

Rhetoric and the Philosophy of Christianity in Clive Staples Lewis' Works: A Case of *Mere Christianity*

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ABSTRACT: *This study discussed rhetoric and the philosophy of Christianity in Clive Staples Lewis' Mere Christianity. It focused on how C.S. Lewis used rhetorical symbols, key terms, and clusters around them to induce his readers' actions. The cluster criticism approach was adopted. Katz and Lazarsfeld's 1955 Personal Influence theory explained how opinion leaders or rhetors indirectly establish the media (print) effects. The cluster criticism method analysis revealed how C.S. Lewis deliberately influenced readers using key terms and clusters.*

KEYWORDS: rhetoric, Christian philosophy, media, rhetorical symbols, clusters, influence.

INTRODUCTION

Several authors, such as Greg Koukl (2019), McDowell and McDowell (2017), and Habermas and Licona (2004), to mention a few, have written various pieces of literature on making a case for Christianity. Their efforts primarily bolstered what the Holy Book says as handed down by Jesus Christ to his Apostles and those who came after them. Over the decades, we have had apologetics such as C.S. Lewis writing to help Christians and non-Christians understand more about the Christian religion. Such works include one of C.S. Lewis' books titled *Mere Christianity*. As a Christian writer, C.S. Lewis represents an apologetic style that returns to philosophy and the mode of discourse first espoused by Plato, though his message is entirely Christian. He was a Christian convert who, after his conversion, became a formidable force for teaching what he believed people must understand about Christian philosophical perspectives as promoted in the Holy Bible.

Every communicator sets out to influence the other party—the reader, viewer, or listener to act in a certain way during a communication encounter. Whichever form of communication the encoder

of the symbols chooses—written, verbal, nonverbal, and others, they try to make every effort to get the message to the receiver as clear and meaningful as possible (Nordquist, 2021; Carey, 1992). C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* has been noted to be one of the most recognized works among other apologetic works (Su, 2019). Joeckel's (2013, p. 30) thought indicated that C.S. Lewis would continue to generate controversy, for his place was already secured on the public stage as long as Christianity remains embattled in the public sphere as they try to teach the same Christian way of life. Cartledge (2016, p. 438) states, "He was one of the most influential Christian thinkers of the twentieth century among the general public and church audiences." Because of these achievements, several other authors have continued writing and noting how Lewis influenced his readers through his prolific writings (Craddock, 2002; Fraser, 2020; Warren, 1997; Davidson, 2011). King (1988, p. 29) asserted, "Examples from Lewis' works that illustrate his awareness of audience and its particularities are almost too numerous to mention. In essay after essay, he directly addresses his common-sense readers." C.S. Lewis is also known among academics. Cartledge (2016, p. 436) put it this way, "Academically, Lewis studies have never been healthier, and now philosophers and theologians are among those studying Lewis for their benefit alongside historians and literary scholars." This thought helps to lay credence to this study's claim that C.S. Lewis has influenced his readers and, thus, has contributed immensely to communication.

This study critically analyzed C.S. Lewis' use of rhetoric in his works using *Mere Christianity* as a case to establish the claim investigated. The key terms (symbols) and the clusters around the key terms adopted by C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* were carefully selected and analyzed to achieve this objective. With a view on the concept of rhetoric, Pertler (2014, p. 113) posits that "Rhetoric functions by creating or eliminating choices to persuade individuals to choose in a particular way." Furthermore, "It is the 'art of persuasion' and most often finds expression in deliberative (advocacy), forensic (legal), and epideictic (praise or blame) contexts" (Aristotle, cited in Don, 1988, p. 28). Summarily, because of the importance and the influence that C.S. Lewis' works have shown over the decades, this study explains how he used rhetorical symbols, key terms, and the clusters around the key terms to induce actions in his readers.

Historical Background of C.S. Lewis

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963), commonly referred to as C.S. Lewis, is an Irish-born scholar, novelist, and author. He was born on November 29, 1898, in Belfast, Ireland. He authored about 40 books. He was brought up in the Protestant Church of Ireland, but as a teenager, he said he lost his faith – turned off by boring church services and the problem of evil in the world. However, after returning to Oxford in the post-war period, he became increasingly perplexed by the existence of God and Christianity. After many evening chats with friends such as J.R.R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson, he finally converted to belief in God (theism) in 1929 and became a Christian in 1931.

