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**Christian Messages in *The Lion, the
Witch and the Wardrobe***

This essay discusses the presence of Christian messages in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (hereafter referred to as *The Lion*). It demonstrates that although *The Lion*, carries with Christian messages and values, the messages have been successfully conveyed by C.S. Lewis in a more palatable and accessible way to the child readers. Focusing on Aslan, the lion as a Christ-like figure, the White Witch as a satanic character, and Mr. Tumnus, the Faun, a charming, talking animal with a strong personality, the essay explores the Christian messages of self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption in *The Lion*.

Self-sacrifice means an offering of self-interests or life given to God. In the Old Testament God commanded the people to pay for their sins by sacrificing the blood of cattle, lambs, goats, doves or pigeons. “These sacrifices were [are] pictures of Jesus’ coming as a once-for-all sacrifice for sinners” (*The Holy Bible*, 722).¹ This essay will focus on the self-sacrifice of talking animals: Aslan, the lion, and Mr. Tumnus, the faun, showing that the one not capable of sacrificing is the opposite of good, the White Witch. Resurrection refers to “the act of coming back to life after being dead” (*The Holy Bible*, 722). In *The Lion*, the resurrection occurs both at a living creature – Aslan and in a place – Narnia, but not at the White Witch. Redemption means to “free from evil by paying a price” (*The Holy Bible*, 722). This essay will also shed light on the redemption of Edmund through Aslan, while the White Witch is incapable of redeeming others and being redeemed. In *The Lion*, the Christian messages of self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption are demonstrated by the result that good triumphs over evil.

According to Luken, “The high fantasy genre is primarily characterized by its focus on the conflict between good and evil. If it is successful, it captures our belief” (Lukens, 22). *The Lion*, as a high fantasy, tries to capture readers’ belief in a palatable way. As in good high fantasy stories, this story demonstrates that Aslan, the Pevensies children and his followers, i.e. the representatives of good, prevail over evil, as represented by the White Witch; Lewis

manages to input Christian messages into *The Lion* with its entertaining elements of talking animals and child heroes and heroines, and even some comic descriptions of the evil White Witch's behaviors, to expose the battle between good and evil to the child readers who read Christian messages of self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption in a palatable and accessible way.

In this novel, characters as Aslan – the lion, Mr. Tumnus – the Faun, even the White Witch – the evil queen, are depicted in a palatable and accessible fashion. Aslan and Mr. Tumnus are very attractive and acceptable since they are talking animals. “Children response with delight to fantasies – particularly stories about animals who acts like humans” (Nodelman, 72). Mr. Tumnus, as a talking faun makes the children responding with pleasure. The first appearance of Mr. Tumnus is quite amusing and attractive. “What with the parcels and the snow it looked [looks] just as if he had [has] been doing his Christmas shopping” (Lewis, 7). Children will find the situation such an entertainment when they thinking about a goat-like Faun rather than a housewife, a human being doing their Christmas shopping. Moreover, the goat like animal even opens his mouth and exclaims when he sees Lucy at his very first sight, “Goodness gracious me” (Lewis, 7). He is also startled by his very first sight of Lucy; he even “dropped [drops] all his parcels” (Lewis, 7) and “was [is] so busy picking up its parcels” (Lewis, 11) that he has no time to reply to Lucy when Lucy greeting him. When the faun finishes picking up his parcels, he even makes Lucy a little bow. It is similar with the situation that an English gentleman bows down to greet a lady to show his politeness and gentility, but here the gentleman has been replaced by a talking faun, hence a pleasure of reading has been produced spontaneously.

However this is one of the most mischievous things Lewis does in this novel. The Christian messages are not indoctrinated by the biblical characters like Jesus, Judas, or Jesus' disciples, etc., but are indoctrinated mischievously by talking animals and child heroes and

heroines. “Becoming absorbed in the atmosphere of the Narnian world – with its fascinating mixture of paradise and imperfection, animal and human, adult and childlike [qualities] – being enabled to live imaginatively in that world for as long as the book lasts, is one of the powerful appeals of Lewis’ stories” (*Imagination and the Arts in C.S. Lewis*, 61).² The appeal of *The Lion* comes from the fact that it is a fascinating story happens between animal and human or even non-human mythological figures like centaurs, minotaur, unicorns, satyrs, giants which make the child readers being absorbed in the imaginative world so that the Christian messages have been delivered accessibly and palatably. Even Lewis himself admits that actually a serious of his Narnia books are about Christ (*On Stories*, 1982), while the children receive these Christian messages effectively and unconsciously as the messages are hiding under the acting of talking animals with Lewis’ using of strategies. “A key strategy in the book [*The Lion*] is use of what reader-response critics call ‘gaps’.³ *The Lion* uses them very effectively” (*Imagination*, 45). When Mr. Beaver first mentions the word “Aslan”, a very curious thing happens: none of the children know who Aslan is, but the moment the Beaver mentions Aslan, each one feels something jump in their soul.

Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer. (Lewis, 74)

Although Aslan is the one of the most crucial characters in *The Lion*, his name is not mentioned until in Chapter 7. Yet even in this chapter, Lewis does answer, neither to the Pevensie children nor to the child readers: who is Aslan? What is Aslan going to do with the children or with Narnia? Hence a mysterious atmosphere, consequently, has been created. “The anticipation and eventual filling of that gap is one of the great pleasures of reading the story” (*Imagination*, 47). With the development of the plot the child readers might have the same feelings with the Pevensie children who become more inquisitive and curious about Aslan, the unknown and mysterious figure. Besides, the lingering doubts of why does Edmund feel “mysterious horror” (Lewis, 74), Peter feel “brave and adventurous” and Lucy

get the different feeling of “wake up in the morning” (Lewis, 74) and “realize the beginning of summer” (Lewis, 74) will drive the readers crave to read the novel and the mysteriousness of Aslan is heightened and makes their reading more palatable. Several days later, the Pevensie children ask the Beaver again who Aslan is.

“Is- is he a man?” asked Lucy.
“Aslan a man!” said Mr. Beaver sternly. “Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor- beyond- the - Sea. Don’t you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion – the Lion, the great Lion” (Lewis, 86).

Usually the King of somewhere or the son of some Emperor should be a human. Lucy just thinks things in the normal way, yet both out of her and readers’ expectation, Aslan, who is said to be a powerful and almost omnipotent king, turns out to be an animal – “Aslan is a lion – the Lion, the great Lion”(Lewis, 86). Here, Lewis uses the capitalized word “Lion” to emphasize the very reality that the King is a Lion rather than a man. The gap of the mysteriousness of Aslan has been filled. This unexpected reality takes children into a comic situation which is interesting and palatable.

Furthermore, even the satanic White Witch is described in a comic tone. According to Nodelman, “One of the pleasures of reading literature is the pleasure of having our emotions evoked: laughing at a comic situation [...]” (Nodelman, 20). The Witch appears as a very different person sitting on a sledge with bells driving by reindeers, usually, with which Santa Claus drives. Generally speaking, a Queen will sit on a luxurious carriage or ride on a handsome horse rather than on a sledge driven by a fat three-foot high dwarf. Beautiful Queen in white sitting with a fat and short dwarf on a sledge driven by reindeers composes quite a palatable scene of fairy tale.

She also was covered in white fur up to her throat and held a long straight golden wand in her right hand and wore a golden crown on her head. Her face was white-not merely pale, but white like snow or paper or icing-sugar, except for her very red mouth. It was a beautiful face in other respects, but proud and cold and stern. The sledge was a fine sight as it came sweeping toward Edmund with the bells jingling and the dwarf cracking his whip and the snow flying up on each side of it. (Lewis, 33-34)

The White Witch, as an evil and satanic character in *The Lion*, appears as a beautiful Queen.

The first time she appears is not Gothic or horrible, but even with an air of romance. In the

western world, white nearly always has positive connotations. It stands for innocence, cleanliness, purity and chastity and it also represents integrity, fidelity or faithfulness.⁴ The White Witch, who is supposed to be the most evil character in the novel, has a white face – “not merely pale, but white like snow” (Lewis, 33). The adjective “white” is used for four times and thus has been emphasized in the description of the White Witch’s first appear. The White Witch, with a pure and beautiful countenance which reminds reader of innocence, purity, and integrity turns out to be the most malicious evil in Narnia. This strong contrast between the good of “white” and the evil nature of the Witch, though ironic, startles the child readers and brings them an exciting reading experience.

Besides, surprisingly, the White Witch transports through Narnia neither with any ugly monster, nor with any huge weird mechanic vehicle, but with an enjoyable sledge; this is “a fine sight as it came sweeping toward Edmund with the bells jingling” (Lewis, 33). Usually a jingling sledge will remind children of Father Christmas, who impresses the children with a generous present giver in the world, but here Lewis uses this nice sledge as a vehicle for the evil White Witch to challenge the reader’s experience, bringing the children “the pleasure of newness – of experiencing startlingly different kinds of stories” (Nodelman, 21). Here the pleasure of newness means the pleasure of experiencing something readers did not previously know. As a queen, the evil Witch’s way of driving belongs to the pleasure of newness which the readers has never experienced and expected before, enabling the reading to be pleasant and amusing.

When the White Witch meets Edmund for the first time, she asks him, “But what are you? [...] Are you a great overgrown dwarf that has cut off its beard” (Lewis, 35). Here, obviously, “who”, a personal pronoun has been replaced by the possessive pronoun “what”. Edmund is a human but not a thing; hence, the question should go like this: “Who are you”. As a reader, it is not hard to tell that Edmund is a human being, while unexpectedly, as a so-called “Queen”

in Narnia, the Witch fails temporarily, at least at first sight, to distinguish Edmund from the dwarf. Actually, the question of “What are you?” embraces deep meanings. On the one hand, readers can tell from the question that the White Witch is extremely arrogant and conceited that she feels contempt for every creature and takes herself as the superior one in Narnia. On the other hand, the situation becomes very comic and amusing when the readers learn that the conceited Queen can not even recognize a human being and she takes Edmund as “a great overgrown dwarf that has cut off its beard” (Lewis, 36). The Witch’s ignorant but imaginative regarding of a human boy as a beardless and overgrown dwarf brings the readers a palatable reading experience.

