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Moral Values in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Philip Pullman, a leading children's author, regards *The Chronicles of Narnia* as "one of the most ugly and poisonous things I've ever read" (*The Guardian*, 1998). The message of *Narnia*, according to Pullman, is that "death is better than life; boys are better than girls; light-coloured people are better than dark-coloured people; and so on" (*The Guardian*, 1998). If Pullman's comments are right, what then might be the point of children reading Lewis's novel? However, the sales figures, i.e. over one hundred million copies (translated into forty-seven languages), suggest that Pullman is less than just.

This essay will demonstrate that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (hereafter referred to as *LWW*) is the bearer of important moral lessons for children. It argues that the novel provides readers with guidance on putting moral principles into practice, and subverts readers to express the best they can be as well. Moral principles such as honesty and integrity, forgiveness, courage, and self-sacrifice, will be discussed as these are represented by various characters, human and animal, in the novel. Mr Tumnus and Edmund stand for the moral values of honesty and integrity, while Lucy and Peter represent forgiveness; Peter, Edmund and Mr Beaver are brave warriors with courage, while Aslan, Edmund as well as Lucy all promulgate the spirit of self-sacrifice. While *LWW* illustrates moral values, it should be noticed that those values are presented in an entertaining manner, especially with children's needs in mind. The mysterious and wondrous world of Narnia and the engaging talking animals enhance the reading experience. The devices that increase the pleasure of reading will thus also be mentioned, though the focus is on the didactic messages of *LWW*.

Though many people assume that Lewis wrote *LWW* with a Christian agenda in mind and wanted to promulgate basic Christian truths to children (Downing, p. 91), Lewis defended himself in his "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to be Said": "Everything began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, and a magnificent lion. At first there wasn't even anything Christian about them; that element pushed in of its own accord" (p.

46). Lewis made it clear that when he wrote *LWW*, the images came first. Lewis was convinced that he did not allegorize at all, especially when a fantasy world with talking animals opens up before the readers. The experience of entering a magic world through the wardrobe; the encountering with the bizarre faun; the adventure of flying on the back of the lion...All these experiences and enchantment will attract readers' attention, and children will be delighted to have the adventure along with the four children in the novel. However, as children's literature, it is almost inevitable that *LWW* will educate and have effect on children in some respects. There are different moral values within the novel that will provide specific advice and guidance to children, and one of these is the moral principle of honesty and integrity.

Honesty and integrity

Honesty and integrity are basic moral qualities for children or adults of all time. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines "honesty" as "the quality of being honest," while "integrity" is defined in the dictionary as "the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles" (<http://oxforddictionaries.com>). It is suggested through the definition that "honesty" is incorporated in "integrity," for "integrity" includes strong moral principles besides "honesty." Lewis promulgated these two moral principles – honesty and integrity through two different figures: one is the animal figure — the Faun; the other is the human character — Edmund. These two characters are similar in inspiring moral values, i.e. they stand in the wrong side at first but choose to be an honest person in the end. However, they differ in some respects as well: the Faun realizes his fault at the very beginning, while Edmund grows into a just person gradually. Before the discussion of these two figures, it is necessary to discuss the functions of animal figures in C. S. Lewis's writing first in order to understand how the talking animals contribute to the entertaining function of the novel.

While Adam Gopnik, an accomplished staff writer for the *New Yorker*, argues that Lewis “never tries to engineer an entertainment for kids” (p. 4), other critics, such as Morgenstern and Bane, argue that Lewis did entertain readers by using talking animals. Bane claims that the use of animals is “a deliberate, calculated decision on the author’s part. By using animals, Lewis could communicate very subtle shades of human personality without taxing his young audience’s level of comprehension or interest” (<http://cslewis>). That is to say, because of children’s natural attraction to animals, the latter can stimulate the acquisition of moral values. Talking animals such as Mr Tumnus, Aslan and Mr Beaver are convincing examples to demonstrate that certain moral values such as honesty, self-sacrifice and courage are derived from entertainment.