C.S. Lewis has remained influential through his works among other apologetics, such as G.K. Chesterton, Ronald Knox, Hillaire Belloc, Frank Sheed, and Maisie Ward. According to Tejvan's

(2009) account, C.S. Lewis became an influential Christian apologist through publications such as *The Screwtape Letters*. He concentrated on a universal form of Christianity, seeking to avoid the everyday sectarianism in his native Northern Ireland. He rarely made any specific reference to a particular denomination of Christianity but sought to reinforce the underlying Christian values of all Christian faiths. His Christian beliefs also influenced his famous works, such as the "Chronicles of Narnia." C.S. Lewis began writing "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" during the Second World War. He was inspired partly by three evacuee children who came to stay in his home at Risinghurst (a suburb of Oxford). Lewis said the experience of the evacuee children gave him a new perspective on the joy of childhood. He also remarked that he had had an image of a Faun since he was about 16. The Chronicles of Narnia, a seven series of books, was published one year from 1950 to 1956. They soon became a publishing success and have become a very influential genre of children's books.

After World War II, C.S. Lewis became increasingly close to Joy Gresham – a Jewish convert to Christianity who divorced her alcoholic husband (the writer, William Gresham). Joy later moved to Oxford, and the two gained a civil marriage contract enabling Joy to live in the UK. C.S. Lewis very much enjoyed the company of Joy, finding an ideal partner to share his intellectual and spiritual interests. Joy Gresham died from cancer in 1957, and C.S. Lewis died a few years later, in 1963, from renal failure on the same date as the assassination of J.F. Kennedy. Since his death, his books and influence have continued to grow. He is rated as one of the top English writers of all time, and his books have been translated into numerous languages (Stroud, 2013).

C.S. Lewis is best known for his works of fiction, especially "*The Screwtape Letters*," "*The Chronicles of Narnia*," "*The Space Trilogy*," and others. His non-fiction Christian apologetics, such as *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, *Christian Apologetics*, and *The Problem of Pain*. Tandy (2011, p. 127) says, "... Lewis' corpus of writing is unified not solely by his Christian worldview, but also by his powerful imagination." Menzies (2013, p. 18) asserts, "Although most of his education was grounded in philosophy and literature, Lewis devoted much time, thoughts, and writings to the subjects of myth, fantasy, and the role of myth in the Christian faith." His Christian theism lends him a compelling scholarly and pragmatic standpoint amongst the other critics of modernity (Seymour, 2012, p. v). Cartledge (2016, p. 437) says, "Without doubt, he was a remarkable man and a Christian scholar. During his lifetime, and even more so after his death, his writings made him a person of huge public interest." The author further asserts, "Rosner's list of public intellectuals collected data from five hundred and forty-six people between 1995 and 2000 shows Lewis comes out 132nd for the scholarship, 31st for media, and 2nd for web hits" (p. 441). It means he has become one of the most influential intellectuals of the last century, and his influence continues today.

C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*

C.S. Lewis' book — *Mere Christianity* contains uncommon truths in everyday language. According to Heck (2007, p. 14), "It is unusual truth because of the power of Lewis's ideas, all of them reflecting biblical teaching, and it was standard language because of the style in which Lewis wrote." The author noted its unusual truth reflected in how he leveraged universal human longing and his use of analogy and the war in which Europe was at the time engaged. *Mere Christianity* was published in 1952 and renewed in 1980. The book consists of chapters initially a series of Lewis's radio broadcast talks organized by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) during World War II, from 1941 to 1944. The first series of broadcasts addressed natural law, the second discussed the fundamental Christian beliefs centering on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the third covered Christian morality, and the last series focused on the doctrine of the Trinity (Heck, 2007, p. 1).

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis devoted its chapters to arguing for Christianity's logical validity. He defended Christianity from its critics and looked in detail at the benefits of the Christian life. Lewis started the book by looking at the law of human nature and its realness. He tried to draw the line between religious sects' beliefs about God and the Devil. For instance, the Pantheists believe that God almighty is neither good nor evil. According to Meconi (2014, p. 3) [sic], "C.S. Lewis' entire purpose in composing *Mere Christianity* the way he did was to exhort his hearers and readers to become 'little Christs,' a phrase, which appears over and over there."