Although the reading of *The Lion* brings the pleasure of newness, and the pleasure of having readers’ emotions evoked for some comic situations and characters like talking animals, it carries with crucial Christian messages of self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption. As has been mentioned above, this is one of the most mischievous strategies designed by Lewis that Christian messages have run through the novel which has been unconsciously read by child readers in a palatable way. The main characters are not theological figures but talking animals with attractive personalities and child heroes and heroines. According to Peter J. Schakel, although Lewis asserted emphatically that he did not want his stories to be read as religious allegories, he did admit to “smuggling theology” (Schackel, 25) into them. In a letter to a friend discussing *Out of the Silent Planet*, Lewis concluded, “Any amount of theology can now be smuggled into people’s minds under cover of romance without their knowing it” (Schackel, 25). Apart from Lewis himself, several critics have talked about the Myth, Christianity or theology in *The Chronicles of Narnia* (hereafter referred to as *The Chronicles*). David Clark claims, “*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* now can be seen as the Christian story in an imaginary world. It resembles the ancient myths because the ancient myths foretold Christianity” (Clark, 65). In several instances he [Lewis]

introduces difficult and problematical theological issues into *The Chronicles*. *The Lion* includes such issues that of the meaning of the truth being conveyed by the myth of the dying and returning god and the meaning of sacrifice (Schakel, 25).

As Richard Cunningham expresses, “He [Lewis] touches the nerve of religious awe on every page. He evangelizes through imagination (quoted in Higgens, 155-6). The fairy tale with talking animals can help to set before the imagination something that baffles the intellect. And then, having returned from fairyland to our own world, one will see more clearly the deeper dimensions of life. Dominique Wilson claims: combining timeless elements of fairy tale, medievalism and Christian allegory, Lewis created a fantasy world, Narnia, which rivals J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle Earth and Ursula K. Le Guin’s Earthsea (Wilson, 173).

The critics, as above mentioned, have various ways of looking at Lewis’ writing style or purpose in *The Chronicles*, on which have been commented as mythical, allegorical, didactic, or religious-related, however they have at least one thing in common, they regard *The Chronicles* as Medias for carrying with certain Christian messages. To put it another way, the commonplace that recurs in their criticism is *The Chronicles* presents certain Christian messages with fantasy, fairy tale or myth, which could also be imaginative, entertaining and palatable. Lewis has showed us some of the most important events and significant truths of the Christian messages in his fantasy series among which *The Lion* concerns the adventures, romance in the land of Narnia are convincingly real and palatable to the child reader at heart. But more crucially, in an accessible and palatable fashion, *The Lion* also conveys Christian messages of self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption through the practice of the Pevensie siblings, Aslan, Mr. Tumnus, and other talking animals. These characters are not only likeable and very human, but also symbolize different types of Christian prototypes.

Self-sacrifice

In *The Lion*, Aslan can be compared with Jesus Christ; he is a quintessential model for self-sacrifice; he pays his own life for Edmund's betrayal. Edmund, obviously, who is similar with Judas, the traitor in Bible, is a traitor who sells his soul to the White Witch because of his greed for the Turkish Delight and a golden crown in Narnia, has to suffer from the consequence of betrayal. The Deep Magic shows that Edmund's life is forfeited to the White Witch. Aslan, the Christ-like figure, wants to save Edmund from sin and death by sacrificing his own life. Therefore he makes a transaction with the evil Witch, for the Deep Magic set by the Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea. The White Witch comes to Aslan for taking Edmund's life.

“Have you forgotten the Deep Magic?” asked the Witch ...
“Tell you what is written on that very Table of Stone which stands beside us? You know the every traitor belongs to me ... “And so,” continued the Witch, “that human creature is mine. His life is forfeit to me. His blood is my property.” (Lewis, 155-6)

There is a prophecy in Narnia that when two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve sit in those four thrones in Cair Paravel, then it will be the end not only of the White Witch's reign but of her life. When the Witch declares that Edmund's life is forfeited to her because the deep magic: every traitor belongs to her and for every treachery she has the right to kill. The Witch wants to take Edmund back and to slay him for a very good reason – the Deep Magic so that the prophecy could not come true. Although Edmund betrays his siblings and the good side temporarily, Aslan forgives and redeems him. It is strongly biblical related, as Bible describes Jesus choosing to go up to Jerusalem, knowing the fate of death that awaits him there. The treachery of Edmund forces Aslan to make the same decision of giving up his life.

Besides, when the Witch threatens to take away Edmund's life, Aslan predicts that his self-sacrifice and he acts like Jesus who does not want any followers to know owing to he is afraid that they will stop him from dying. Aslan has already made the decision to die for Edmund, and his sin. That is why he tells every one to “Fall [fall] back, all of you”, “and I will talk to the Witch alone” (Lewis, 157) when the Witch comes to him to make the transaction. After the stern and earnest talk between Aslan and the Witch, Aslan declares that he has settled the matter and the Witch has renounced the claim on Edmund's life, however,

he does not even mention any other details of the talk, not to mention what is the price for taking back Edmund's life to the siblings and his followers. Aslan is so selfless and he tries to keep his secret of self-sacrifice. After they make the deal for taking Aslan's life rather than Edmund's, the Witch is too excited to accept the fact that Aslan will die for Edmund; she "was just turning away with a look of fierce joy" (Lewis, 158), and she asks Aslan uneasily whether he will keep his promise or not.