The turning up of a Faun with an umbrella and parcels in a snowy wood at the end of Chapter 1 arouses interest because “children response with delight to fantasies – particularly stories about animals who acts like humans” (Nodelman, p. 72), and the Faun is just this kind of animal which children will feel enthusiastic for. “From the waist upwards he was like a man, but his legs were shapes like a goat’s [...] and instead of feet he had goat’s hoofs. [...] He also had a tail” (*LWW*, p. 15). The description of Mr. Tumnus presents explicitly how a faun looks, and children will feel fascinated to meet a faun along with Lucy.

Mr Tumnus is a kind-hearted Faun who chooses to be an honest and upright person in the end after his inward struggling. When he comes across Lucy at the first time and finds out that she is the “Daughter of Eve” (*LWW*, p. 16), the Faun is determined to take Lucy home and wants to hand her over to the White Witch. However, Mr Tumnus feels so ashamed of himself that he dissolves into tears as he confesses:

[Lucy] asked, “Mr Tumnus! Whatever is the matter?” for 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. (*LWW*, pp. 21-22)

The description of the Faun's crying clearly demonstrates his remorse. At first, he just tells Lucy "it's no good" "sorrowfully" (*LWW*, p. 21) when Lucy requests to leave, but a moment later, his eyes fill with tears. The Faun begins to cry is because he feels a bit guilty now. Then his remorseful emotion reaches to the highest point, because the tears not only "trick down," but also "run off," and the verb "howl" underlines the Faun's agony. Hence, the description cited above presents the readers a Faun with extreme suffering, which is due to Mr Tumnus's inward struggle of being an honest man.

The detailed description of Mr Tumnus's weeping is implying that the Faun feels regretted for his vicious behaviour. Readers will feel sympathetic to him because Mr Tumnus is forced to be a kidnapper for the White Witch. He is struggling, for he is afraid of the Witch, and knows exactly what will happen if he sets Lucy free: "And she'll have my tail cut off, and my horns sawn off, and my beard plucked out [...] And if she is extra and specially angry she'll turn me into stone" (*LWW*, p. 24). The White Witch's heinous means of punishment is highly threatening. Nevertheless, the Faun chooses to help Lucy without regard to his own safety at last.

There are two primary reasons why Mr Tumnus wants to set Lucy free. The first is that he has known Lucy now and makes friends with her, as he says in the novel, "Of course I can't give you up to the Witch; not now that I know you" (*LWW*, p. 25). The second part of the sentence "not now that I know you" suggests the reason of the Faun's action. However, the second reason, which is the more important one, is that the Faun himself is kind-hearted and honest. His bursting into tears when Lucy wants to go home clearly demonstrates that Mr Tumnus cannot go against his well-meaning and honest nature. He even avows to Lucy: "I'm a bad Faun. I don't suppose there ever was a worst Faun since the beginning of the world" (*LWW*, p. 23). The Faun's harsh words to criticize him imply that he is an honest person. This is because he realizes his fault as well as feels ashamed of his vicious behaviour. When the

Faun sees Lucy off, he asks to keep Lucy's handkerchief (*LWW*, p. 26). The handkerchief represents the friendship between Lucy and the Faun. By being honest, Mr Tumnus not only receives forgiveness but also acquires a precious friendship from Lucy.

Though encountering the same dilemma as Mr Tumnus, Edmund chooses to join the White Witch's side without hesitation, because he is a spiteful and mean boy at first. Moreover, he is greedy for the Turkish Delight and the honour of being a prince. Thirdly, he is lack of strong moral principles at first, which is the most important reason. When he eats Turkish Delight the first time, he falls straight into the White Witch's trap. All he wants is to "shovel down as much Turkish Delight as he could, and the more he ate the more he wanted to eat" (*LWW*, pp. 38-39). The verb phrase "shovel down" shows Edmund's desperate desire to eat more sweets; and his passion for Turkish Delight demonstrates that Edmund is under the control of the White Witch, because Edmund focuses all his attention to the sweets so that "he never asked himself why the Queen should be so inquisitive" (*LWW*, p. 39). At last, the Queen "gets" him to tell her all she wants. The word "gets" indicates that the White Witch's trick has been successful.