During the research for this study, the researcher discovered that the phrase—little Christ appeared five times throughout the book. In his preface to *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis admits that this is not a confessional work but is "merely" the explanation and defense of "the belief that has been common to nearly all Christians at all times" (p. viii). Shrock (2017, p. 99) notes that the moral argument for the existence of God from *Mere Christianity* has been called the most widely convincing apologetic argument of the 20th century. It reflected Lewis' intention to deify God and showed the human person's divine transformation in Jesus Christ.

Mere Christianity continues to serve its purpose of revealing that Christianity is valid to anyone who reads it. It was noted that Lewis summarized the historic center of Christianity in *Mere Christianity* in an easily understood language. He used the analogy, the story, a basic vocabulary, and the innate longing in every person to catch the reader's attention (Heck (2007, p. 1). According to Wilson (cited in Leith, 2013, para. 5), "*Mere Christianity*, ... sells in vast quantities in the US and is regarded as "almost a sort of summa Theologica of the Protestant world." These thoughts shared by various authors and researchers make *Mere Christianity* a good fit for this study. They showed how C.S. Lewis effectively communicated his ideas and tremendously influenced his readers using rhetorical symbols, key terms, and word clusters.

Thesis Statement

This study discusses rhetoric and the philosophy of Christianity in Clive Staples Lewis' *Mere Christianity*. C.S. Lewis' works are still being studied by academic and non-academic institutions, especially in the UK and the US. A few examples include Oxford University, C.S. Lewis College, Canterbury House of Studies (Schole Academy), Regent University, and C.S. Lewis Study Center, among several other educational institutions. This study focused on how C.S. Lewis used rhetorical symbols, key terms, and the clusters around the key terms to influence his audience—induce their actions as they read the book. The cluster criticism approach was used to analyze the selected rhetorical symbols, key terms, and clusters around the key terms.

The rationale behind the choice of C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, among other books, was based on the review of a series of other authors' recommendations of its impact in teaching moral argument for the existence of God. According to Shrock (2017, p. 99), "Moral argument for the existence of God from *Mere Christianity* has been called the most widely convincing apologetic arguments of the 20th century." Leith (2013, para. 5) revealed that C.S. Lewis' works had contributed immensely to Christians' and non-Christians' worldviews of Christianity.

Significance

This study is an addition to other literature on C.S. Lewis' contribution to communication studies, knowledge, and Christian faith. It contributed to learning in communication, theology, rhetoric, and cluster criticism. Everyone, including communication and theological scholars and students, religious leaders, and publishers, with an urge to pursue or acquire knowledge about C.S. Lewis' rhetoric and philosophy, apologetic arguments, Christian and non-Christian worldview of God, and the Christian faith, shall benefit from this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding of Communication through C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christian*

Communication is the act/art of sending information from a sender (source) to a receiver. Communication comes in various forms—verbal, nonverbal, and written. Whichever form of communication is chosen, everyone involved, either in encoding or decoding the message transmitted, must be in their best frame of mind to understand and interpret the stimulus received appropriately to achieve the purpose of the communication encounter. C.S. Lewis' style of communicating through writing—using simple language makes it easier for his readers to understand his points of view. C.S. Lewis (cited in Bassham, 2015, p. 99) said, "... if speakers and writers could not translate their thoughts into a common language, then their thoughts were confused."

In all his literary works, which include *Christian Apologetics: Pro and Con* (2015), *The Screwtape Letters* (2009), *Revelation, Conversion, and Apologetic* (2012), *Case for Christ: Insights from*

Reason, Imagination, and Faith (2005), to mention a few, he focused on simply communicating what he had found about God, Christ, life, and Christian philosophical perspectives. As Beebe, 2020 said, “A skilled communicator is holistic, intentional, transpositional, evocative, and audience-centered. C.S. Lewis showed these characteristics in his works. For this, various writers and critics have continued to pay attention to his achievements as a literary artist.

C.S. Lewis believed in the importance of communication—transmitting ideas, views, beliefs, and norms to another person to influence them positively. In one of his essays titled *Before We Can Communicate*, Lewis discusses communication and explores the frequently overlooked necessity of using commonly agreed-upon definitions. He gives two reasons why communication breaks down. First, he submits that communication breaks down because intentions are not always understood correctly. Second, communication breaks down because of avoidance and arrogance. He tries to help communicators communicate effectively, thus pushing for brevity and clear communication in all his works, either for children or adults (pp. 58-62). He explained that as a military chaplain working in a highly diverse and pluralistic environment, he devoted much attention to communicating clearly, especially when dealing with "theological matters. He asserted, “I always inquired into the religious background of the person with whom I was speaking” (Kincaid, 2017, n.p.).