"Haa-a-arrh!" roared Aslan, half rising from his throne; and his great mouth opened wider and wider and the roar grew louder and louder, and the Witch, after staring for a moment with her lips wide apart, picked up her skirts and fairly ran for her life. (Lewis, 158)

Aslan does not answer the Witch directly but roars at her. Here, the roaring of Aslan casts light both on his desperate mood for incoming death and the fact that he will always be revered as a King of the woods. This fact will never be changed and his dignity can never be challenged even if he is going to be persecuted according to the transaction with the satanic Witch. Just as Mr. Beaver says, "He's wild, you know. Not like a tame Lion" (Lewis, 200), when the Witch stares him for a while, she can not bear to stare for any longer because Aslan's "great mouth opened wider and wider and the roar grew louder and louder" (Lewis, 158). It is a very awe-inspiring and unbearable situation for the Witch to keep calm and composure. Although she pretends to be not scared because she has staring Aslan for a moment, she stares with her lips wide apart and "picked up her skirts and fairly ran for her life" (Lewis, 158). The Witch's withdrawal can be interpreted into the message that when the Witch, the evil confronts Aslan, the good, the former will feel instinctively scary and be frightened away.

In the Bible, Jesus firstly observes the last supper with his disciples and then goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Correspondingly, *The Lion* also includes a final supper: "After a meal, which was taken in the open air on the hill-top, they were [...]" (Lewis, 159); In the Bible, Jesus prays during the meal, although there is no detailed depiction about the meal and Aslan's praying, Lewis stresses the sense of impending doom of Aslan just as in the Bible,

in which the descriptions of Crucifixion occupies large space. Furthermore, though Aslan does not tell the girls his sacrifice, at the night of his death, Susan and Lucy are unable to sleep and they get up to check on Aslan; then they see Aslan who is “looked somehow different from the Aslan they knew. His tail and his head hung low and he walked slowly as if he were very, very tired” (Lewis, 163). Aslan’s gloomy mood has not been discovered by Peter, Edmund or any other male followers, but the girls have observed it and accompanied him to the Stone Table, in which the girls witness Aslan’s execution. As the Bible recounts, the women will become witnesses of the suffering and death; in *The Lion*, Lucy and Susan are the female witnesses of Aslan’s self-sacrifice and death.

Aslan goes to the Stone Table to be persecuted. This scene is similar with the scene of Jesus Christ’s Crucifixion. As Christ died for sinful humanity, Aslan chooses to die for sinful Edmund. When the Witch’s malignant followers first see the great lion pacing toward them, their dismay of howl and gibber go up and for a moment even the Witch herself seems to be struck with fear (Lewis, 166). It demonstrates that it is doomed that evil will be thrown into fear when it meets good in *The Lion* and in most of children’s literature. However, the situation that “Then [then] she (the White Witch) recovered [recovers] herself and gave [gives] a wild, fierce laugh” (Lewis, 166) demonstrates that the pact of Deep Magic soon enables the Witch to regain her composure; the Witch’s emotion changes immediately from fear to fierce ecstasy.

“The fool!” she cried. “The fool has come. Bind him fast.”...
They rolled the huge Lion over on his back and tied all his four paws together, shouting and cheering as if they had done something brave ...But he[Aslan] made no noise, even when the enemies straining and tugging, pulled the cords so tight that they cut into his flesh. (Lewis, 166)

Here the situation that Witch calls Aslan “the fool” (Lewis, 166) twice, and the rabble’s “shouting” and “cheering” shows that Aslan has been cruelly mocked not only by the Witch but also her evil followers. Besides, the six verbs of “roll”, “tie”, “strain”, “tug”, “pull”, “cut” show that Aslan has been mercilessly tortured during the sacrificial execution. Although

Aslan has been rolled so tightly that “the robes cut into his flesh” (Lewis, 166), he neither resists nor even tries to roar or to curse. Albeit with the fact that “one of those paws could have been the death of them all”, but “He made no noise” (Lewis, 166); he has been tied up, muzzled, shaved, spat on, and battered by a jeering crowd but he still keeps silent. The same situation happens in the Bible, “Jesus remains silent before Pilate” (The Holy Bible, Matt 27: 14). For one thing, it is Aslan’s own choice to sacrifice himself; he has a well-known knowledge about his imminent situation that he will be cruelly treated and dead, so there is no need for him to resist. For another thing, he is like Jesus, he has the faith that let himself pay for the sinful creatures and forgive them. He has accepted the fate and has to respect the law of Narnia: the Deep Magic. It is ludicrous for the malignant followers of the Witch think themselves “brave”, actually, it is a faked-brave for those prigs. Besides, when the Witch watches Aslan’s coming for death, she bursts out a “wild and fierce laugh (Lewis, 166)” and calls the reverend Aslan as “The fool” (Lewis, 166) twice. The laugh can be seen as a temporary triumph of the Witch, but it can not be read as that good has been transcended by evil because the resurrection which comes later will reverse the situation and makes the Witch’s previous wild and fierce laugh looks rather foolish and ironic.

