perelandra and Malacandra, the natural vegetations and the heavenly beings are graphical portrayal. The mild and subtle descriptions as contrasted with the griping and fearful descriptions of the Un-man, an evil agent, the long descriptive passages of Ransom’s combat with the Un-man, and finally the descriptions of the glorious state of the Oyarsa of the different planets are evidence of Lewis’ imaginative power. The chapter further focuses on the functions and descriptions of the NICE and the Logres.

The technique of flash back in the chapter, ‘The Strategy’ helps to maintain the suspense of the novels as a space thriller. It also serves to link the novels. Weston’s first visit to Malacandra, his Malacandrian experience, the Un-man’s recollection of his state of splendor prior to the fall and Christ’s suffering at Calvary are a few flash backs of the novels. The flash back of Mark and Jane is a psychological study of their childhood.

Featuring alongside with the technique of flash back is the use of stories that are narrated by the different characters of the novels which is instrumental in making the novels readable. Besides adding variety, it is also vital in bringing out the important themes of the trilogy. The story of the war in heaven, the fall of Lucifer, the story of Adam and Eve, the story of the Fisher King, narration of the Arthurian Legend and Merlin the magician, the episode of Mr. Bultitude are the various stories in the trilogy that proves Lewis’ craftsmanship.

The timely use of dialogues is instrumental in breaking the monotony of the long descriptive passages. In the course of a dialogue between two characters,
Lewis highlights details of situations, places or people. The fall of the angels is discussed by Ransom and the Oyarsa which reflects on the beginning of the conflict between God and Satan. The dialogues between Tinidril and the Un-man in Perelandra reveal Satan’s craftiness and his diplomatic nature. The numerous dialogues in That Hideous Strength focus on theological concepts and scientific philosophies.

The trilogy drives home the profound Biblical doctrines and provides spiritual insight to the contemporary world that is drawn into the lure of science and materialism. Chandler calls Lewis as a ‘common man’s theologian’. Lewis indeed reaches out not only to the intellectual people but also to the common man and interprets the deep biblical concepts in ways that are easy to comprehend. He presents a complete overview of God’s sovereign power and His divine plan for mankind. The trilogy also depicts the conflict between the good and evil powers and mankind’s role in response to the conflict between good and evil as reflected in the scriptures.

The craftsmanship of Lewis’ science fiction indeed deserves high praise. His use of various literary techniques runs complimentary to the theme. He succeeds in presenting a holistic view of the Biblical doctrines through his trilogy. Brilliant is his handling of the various Biblical themes even as he brings to light the different stages of man’s spiritual warfare. Man’s profound seeking and aspiration that enable him to traverse through his rugged course to the final achievement is effectively highlighted through the immense diversity of characters and incidents.
William G. Johnson and Marcia. K. Houtman imply, "what Lewis succeeds in doing so well is creating in fiction a reality that draws readers into worlds seemingly more real than those in which the readers live." (75) In spite of the trilogy being a science fiction set in three different planets the unique craftsmanship of Lewis enable the readers to identify themselves with the story and ponder deeply on his views.

The Encyclopaedia of Religion describes Lewis as, "A brilliant populariser of faith and an apologist acceptable to an exceptionally wide spectrum of Christians. Lewis from unexpected angles sheds light on the faults and foibles of man and women." (534). The science fiction of Lewis deals with a variety of themes bringing to light the flaws of humanity and also offers solutions to set it right. Lee. D. Rossi rightly remarks that, "Lewis is one of the very few authors of the twentieth century whom individuals in spiritual turmoil can turn again and again for consolation and guidance."

The space trilogy of Lewis efficiently demonstrates the spiritual conflict between God and the Dark Powers. The rebellious spirits thrown out of heaven have indulged in a terrible warfare with the inhabitants of the earth. Quoting the words of Wollheim, Meenakshi Raman writes that the trilogy describes 'the conflict between materialistic science and moralistic theology (55). Kumar opines that science and technological advancement have created different cultures and ambiences which is disturbing the moral balance in some cases. Edmund Cripins views that science fiction is basically 'what would happen if?"(144) Lewis highlights that if the human race is not watchful it will be consumed by the
evil powers. He also points out Satan’s burning desire to succeed in his mission would make him utilize any thing that comes his way. Lewis foretells that the modern world with its tremendous advance of scientific knowledge is likely to become a prey to the destructive powers. Commenting his views of the contemporary world, Sudhakar Mondithoka remarks,

"We are living in an age of scientific advancement, technological breakthroughs and knowledge explosion. It is called the ‘space age’ or the ‘age of information technology’ or even ‘cyber age’. Man’s accomplishments make it appear as though there is no limit to what man can do...Therefore, the modern man tends to feel that he is self-sufficient, independent of and without any need for God...They see scientific pursuits and belief in God as contradictory approaches to reality and imagine that the theological possibility is ruled out.”(7)

Lewis through his science fiction offers to the world that a life void of the presence of God will become an agent of the evil powers. On the other hand a Spirit controlled life will be saved and will be a life of meaning to others as well. Haigh rightly says, “Lewis fiction displays a unique combination of powerful intuitions with a clear didactic purpose, of orthodox Christian beliefs with a speculative imagination. “ (White, 6) Wollheim opines that the high civilization must be God-fearing and adhere to the conviction that there is higher morality than that of mortal law making.
Thus, as Downing comments, “the Ransom series gave Lewis the opportunity to represent Christian doctrines in a new imaginative context, to recover the awe and majesty of the medieval world-picture, and to offer his own reflections on the nature of good and evil.” (100)

Lewis’ craftsmanship of the science fiction makes the science fiction a brilliant masterpiece. The science fiction of C.S. Lewis thus stands as an evidence for his unique craftsmanship. His imaginative power and splendid use of various literary techniques to expound the theme in his space trilogy is commendable and makes it a book of all times.