Viewing his contribution to communication, Glycer’s review (cited in Bebee, 2020, para. 7) showed that C. S. Lewis has continued to enchant readers worldwide, partly because of what he said and how he said it. It has also been argued that “Lewis was a public intellectual. He combines expert scholarship with journalistic communication skills, which meant that his ideas entered and influenced the public domain” (Joeckel, 2013). In line with these scholars’ views, it is evident that by investigating *Mere Christianity*, as Christian communicators, we can learn practical communication skills from studying and understanding C.S. Lewis' works, the use of simple languages, and rhetoric. If we successfully imbibe these communications and writing skills, we can communicate Christ more effectively if we find ourselves in an apologetic position.

C.S. Lewis' Rhetoric and the Philosophy of Christianity

Rhetoric

The ability to communicate with physical symbols, especially in written forms, makes human beings superior to every other creature. We use various symbols daily to communicate with others and make our lives worth living. Thus, rhetorical symbols in language form play a significant role in our everyday experience. We exist and function because of our ability to comprehend others' thoughts and emotions through language. According to Foss (2018, p. 4), “The act/art of using our power of speech and command of the language in organizing and reorganizing symbols to disseminate meaningful messages—written, spoken, or gestured, to persuade/influence others is known as rhetoric.” When people use rhetorical symbols as C.S. Lewis did in *Mere Christianity*, they can influence others and shape society. C.S. Lewis’ simple and effective use of rhetorical

symbols to transmit his messages made him one of the most influential rhetors of the 20th century. Given his rhetorical achievements, Como (cited in Tandy, 2011, p. 128) posits, [sic] "Lewis' rhetorical gifts are arguably unmatched in [the twentieth] century in their adroitness and versatility."

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis adopted specific key terms to create intense meaning for his thoughts. It is consistent with Foss' (2018, p. 63) argument that communicators/rhetors, such as Lewis, deliberately use rhetorical symbols to influence their readers. Lewis's excellent use of rhetoric based on the key terms he adopted revealed how tenacious he was in wanting people to pay attention to God, Christianity, the Christian faith, and the law that guides everyone's endeavor in life. As an effective rhetor, C.S. Lewis appeals to pathos: his audience's emotions and logos — reason and logic in *Mere Christianity*. King (1988, p. 28) puts it this way: "He was not just going to push his ideas into his readers' minds; instead, he engaged his rhetorical prowess to build trust in them." It is believed that 'experience is the best teacher. C.S. Lewis writes based on his experiences from being an atheist to being a Christian convert with a strong belief in God and his son Jesus Christ. As noted earlier, his message in *Mere Christianity* is evident based on his writing style—using simple and understandable language. His thoughts continued to expand Christian communication studies, Christian philosophical perspectives, and peoples' worldviews of Christianity.

The Philosophy of Christian Belief in *Mere Christianity*

C.S. Lewis sees a Christian as someone who accepts the common doctrines of Christianity (p. 9). He further noted that spiritualizing the word Christian will only make it meaningless. Consequently, Lewis identifies the intent of the objection. So, he adds: "It is not for us to say who, in the deepest sense, is or is not close to the spirit of Christ. We do not see into men's hearts. We cannot judge and are indeed forbidden to judge" (p. 11). His philosophy of Christianity points to the fact that Lewis wants people to know that God exists and see that there is one thing that can satisfy them. He stressed that the only thing is his son—Jesus Christ. Therefore, to love and worship Christ is surrendering everything about the human self and nature to him. To reinforce these points, Lewis asserts [sic]:

The Christian way is different: harder and easier. Christ says, "Give me All. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money, and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self but to kill it.... Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked—the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours (pp.196-197; Matthew 16:24).

Although he saw himself as a layman, his communication about Christianity's truth goes beyond most laypeople's understanding (pp. viii; 14). This kind of knowledge of the divine can be accorded

to the teachers and preachers of our time. C.S. Lewis did not just expand communication studies in his argument from a theological perspective; his works helped shape our understanding of communication theories (p. 54), such as the communication influence theory. Also, Lewis expanded people's knowledge about how things would turn out if they connected with God (p. 124).