Likewise, the White Witch manages to make Edmund obey her request of keeping the meeting a secret by using Turkish Delight. However, Lucy notices the change of Edmund, because Edmund's face is "flushed and strange" (*LWW*, p. 42) and he looks "awful" (*LWW*, p. 44). This is an example of using enchantment to show the danger of lying. As the beaver points out later, Edmund "has already met the White Witch and joined her side [...] He had the look of one who has been with the Witch and eaten her food" (*LWW*, p. 81). The quotation indicates that the treacherous person has the different appearance. Therefore, the implicit didactic message here is that people should act with integrity, for the vicious person can be recognized. When Edmund learns through Lucy that the Lady he met is a dangerous witch, he still wants to taste the Turkish Delight even though he feels uncomfortable (*LWW*, p. 43). This

behaviour shows the immaturity and amorality of Edmund as well as his gluttony. He is credulous and lacks strong moral principles, thus he can make friends with anyone who gives him what he wants.

Besides the desperate desire for the enchanted Turkish Delight, Edmund's aspiration to be a prince in the future shows Edmund's vanity as well. In order to fulfil his aim, Edmund tries to persuade Lucy by saying, "You can't always believe what Fauns say" (*LWW*, p. 43). Later, he even convinces Peter that the Witch is kind when all the children enter into the world of Narnia. He says to Peter, "How do we know that the fauns are in the right and the Queen [...] is in the wrong?" (*LWW*, p. 61) Edmund is resorting to sophistry by saying this rhetorical question because he knows exactly that the Queen is a cruel witch. It is also worthy of attention that Edmund uses "the Queen" instead of "the Witch" in this example, which implies Edmund's positive attitude and favourable impression of the witch. When Peter answers that the Faun saves Lucy, which is not the answer that Edmund expects, Edmund has a second try by saying: "He *said* he did. But how do we know?" (*LWW*, p. 61, author's italic) The verb "said" shows that Edmund is sensible and intellectual at this time, for he knows what people say is not always true and one cannot simply believe in other people's saying.

However, things will be different when it comes to Edmund himself. Edmund takes for granted that the White Witch is in the right and even makes excuses for such thoughts. He says to himself: "She was jolly nice to me, anyway, much nicer than they are. I expect she is the rightful Queen really. Anyway, she'll be better than that awful Aslan!" (*LWW*, p. 85) The repetition of the word "anyway" suggests that Edmund feels unsure about his comments for the White Witch; he is implying that he really knows that the White Witch is cruel. However, his greed for Turkish Delight and ambition to be a prince make him forget his moral values. He wants to get everything he desires, even at the cost of his integrity.

Edmund is standing at the crossroads of his life, but he feels it difficult to take the right path, especially when he is confronted by so many temptations. As Downing claims, “the crucible of character is not moral precepts but actual moral choices, situations where the right decision is not the easiest or the safest one” (p. 91). It is hard for a child to repel against temptations such as the delicious Turkish Delight or the honour of being a prince or princess; and it is even harder for Edmund-- the weak character in the novel to make the right decision. It is thus understandable that Edmund makes the wrong decision at first. However, Edmund’s action of remorse and reform at last is a convincing example to inspire children to act with integrity.