The moment Aslan is killed by the Witch, he “looked[s] up in the sky, still quiet, neither angry nor afraid, but a little sad” (Lewis, 170). Similarly, Christ’s soul is “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (The Holy Bible, Matthew 26:38). He has also suffered humiliations similar to those suffered by Aslan. They [The governor’s soldiers] stripped him [Jesus] and put a scarlet robe on him, [...] and mocked him (The Holy Bible, Matthew: 27:51). Just as Jesus has been tied, striped, mocked, the Christ-like figure Aslan has been shaved, tied and mocked. Jesus and Aslan are mocked and maltreated by the rabble, both of them keep silent and they are sorrowful toward the execution and. While Jesus is sad for the sinful human, and the sadness of Aslan could be “sadness at the existence of evil in Narnia, not a

feeling for himself” (Colbert, 38). Besides, Aslan knows not only well of the Deep Magic but also the Deeper Magic which will save him from death.

Apart from Aslan, Mr. Tumnus, the Faun, also has sacrificed himself. Originally he is forced to be taken service under the White Witch, but after his encounter with Lucy, the daughter of Eve, he regrets and repents deeply. At the beginning, when he knows Lucy is the daughter of Eve, he invites Lucy and pretends to be friendly with her; he wants to make Lucy asleep and to hand Lucy over to the Witch. But after a pleasure communication with Lucy, he changes his mind, dropping remorseful tears in front of Lucy.

“The Faun’s brown eyes had filled with tears and then the tears began trickling down its cheeks, and soon they were running off the end of its nose; and at last it covered its face with its hands and began to howl.” (Lewis, 18)

He confesses to Lucy that he has orders from the White Witch that if ever he sees a Son of Adam or a Daughter of Eve in the wood he is to catch them and to hand them over to her. As Lucy is the first human he meets, it behooves to him to catch Lucy and to hand her over to his master - the Witch. But his humanity and conscience call him back; he cries so fiercely, the tears falls from the situation of “being filled with tears”, “trickling down” to “running off” (Lewis, 18). The three verbs – “fill”, “trickle”, and “run” describe three different degrees of the crying, and they have succeeded in expressing the Faun’s increasing repentance. He feels ashamed of his previous intention on account of his covering of his face. The Faun is very humane and merciful that he finally decides to release her and confesses her the truth, even if he knows that the White Witch is sure to find out he has released Lucy, and she will have his tail cut off, horns sawn off, beard plucked out, “And if she is extra and specially angry she will turn me [he] into stone” (Lewis, 21). In spite of his knowing of being turned into stone, he still decides not to hand Lucy over to the Witch, but to tell her the truth and sees her off to the lamp-post safely. It is with a spirit of self-sacrifice for Mr. Tumnus to disconcert his own interests and even to put his life at risk to protect Lucy.

Even if Mr. Tumnus is a Faun and even if he once belonged to the Witch's side, he has the basic quality of humanity and Christianity: he values good and despises evil, albeit with the fact that he has to die for this humanity. He has saved Lucy, who is the youngest Pevensie children but the first one to venture into Narnia with cheerful, kind, and brave personalities. Before the appearing of Aslan, she has been considered as the protagonist in the previous seven chapters of *The Lion* and Mr. Tumnus' self-sacrifice enables Lucy to accomplish her task as a discoverer and as one of the savers – Queen Lucy the Valiant in Narnia.

Resurrection

After the death of Aslan, the witnesses Lucy and Susan are too mournful and sorrowful to see the corpse of Aslan lying on the stone. They feel cold and walk away for while, yet when they come back the gospel climax of the novel happens.

At that moment they heard from behind them a loud noise – a great cracking, deafening noise as if a giant had broken a giant's plate.... The Stone Table was broken into two pieces by a great crack that ran down it from end to end; and there was no Aslan....
(Lewis, 177)

The stone table cracks just like the curtain cracks when Jesus' crucifixion has been done. At that moment the curtain of the temple was [is] torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook [shakes] and the rocks split (The Holy Bible, Matthew 27: 52). They all have cracks and earthquakes before the revival of Aslan and Jesus, both of whom have disappeared for a moment.

Apart from the similarity of the scenes between Aslan's and Jesus' resurrection, death and resurrection of Aslan are also related with two magic: Deep Magic and Deeper Magic. Actually these two magic embody the Law in Narnia and Christian messages. The beginning chapters of the story establish the basic law in Narnia into which the Emperor put magic at the very beginning – “every traitor belongs to the Witch as her lawful prey and that for every treachery she has a right to kill” (Lewis, 156). Everyone, including the Witch and Aslan should obey the law, or else all Narnia will be “overturned and perish in fire and water”

(Lewis, 156). For the Witch, the most important thing is to keep Narnia under her dominance. While according to the old rhymes, “When Adam’s flesh and Adam’s bone sits [sit] at Cair Pavavel in throne, The [the] evil time will be over and done” (Lewis, 87). In order not to be dethroned by the four children, the Witch seduces Edmund to betray his siblings by making use of his weakness – his greed for Turkish Delight and his vanity for power. But after she finds that the battle with Aslan is to her disadvantage, she claims Edmund’s life as forfeit to her according to the Deep Magic for Edmund is guilty of treachery. Aslan acknowledges the Deep Magic and pays with his life for the Deep Magic.