Theoretical Framework

Katz and Lazarsfeld's Personal Influence Theory

Every field of life is tied to communication—we communicate to get others to join us to keep our world going. C.S. Lewis' books, for instance, *Mere Christianity*, express his ideas, views—understanding of God, Christianity, and the wider world. Since having knowledge and communicating God goes beyond the surface meaning of the stories about him—the Creator of all things, C.S. Lewis adopts his communication skills to impart to his readers to understand better God and the worldview of the Christian philosophical perspectives (Beebe, 2020, para. 9).

Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) Personal Influence theory was selected for this study. The theory is based on a 1940s study on the social influence that states that media, such as the print, effects are indirectly established through the personal influence of opinion leaders (McQuail, 2010; Livingstone, 2006; Lang and Lang, 2006; Blumler, and Katz, 1974). Most people receive much of the information at their disposal through opinion leaders. These leaders who access the media share the information they acquire with their followers. Thus, followers are influenced by second-hand media information (Oueslati et al. 2020, p.). In line with this assertion, it sufficed to say that C.S. Lewis was an opinion leader of his time. In our current realities, it could be said that his works still reflect his influence in creating a more profound knowledge path about God, life, morality, and Christian philosophical perspectives. However, in reconsidering this assertion today, the question that comes to mind is how influential C.S. Lewis' works are on the present generation—the millennials who are now gravely influenced by Enlightenment philosophies and worldviews (MacKenzie Jr. & Scherer, 2019; Travis & Tommy, 2015).

Notwithstanding a series of questions that could emerge consistent with this question, in communicating his ideas, Heck (2007, p. 5) submitted that "He chose to use the common language to communicate truth. "My task was therefore simply that of a translator, one turning Christian doctrine, or what he believed to be such, into the vernacular, into language that unscholarly people would attend to and could understand." In other words, as an opinion leader, C.S. Lewis engaged the written communication medium to disseminate his views—arguments, propositions, and assertions, using simple language that anyone, even in our present realities, can understand. This submission explains the relevance of the Personal Influence theory to this study. He influences his readers through the writing medium. It is interesting to note that academic institutions—colleges/universities, theological institutions in the United Kingdom, the United States, and some other countries have adopted C.S. Lewis' books as teaching materials. Wherever apologetics are

discussed, his name and works continue to ring an intellectual bell. They help to shape communicators' influence and apologetics studies, especially in academic and theological settings.

Cluster Criticism

Critics use cluster analysis as a method of rhetorical criticism. It helps evaluate the perspectives and worldviews of a person communicating an idea, such as C.S. Lewis. Through cluster, an audience can learn and understand authors' thoughts or arguments more based on how they cluster key terms and symbols with other words or symbols around the key terms (Foss, 2018; Schrader, 2016). A cluster is a collection of similar words, phrases, variables, or objects that intensify meaning to cause readers, viewers, listeners, or observers to take a particular action relating to the originator's intent. A cluster analysis usually comprises steps like having similar objects of interest according to the selected variables determined by proximity measures, having similar objects sorted into groups based on standards, and using specific clustering methods (Milligan (1996). Consistent with these thoughts, it is evident that rhetors, like any other media or communication professional, use key terms to induce specific thoughts to increase their followers' understanding of the message they try to pass across. Their overall communication intent is to change their mindsets or stereotypes and cause them to take specific action(s).

Whenever key terms are used, clusters are also found around them. This process intensifies the rhetors' arguments, assumptions, and propositions (Foss, 2018, p. 63). Since we are all created to combine symbols, make meaning from them, and disseminate meaningful information whenever we want, we must do these creatively and effectively. The ability to develop or create symbols and use them is known as rhetoric. According to Burke 1950 (cited in Foss, 2018, p. 61), "Rhetoric is the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents." It is pertinent to note that the clusters around key terms used by a rhetor can reveal their meaning and purpose for the key terms in the literature, such as *Mere Christianity*, speeches, and adverts. In other words, communicators use the key term to communicate ideas and reinforce a certain mood, attitude, and emotion in others. Therefore, the need to identify, investigate, and chart the key terms used to create the moods, meanings, and emotions by C.S. Lewis in his works using *Mere Christianity* as a case becomes inevitable. It is consistent with Burke's assertion (cited in Foss, 2108, p. 65) that "In cluster criticism, the meanings that key symbols have for a rhetor are discovered by charting the symbols that cluster around those key symbols in an artifact." Several key terms were identified in *Mere Christianity*. This study was delimited by selecting key terms, such as God, Christianity/Christians, Law, and Humans, because they were the book's most frequently used key terms.