Edmund’s change is not instantaneous or abrupt; instead, it comes under certain influence. Just like the critic states, “the impact of events on the character” can create “new traits to supplant or alter the old” (Lukens, p. 89). Edmund is transformed from a spiteful and immoral boy into an honest and upright person with the help of Aslan. After Edmund has been rescued, he and Aslan have a conversation, which “Edmund never forgot” (*LWW*, p. 128). The quotation indicates that Edmund’s conversation with Aslan is a driving force for him to change, and the expression “never forgot” underlines the significance of the conversation. After the conversation, Edmund endeavours to transform himself from a traitor into an upright person. Moreover, when the Witch comes to them and wants to kill the traitor -- Edmund as her “lawful prey,” Edmund is so quiet and mature that he just stands there, and looks at Aslan and says nothing (*LWW*, p. 130). Edmund’s quiet temperament presents a huge contrast with his former one, i.e. the snappish and spiteful boy who always jeers at Lucy. Likewise, Edmund is not timid or greedy now. He can face the White Witch bravely, even though the witch is coming to kill him. Hence, with the help of Aslan, Edmund, a former petulant and immature boy, finally grows into a sedate, upright person.

Edmund's reformation gains everyone's admiration and respect, even Lucy thinks that he looks better than she has seen him look for ages: "He had become his real old self again and could look you in the face" (*LWW*, p. 165). The phrase "look you in the face" shows that Edmund no longer feels ashamed or guilty, because he fights for justice now. The description that Edmund becomes finally "King Edmund the Just" (*LWW*, p. 169) reinforces the importance of integrity. This is because Edmund cannot be the prince as he wished by betraying his siblings, but he can acquire the honour of "King the Just" by being "great in council and judgement" (*LWW*, p. 169). The implicit didactic message here is that people gain respect by being honest.

As presented above, Lewis utilized the device of a talking animal – the Faun to catch readers' attention, and the didactic message of being honest and upright can be inspired through the examples of Mr Tumnus and Edmund. The moral values in this section prevent the occurrence of some personal problems, and constitute a source of inspiration in time of need. Just like Mr Tumnus and Edmund in the novel, they do not act with integrity at first, and they have either the menace or the temptation in front of them, which prevents them from making the right choice. However, they return back to the right track at last. Therefore, these two characters set good examples for children.

Forgiveness

Besides honesty and integrity, forgiveness is an indispensable value for children as they grow up. Forgiveness is like a "catalyst" that can promote reform. As is demonstrated in the novel, both Mr Tumnus and Edmund make mistakes at the beginning, but they transform into the upright men at last, which is primarily due to the forgiving action made by others. Bell mentions that unlike characters in other allegorical novels, the four children in *LWW* "are differentiated, delineated by particular traits and motivations" (p. 14). Lewis emphasized these particular traits by giving them the titles: "King Peter the Magnificent," "Queen Susan

the Gentle,” “King Edmund the Just,” and “Queen Lucy the Valiant” (*LWW*, p. 169). However, besides these general traits of the children, they possess much more virtues as well; and for Lucy, the most distinguished virtue is her generous forgiveness.

Lucy sets an excellent example of forgiving people at the very beginning when she meets Mr Tumnus. When the Faun tells Lucy that he is a kidnapper for the White Witch, Lucy tries to console him by saying “rather slowly”: “Well, [...] well, that was pretty bad. But you’re so sorry for it that I’m sure you will never do it again” (*LWW*, p. 24). Lucy’s speech conveys her forgiveness and positive attitude towards the Faun. She condones Mr Tumnus’ former fault though it is “pretty bad,” because she believes that he will never help the Witch kidnap person again since he feels sorry for his vicious behaviour. Moreover, her “slow” speech and the repetition of “well” as well as the word “sure” all suggest that Lucy tries her best to comfort the Faun and wants to be truthful and sincere. The quotation cited above thus indicates that Lucy is an amicable girl who always sees the better side of people and can forgive.