In a word, Deep Magic is a rule of fair play and it deals with right and wrong in justice; it is a law that “everyone knows by nature and does not need to be taught” (*Mere Christianity*, 22). In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis wrote:

“Come on, you promised” is that the man [...] is appealing to some kind of standard of behavior which he expects the other man to know about [...] It looks, in fact, very much as if both parties has[have] in mind some kind of law or rule of fair play or decent behavior or morality or whatever you like to call it, about which they really agreed. And they have. (*Mere Christianity*, 21)

In *The Lion*, the Deep Magic is the rule/law of fair play of right and wrong. The corresponding “two parties” in *The Lion* can be found as they are Aslan and the White Witch. Both of the parties know the Deep Magic by nature, and “he [Aslan] knows the Deep Magic better than that” (Lewis, 156); the “remark” of “come on, you promised” (*Mere Christianity*, 21) can also be found when the Witch makes the deal with Aslan, and her uneasiness comes from the law that evil will be frightened by good makes her wonder about the promise – “how do I know this promise will be kept” (Lewis, 158). Aslan answers by roaring rather than by saying any word because he knows and respects the Deep Magic by nature. As the White Witch reminds Aslan of the traitor’s life is forfeit to her. If Deep Magic is disobeyed, all Narnia will be overturned and perish in fire and water (Lewis, 156). The Witch plays the role of Satan who can take traitors’ souls. As told in the gospel story of Job, God allows Satan to test people’s souls and to take those souls if the person fails. Edmund fails to pass the test, so

his life and soul belong to the satanic Witch. However, as Aslan claims:

The Witch knew the Deep Magic, [;] there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. [...] She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backward. (Lewis, 178-9)

The Deep Magic, which is unknown to the evil Witch and makes Death “start working backward” (Lewis, 179), is set by the Emperor who can transcend the rule with a Deeper Magic that allows good to triumph over evil, not as a matter of right or wrong, but simply as a matter of the Emperor's will. This is the Narnian version of Lewis' belief in God's grace – a gift of supernatural to the faithful (Colbert, 38). Aslan is the willing victim; he commits no treachery, but he is killed on the Stone Table in a traitor's stead, the death itself will start backward, i.e. the resurrection comes after Aslan's self-sacrifice.

Deeper magic has been used as a saving power for Aslan in *The Lion*, and it enables Aslan and even the whole Narnia to be resurrected. After the resurrection of Aslan, the Lord of the woods, he is indeed saved and “larger than they had [have] seen him before”, standing and shaking his mane which “had [has] apparently grown again” (Lewis, 178). Resurrection not only bestows the rebirth on Aslan but also empowers him since he has “grown again”, and later he saves not only Edmund, but the whole Narnia from winter and darkness. “He had bounded up to the stone lion and breathed on him” (Lewis, 183), then later the previous stone statue “whisked round – almost as if he had been a cat chasing its tail – and breathed also on the stone dwarf [...]” (Lewis, 183). Everywhere is coming to life. Aslan, the savior brings back the spring to Narnia again.

Instead of all that deadly white the courtyard was now a blaze of colors; [...] and instead of the deadly silence the whole place rang with the sound of happy roarings, brayings, yelpings, barkings, shouts, hurahs [hurrahs], songs and Laughter. (Lewis, 185)

Plentiful adjectives of colors “chestnut”, “indigo”, “reddy-brown”, “yellow”, “crimson”, “silver”, “green”(Lewis, 185) show that in Narnia all things regain colors instead of mere white and the winter ends. Among eight nouns of happiness – “roarings”, “brayings”, “yelpings”, “barkings”, “shouts”, “hurrahs”, “songs”, and capitalized “Laughter”(Lewis, 185),

six of them are gerunds, showing the rebirth of stone statues and their ecstasy of the resurrection has been showed fiercely and dynamically. Both of the adjectives of colors and the gerunds of cheering /happiness denote that Aslan's self-sacrifice and the resurrection have brought back the green, alive and vivid Narnia. When two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve approaching the castle of Cair Paravel, there are "the sands with rocks and little pools of salt water, and seaweed, and the smell of the sea and long miles of bluish-green waves breaking for ever and ever on the beach" (Lewis, 198). They can even hear the sound of seagulls which can symbolize the vividness, and rebirth of both Aslan and the whole Narnia.

In addition, on the Witch's way to the catching up with the siblings, "every moment the patches of green grew bigger and the patches of snow grew smaller" (Lewis, 131). It shows that spring of Narnia is approaching, and the strength between good and evil is changing. Good is becoming stronger and stronger, while evil is getting weaker and weaker. "The patches of green" (Lewis, 131) which symbolizes good "grew [grows] bigger", while "the patches of snow" which symbolizes evil "grew smaller". Here the words "green" and "snow", "bigger" and "smaller" are two pairs of opposites which demonstrate the resurrection of Narnia, not only the place but also the whole Narnia including the lives in Narnia: the revival of singing birds, buzzing bees, green grasses, dancing trees, blooming spring flowers. Not only the plants, animals or any other creature, but also the sunlight becomes "delicious" (Lewis, 131) and the colours of mist changes from pale white to glaring gold.