METHOD

The cluster criticism method was adopted for this study to ascertain how rhetorical symbols influenced readers' perception of C.S. Lewis' thoughts or arguments in *Mere Christianity*. It was

adopted because it requires a researcher to look for the intensity or frequency of terms that reflect a rhetor's intentions (Burke, cited in Foss, 2018, p. 74). Further, Foss (2018, p. 65) explained that after one has identified the key terms in the artifact (such as *Mere Christianity*), they will have to chart the terms that cluster around those key terms" [emphasis inserted]. Using C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, the key terms and the clusters around the key terms were selected and charted. C.S. Lewis adopts various symbols in communicating his intentions to influence others—to get readers to understand and embrace his propositions. Thus, he used multiple symbols to express his ideas and reinforce a certain mood, attitude, emotion, and others (Foss, 2018, p. 63). The key symbols identified in *Mere Christianity* are God, Christianity, Faith, Law, Human, Hope, Morality, Religion, Church, Reason, Salvation, and Life. However, God, Christianity, Law, and Humans were purposively selected for analysis. They appeared more and reflected this study's intent—to reveal how C.S. Lewis tried to capture his audiences' attention to his arguments by accentuating God and the Christian worldview through *Mere Christianity*. The selected key terms and clusters are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Selected Key Terms (Symbols) and Clusters Around the Key Terms in C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*

S/No.	Key Terms	Appearances	Clusters
1	God	428	"The Rival Concept of God," "The Three-Personal God," "one God," "God keeps no one waiting," "one God," "God of ...Christianity," "God is a God who can forgive," and "God keeps no one waiting," "God's law," "God of Christian theology," "God is good," "God is the only comfort," "Christian idea of God," "God is separate," "God's grace," "God in Heaven," "idea of God," "the real ultimate God," "outside God, apart from God," and others.
2	Christianity	111	" <i>Mere Christianity</i> ," "Case for Christianity," "Common Christianity." "Common doctrines of Christianity," "Christian behavior," "became a Christian," "the Christian fold," and, "said enough about Faith," "good faith," "what Christians call Faith," "the word of Faith," "be the faith and reason," "Christian," and "Faith" and others.
3	Human	134	"The Law of Human Nature," "to his Human nature," "Human idea," "ordinary human beings," "human invention," "human convention," "human race," "human vermin," "human behavior," "human greed and trickery and exploitation," "human fleet," "human effort," "human point of view," "human history," "human machine," "human teacher," "human life," "human form," "human arts and sciences," among several others.
4	Law	108	"The Law of Human Nature," "The Reality of Law," "the Laws of nature," "governed by law," "intellect," "God's law," "spiritual law," "moral law," "Natural law of behavior," "the law of charity," "the laws of chemistry," "biological laws," "law of gravitation," "Law pressing on us," "Power behind the law," "law of descent behavior," "Christian law," "divorce laws," etc.

The samples show some selected key terms/symbols, the number of appearances, and the clusters that surround them in C.S. Lewis' Mere Christianity.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the samples selected for this study, they showed that C.S. Lewis' use of key terms to communicate his ideas helped readers understand the central focus of his argument and the proposition of his views or opinions in *Mere Christianity*. Four essential key terms, among others, and the clusters around them as used in the book were selected. These are God, Christianity, humans, and Law. Since this study is not quantitative, it will not discuss or measure the use of the key terms based on percentages. However, the analysis shall focus on intensity in the theme of the key terms.

God

C.S. Lewis mentioned God four hundred and twenty-eight (428) times throughout the book. It showed the intensity of his motive to introduce or re-introduce God to his readers. When a word or concept is repeated, it shows that its user wants the audience to pay special attention to it (Hassan & Barber, 2021). Conversely, it could serve as a reminder to an audience—reader, listener, or viewer. Therefore, C.S. Lewis' mention of God and the clusters around the name such as "The Three-Personal God," "one God," "God of ...Christianity," "God is a God who can forgive," and "God keeps no one waiting," among several other mentions showed his deliberate intention to communicate the idea of God—the Christian God, what he stood for, and his perception of his creatures. For example, in Part II (pp. 35-60), he discussed "What Christians Believe: The Rival Conceptions of God. Here, he used the key term—God, and asserted, "...God is quite definitely "good" or "righteous," a God who takes sides, who loves love and hates hatred, who wants us to behave in one way and not in another" (p. 36). C.S. Lewis used God as a key term. He used the clusters around the name to intensify who God is and to reveal His character further. He intended his readers to understand God better and how He wants human beings to behave. In summary, it showed Lewis' intent to influence his readers' actions to pay more attention to God and to gain a deeper understanding of His expectations from them—His creatures (see Isaiah 43:21).