After Lucy finds out that she is actually the victim, she feels sure, though terrified as well, that the Faun will set her free. She tries to convey her trust and understanding to Mr Tumnus by saying, “Oh, but you won’t, [...] You won’t, will you? Indeed, indeed you really mustn’t” (*LWW*, p. 24). Though the tag question “will you” as well as the reiteration of “indeed” implies Lucy’s uncertainty and panic, the repetition of the privative “won’t” and “mustn’t” underline her trust in the Faun. By saying these sentences, Lucy tries to express her forgiveness and persuade the Faun to be a kind person.

Furthermore, except for Lucy’s generous forgiveness, she regards the Faun as her best friend unfeignedly. When Lucy and Mr Tumnus separate, Lucy is worried about the Faun, so she says to him, “And I do hope you won’t get into dreadful trouble on my account” (*LWW*, p. 26). Instead of blaming the Faun for not being honest and kidnapping her, Lucy even ascribes

the fault to herself, because Mr Tumnus will be in trouble on her account. Lucy's magnanimous behaviour is an excellent example suggesting how to deal with enemies or opponents. Besides the simple action of forgiving, it is more important to stand in the perspective of others and be a thoughtful and truthful friend.

Likewise, Lucy also forgives her brother Edmund for all his wrongdoings. When Lucy tells her siblings about her fantastic experience in Narnia, they do not believe it and think Lucy is telling a silly lie. Though the two elder ones hurt Lucy's heart, they do it unconsciously. However, Edmund is spiteful on this occasion. "He sneered and jeered at Lucy and kept on asking her if she'd found any other new countries in other cupboards all over the house" (*LWW*, p. 29). These cannot be seen as an elder brother's proper behaviour, but Edmund has lots of fun with these sarcasms. In contrast to Edmund, Lucy is much more sensible. When she meets Edmund in Narnia, she is so joyful and excited. She says to him, "If I'd known you had got in I'd have waited for you" (*LWW*, p. 42). She no longer feels sad and disappointed, because she and her brother both have this wonderful experience. She forgives what Edmund has done to her, and she even feels sorry for not waiting for Edmund, which is not her fault.

However, Lucy's amicable and sensible behaviour is not received positively. Lucy is looking forward to telling her siblings about the adventure, thus she says to Edmund, "I *am* glad you've got in too. The others will have to believe in Narnia now that both of us have been there. What fun it will be!" (*LWW*, p. 44, author's italic) The italicized "am" highlights Lucy's extreme happiness, and the last sentence of the quotation implies Lucy's simple good wish. On the contrary, Edmund "decided to let Lucy down" (*LWW*, p. 45). The word "decided" indicates that Edmund violates his promise intentionally, and the reason of his action is that he feels "annoyed with Lucy for being right" (*LWW*, p. 45). Edmund's action and the reason

for his behaviour emphasize his malevolent personality. He does not care about other's feelings, all Edmund wants is to spite and enjoy the successful mood of being a nasty person.

Though Lucy feels hurt by Edmund's vicious behaviour, she forgives him without hesitation. When Edmund tells his siblings that he only plays with Lucy and pretends that all her story is true, Lucy "gave Edmund one look and rushed out of the room" (*LWW*, p. 46). Lucy feels so inconsolable that she says nothing but gives Edmund a look and runs away. Edmund does let Lucy down this time, thus Lucy does not want to argue at all. After all, Lucy is just a little girl; that is why she says miserably to her siblings: "I don't care what you think, and I don't care what you say. [...] I know I've met a Faun in there and – I wish I'd stayed there and you are all beasts, beasts" (*LWW*, p. 47). Lucy behaves rather childish here, she insists that her story is true and even attacks her siblings as "beasts." She is heart-broken, and the repetition of "I don't care" suggests that Lucy is rather sorrowful and helpless, because she does care deep in her heart. However, when Edmund betrays them and goes to the White Witch, Lucy even asks Aslan to save him (*LWW*, p. 120). Moreover, after Edmund is saved, Lucy forgives him unhesitatingly. Her generous action of forgiveness is a convincing example that demonstrates how children can put moral principles into practice. By managing to forgive, Lucy sets an excellent example for children.