In Chapter 11 – Aslan is Nearer, the White Witch is getting more and more impatient and irritable as she knows the very fact that Aslan is approaching. As a leader of the evil, her fear of the approaching of Aslan, the good, is growing. She wants to catch up with the siblings before their encounter with Aslan at the Stone Table to prevent her evil dominance in Narnia from dethroning. Her uneasiness is getting stronger and stronger. On her way to the intercept, she keeps saying "F[f]aster, faster" (Lewis, 131, 132) for twice. The repeated two "faster"

show that she is losing her patience and confidence. Ironically, the faster she wants the slower the sledge moves. “The sledge jerked [jerks], and skidded [skids] and kept [keeps] on jolting as if it had [has] struck against stones. And however the dwarf whipped [whips] the poor reindeer the sledge went [goes] slower and slower” (Lewis, 128). Here the three verbs “jerk”, “skid”, “jolt” demonstrate dynamically that the toughness and facetiousness of her driving on the sledge when the snow is melting. When the dwarf, her follower, claims that they shall never overtake the siblings walking, the Witch replies, “Are you my councillor or my slave?” (Lewis, 130). It shows that the approaching of resurrection of Narnia traps the evil Witch into a tougher situation which makes her lose her temper, patience and arrogance as a “Queen” step by step; she even loses her temper to her follower.

As they give up on driving with sledge, and walk on the path, there are “more wonderful things happening” (Lewis, 131); the ground is “covered in all direction with little yellow flowers – celandines” (Lewis, 131); “T[t]he noise of water grew [grows] louder” (Lewis, 131); the snowdrops, according to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, which is an European plant with a small white flower which appears in early spring “(*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1886)”, are growing; “there was [is] chattering and chirruping in every direction [...] the whole wood was [is] ringing with birds’ music” (Lewis, 132). It is wonderful because the signs of spring appear gradually. Booming spring flowers, the running water, chirruping birds compose of the wonderful scenery of spring. But to the Witch, they are not wonderful things but more horrid things happening on their path. As the beech trees “put forth their delicate, transparent leaves” and “light also became [becomes] green” (Lewis, 133), the fate for the Witch and her evil rabble also becomes transparent.

The increasingly occurring signals of green spring terrify the White Witch and her uneasiness has been uncovered through her reply to the dwarf. When the dwarf says this is spring and this is Aslan’s doing, the Witch loses her temper and says “If [if] either of you

mentions that name (Aslan's name) again, he shall instantly be killed" (Lewis, 133). Albeit with the fact that there is no direct sign to show the evil Witch's fear for Aslan, reader can distinguish her fear from her angry. Not Aslan, the lion, but even the name of Aslan terrifies the Witch so much that she does not allow anyone to mention the name; she fears so much that even who mentions the name will be killed. She hides her fear under her angry and it can be verified by Mr. Beaver's saying. At the beginning, Mr. Beaver tells the siblings that "if she(the White Witch) can stand on her two feet and look him [Aslan] in the face it'll be the most she can do"(Lewis, 85).

In addition, the changing forms of snow also predict the resurrection of Narnia, signals of spring and foretell the doomed fate of the White Witch. The forms of snow change incessantly, from being solid and cold, to being less cold and wetter, then the snow "was [is] really melting in earnest" (Lewis, 129-130), and at last it changes into the form that just as the dwarf said – "This is no thaw" (Lewis, 130). The changes of the forms of snow show that the long-lasting winter is vanishing for the approaching of Aslan. The resurrection of spring Narnia is happening, and the evil dictatorship of the White Witch is close to the end just as the melting process of the snow.

Redemption

According to Coblert David, the heart of the Christian story is the redemptive work of Christ, and Lewis makes this one of his focus in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* [...] (Coblert, 255). Edmund is the fourth of the Pevensie children; he plays the role of the traitor. His actions in Narnia lies in opposition to Lucy's: where, on the first visit, Lucy is forgiving and helpful to Mr. Tumnus; Edmund is swept into the presence of the White Witch, who plays on his greedy, "jeering and rather malignant" (Lewis, 60) nature, setting him up later to betray his brothers and sisters. Originally, Edmund is as spiteful naughty and mean as it is possible for a young boy to be, but his character transforms halfway through the novel. By the

end, Edmund is impartial and courageous and he is just as admirable as Peter, and even quieter and braver. The Witch is simply evil through and through and she has no capacity for goodness, because she does not understand self-sacrifice or any other Christian values, she is not born with the capacity for both good and evil that human beings possess. Edmund is human, however, and no matter how evil he is in the service of the Witch, he is never so far gone that through Aslan, the Christ-like figure saving him by self-sacrifice.