Christianity

Christianity is another key term selected in this study. It was mentioned one hundred and eleven (111) times throughout the book. Christianity cannot be discussed independently of the term Christian, which was mentioned eighty-eight (88) times, and faith, which was mentioned thirty-eight (38) times. So, the terms are discussed together. Interestingly, C.S. Lewis had an entire book published in England under Broadcast Talks' title *Christian Behavior* (1943). There is no doubt that C.S. Lewis was a Christian convert who, based on his knowledge and experience of other religions or atheism (p. 35), came to understand the differences between what Christianity and the Christian faith stand for as against what other religions or beliefs stand for. In his objective sense, he advised Christians thus, "If you are a Christian, you are free to think that all these religions, even the queerest ones, contain at least some hint of the truth" (p. 24). C.S. Lewis' interest in

revealing what Christianity is, is seen in how he continued to emphasize his views on the concept throughout the book's pages. Some of the clusters found around the word — "Christianity" are "*Mere Christianity*," "Case for Christianity," "Common Christianity," "Common doctrines of Christianity," "Christian behavior," "became a Christian," "the Christian fold," "said enough about Faith," "good faith," "what Christians call Faith," "the word of Faith," "be the faith and reason," "Christian," and "Faith" respectively.

It suggests that C.S. Lewis made a case for Christianity under a severe attack when he wrote *Mere Christianity* (p. 26). He effectively used the radio (BBC) as a medium to become the mouthpiece for Christianity and its philosophical perspectives. In communicating the ideology of Christianity, he asserted that "...Christianity simply does not make sense until you have faced the sort of facts I have been describing. Christianity tells people to repent and promises them forgiveness" (p. 31). It also points to how Lewis' action—using his rhetorical prowess to influence his audiences is consistent with Katz and Lazarsfeld's Personal Influence theory proposition. It will be submitted that the clusters found around the term Christianity gave it a more profound meaning. They helped the reading public relate more to what C.S. Lewis intended to achieve with his arguments and propositions—belief in God, Jesus Christ his son, having faith, and more to it, embracing peaceful coexistence in society. For example, he asserted, "Human beings, after all, have some sense; they see that you cannot have real safety or happiness except in a society where everyone plays fair, and it is because they see this that they try to behave decently" (pp. 17-18). It relates to his rhetoric about knowing God and behaving in ways that are pleasing to Him—loving everyone around (see Mark 12:31).

Human

Since C.S. Lewis's efforts in *Mere Christianity* addressed human beings as intellects (p. 17), they were addressed based on their nature and how they should fulfill God's divine ordinance through the character and teachings of his son Jesus Christ. Lewis mentioned "Human" one hundred and thirty-four (134) times throughout the book. He understood that humans are subjected to various laws of nature, such as moral law/law of right and wrong, the rule of decent behavior, the law of gravity, and the natural law. But notwithstanding, he communicated to his audiences' intellects through *Mere Christianity* and redirected their perceptions toward believing his arguments about the Creator—God and His relationship with every human being. Some of the clusters identified around the key term— "Human" include "to his Human nature," "Human idea," "ordinary human beings," in addition to "intellect" and "law," to mention a few. Here, his intention was not to take their attention away from their nature. He understood that people believe in different gods (pp. 23-25), but he wanted his audience to understand the place of the Christian God in their lives and that Jesus Christ is His Only Son (pp. viii, 6, 76). He used the term and the clusters to draw readers' attention to the nature of their environment—people and society and to help them relate with them better by God's divine ordinance.