Initially, the Witch's enchanting box of Turkish Delight lures Edmund. The magical sweet causes an insatiable greed for more in the unfortunate boy. Edmund becomes a traitor because of his greed for Turkish Delight. Later, it is evident that Edmund is corrupted by a desire for power and by the lavish promises of the Witch. Edmund does not seem to care when he hands over his siblings to a woman whom he knows deep down is a dangerous witch. Although he sees more and more evidence of the Witch's cruelty and evil, he persuades himself to ignore her evil behaviors. But after he tastes the bitter fruit, Edmund does atone for his sins and transform his character. The first change happens when the Witch treats Edmund like a slave rather than a prince. "Edmund for the first time in this story felt sorry for someone besides himself. It seemed so pitiful to think of those little stone figures sitting there all the silent days and all the dark nights" (Lewis, 128). Edmund even shows his empathy for the first time in the novel when he witnesses the Witch petrifying a happy group of small forest animals. Eventually, with the help of Aslan – a discussion between him and Aslan makes Edmund fully realize the Witch's intentions and the benevolence of Aslan. Besides, it is Aslan's self-sacrifice and redemption saving him from the evil. Ultimately, it is up to Aslan to redeem him and complete his transformation.

Edmund plays the role of Judas in *The Lion*, selling his soul to the White Witch/Satan in exchange for Turkish Delight and the promise that if he would bring her brother and two sisters to her she would make him king. However, Lewis gives him the second chance to

transform and redeem himself by forging him and acting self-sacrifice. Edmund's life is spared physically and healed spiritually. Lucy finds him "not only healed of his wound but looking better than she had seen him look but looking better" (Lewis, 197). Edmund has become his real old self again (Lewis, 197). And on the field of battle Aslan makes him a knight.

It is Edmund who plays the most pivotal role in the Battle, only if the Witch's wand is broken can they begin to have some chance to defeat her. After they succeed in the fierce battle with the evil Witch, Peter tells Aslan, "It was [is] all Edmund's doing" and Edmund makes the Witch loosing her dangerously stone-making wand which will make them being beaten – "We'd have been beaten if it hadn't been for him" (Lewis, 196). Edmund even understands the values of Christianity, and the essence of self-sacrifice. As the fight with the Witch, "he was covered with blood; his mouth was open, and his face a nasty green color" (Lewis, 196). He is terribly wounded and is going to die without Lucy's cordial which is given by Santa Claus. After Edmund has become the King of Just, he is "a graver and quieter man than Peter, and great in council and judgment (Lewis, 201), and he becomes King Edmund the Just. Although Edmund once has made errors of being in the evil side, he finds himself back and even becomes graver through redemption. The coming back of the good nature Edmund over the previous betrayal evil denotes that the good will triumph over evil even if someone turn from being malignant to kind and selfless with the Christian value of redemption.

As has been mentioned above, Deep Magic denotes fair play/rule, while Deeper Magic enables the belief that good will triumph over evil to be realized. Through Deeper Magic, Aslan gets revived and then saves the Narnia from the evil dominance of the White Witch. Deeper Magic has given regretful Edmund and self-sacrificing Aslan an opportunity of being redeemed and redemption and also of saving all the Narnia from darkness since later Edmund

will be together with the good side – Aslan and his siblings to defeat the evil Witch and to end the ages of “always winter and no Christmas” (Lewis, 20) in Narnia. While differs from Aslan, or from any other characters like the Faun, Edmund who belongs to the good side, the evil White Witch can never redeem others, or being redeemed; she is unable to do resurrection and self-sacrifice either; she is selfish, conceited, she only cares about her dictatorship. Aslan, the representative of good and Christ-like figure can sacrifice himself, and his death can work backward and to have his resurrection while the White Witch, who is evil and represents Satan, is defeated by Aslan and can never understand self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption. Though Aslan may not have known about Deeper Magic before his resurrection, his resurrection makes everything look different. The Witch is defeated and the whole Narnia gains rebirth. Hence the aim of showing the fact that good will prevail over evil in *The Lion* will be accomplished and the Christian messages of self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption can be read accessibly by the child readers.

The above essay demonstrates that the Christian messages of self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption are omnipotent in *The Lion*. Good has convincingly prevailed over evil in this story. Children are receptive of moral lessons if they are presented in an entertaining and palatable fashion. Lewis was not only an imaginative storyteller, but also a writer of depth and complexity, to whom every detail, from characters, as talking animals to some comic situations and imaginative plot placement, holds symbolic meaning and Christian messages. The presence of talking animal characters and the evil but beautiful Witch ensures that children will enjoy the reading experience at the same time as they are given demonstrations of how important Christian/moral values work and how they can yield significant advantages to those who practise them. Ultimately, there is the promise of new life, at least in Narnia.

¹ Definitions of Christian messages of self-sacrifice, resurrection and redemption in this essay all come from the Dictionary of NIV Terms in *The Holy Bible*: NIV version.

² Hereafter, *Imagination and the Arts in C.S. Lewis: Journeying to Narnia and Other Worlds* hereafter will be referred to as *Imagination*.

³ According to Reader Response Criticism, all stories depend on gaps - details that need later to be clarified or questions that a reader wants answered, and immediately begin trying to answer by anticipating later events.

⁴ See <<http://symbolism.wikia.com/wiki/White>> (accessed 12th. November, 2010)

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