Law

Throughout the book, C.S. Lewis mentions the word, law, one hundred and eight (108) times. It was also noted that the term law served as a cluster to specific selected key terms such as God. However, “law” was selected as a key term because Lewis often accentuated it to induce a reaction in his audiences. For instance, he noted that “Now we cannot, in that sense, discover our failure to keep God's law except by trying our very hardest (and then failing) (p. 72).” When God decided to relate with His people—the Israelites, He made sure that laws were passed to them. It was necessary because He wanted them to live according to His principle and will. The Israelites needed to be guided to forestall positive character, peaceful coexistence, and the people’s enjoyment (see John 15:10; Deuteronomy 11:13–15; 28:1–14; Leviticus 18:4). In summary, Lewis argued that “But if treaties do not matter, and if there is no such thing as Right and Wrong— in other words if there is no Law of Nature—what is the difference between a fair treaty and an unfair one?” (p. 12). Therefore, accentuating “law in *Mere Christianity* showed Lewis’ understanding of how chaotic our world will be without laws (God’s or men’s). Imagine our society with laws.

Some of the clusters among several others that were identified around the key term— "Law" includes “God’s law,” "The Law of Human Nature," "The Reality of Law," and "governed by law." Lewis used the clusters to strengthen his arguments and explanations about the law's benefits to people and society and why it is pertinent for them to relate to it. Thus, aside from God’s law, natural and man-made laws were stressed in humans' experiences with Moral Law, drawing attention to how people obey or disobey the laws. His intention here is to communicate how humans can successfully live together, embracing equity, inclusion, fairness, and diversity even when they may have different instincts about developments, traditions, and cultures. To C.S. Lewis, Moral Law gives us direction (p. 10).

The themes identified in C.S. Lewis' writing in *Mere Christianity* revealed the proposition of the personal influence theory, which is the background of this study. He consciously used the key terms and introduced clusters around them to induce certain moods, attitudes, and emotions to influence readers. Generally, he wanted every reader to understand his standpoint about God, Christianity/Christian faith, and the law. He explained how people could live together, obeying the laws that guide and shape society. Lewis also accentuated reasons for people’s ultimate obedience to God through their relationships with His only Son, Jesus Christ, whom he believed is a moral teacher (pp. 6, 76).

CONCLUSION

This study examined C.S. Lewis' rhetorical symbols—key terms used in communicating his views about God, Christianity, faith, morality, reason, life, and others, and the clusters around the key terms. Burke (cited in Foss, 2018, p. 83) argued that rhetoric functions to name or define situations. In the case of C.S. Lewis, in *Mere Christianity*, he engaged his rhetorical skills to elaborate on his

knowledge, opinions, and the lesson his audiences would learn from his arguments and propositions in *Mere Christianity*.

The rhetorical criticism approach helped explore how C.S. Lewis used the key terms and the clusters to induce actions and reinforce a certain kind of mood, attitude, and emotion in his audience—readers in this case. The analyses showed that C.S. Lewis repeatedly used the key terms and the clusters around the key terms to draw readers' attention to the message he is “preaching” using his book—*Mere Christianity* as a medium. The primary purpose was to influence them, causing them to respect the place of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, in society, which goes beyond religion, culture, or tradition. Thus, C.S. Lewis deliberately wrote to influence his readers' perception of the book's subject matter—Christianity, the truths he discovered about God, and His intentions for humanity, after his conversion to Christianity as with Prophet Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 15:19). Lewis thoughts are consistent with the numerous arguments of the authors cited in this study (for example, Bassham, 2015; Cartledge, 2016; Heck, 2007; Joeckel, 2013; Leith, 2013; Shrock, 2017) and Katz and Lazarsfeld's Personal Influence theory.

C.S. Lewis' influence is seen in the authors/writers who eulogized his works. They asserted that Lewis' literary works had remained pieces that critics, writers, researchers, and scholars still study or discuss to date. These thoughts reveal that C.S. Lewis had tremendously added to the scope of communication studies and shaped our understanding of communication theories, such as Katz and Lazarsfeld's Personal Influence theory.

Limitations and Suggestions

This study does not lack limitations. If more of C.S. Lewis' works had been investigated, it is hopeful that they would have helped the researcher generate more key terms and clusters for analyses. It would have hopefully resulted in achieving more findings. Despite the limitations, the data generated and analyzed were considered sufficient for this study based on its primary purpose and scope. The study contributes to researchers' continual investigations and discussions of Clive Staples Lewis' works. Therefore, this researcher will suggest that further studies should investigate more than one of C.S. Lewis's works. It also recommends that future researchers may consider a comparative analysis of Lewis and other apologetics works with related themes. Hopefully, through such studies, past and present apologetics' tenacious voices may be further accentuated, drawing more converts to the knowledge of the truth about God, Christianity, faith, and Christian worldviews.

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