Besides Lucy, Peter also puts forgiveness into practice. As the eldest brother, Peter has the responsibility to sustain harmonious relationships among the siblings. However, when Peter knows that Edmund is lying about the adventure of Narnia, he is so irritated that he rebukes Edmund, saying, "Well, of all the poisonous little beasts—" (*LWW*, p. 56). The sentence is not finished, but the implied message is that Peter is angry at Edmund's malicious behaviour and feels disappointed for him as well. Thus, Peter fails to control his emotion and utters these serious words.

After Peter realises that his speech is improper, he “shrugged his shoulders” to relieve his anger and “said no more” (*LWW*, p. 56). However, the silence between Peter and Edmund does not relieve the fight, but emphasizes the strong smell of gunpowder. Edmund does not feel sorry for his immoral behaviour, instead, he feels hurt for his self-esteem. Edmund is so spiteful and beastly that he says to himself “I’ll pay you all out for this, you pack of stuck-up, self-satisfied prigs” (*LWW*, p. 56). He disdains his sibling’s behaviour. However, the truth is that Edmund’s siblings all behave better than he does, and he is the one who needs to reform. Nonetheless, Peter feels self-condemned for Edmund’s betrayal, thus he says to Aslan: “That was partly my fault, Aslan. I was angry with him and I think that helped him to go wrong” (*LWW*, p. 120). Peter’s earnest and sincere words indicate his sensible and generous personality. Moreover, Peter not only forgives Edmund, but also feels proud for Edmund’s brave behaviour on the battle. Peter tells Aslan: “It was all Edmund’s doing [...] We’d have been beaten if it hadn’t been for him” (*LWW*, p. 164). Even though he fights courageously and dauntlessly, Peter does not take credit for the success. Instead, he attributes all his success and honour to his brother Edmund. His sincere compliment to Edmund demonstrates that Peter no longer has prejudice on Edmund, but tries to look at Edmund’s virtues.

Lucy and Peter’s generous behaviour of forgiveness will inspire children as they grow up. As Terry Pratchett points out, reading fantasy “is the compost for a healthy mind. It stimulates the inquisitive nodes. [...] there is some evidence that a rich internal fantasy life is as good and necessary for a child as healthy soil is for a plant, for much the same reasons” (p. 3). *LWW* is such kind of fantasy that can educate and nurture children as Pratchett suggests, and the moral value of forgiveness cited above is also the most convincing section in *LWW* to demonstrate Pratchett’s comments.

Courage

Since children will “bring their own experiences with them and relate them to the story” (May, p. viii), it is thus necessary for children’s literature to be educational and convey positive experience. Lewis imparted important messages about life in *LWW* as well. Instead of mentioning “neither death nor aging,” as the “safe” stories have done (Bettelheim, p. 8), *LWW* describes many scenes of death. Lewis wanted to show that “real” life is full of difficulties and struggle, and only people with a strong will and courage can master all obstacles and achieve victory in the end. The *Wiktionary* defines “courage” as “the quality of a confident character not to be afraid or intimidated easily but without being incautious or inconsiderate” (<http://en.wiktionary.org/>). Therefore, the quality of courage not only contains valour but also includes wisdom and cautiousness. The distinguished warriors with courage in the novel are Peter, Edmund, and Mr Beaver.

Peter is not a courageous man at first. His cowardice is introduced when Peter meets Aslan for the first time. He even does not plucky enough to go ahead:

“Go on,” whispered Mr Beaver.

“No,” whispered Peter, “you first.”

“No, Sons of Adam before animals,” whispered Mr Beaver back again.

“Susan,” whispered Peter. “What about you? Ladies first.” (*LWW*, p. 119)

Peter wants Mr Beaver to go first because he is afraid of Aslan, however, Mr Beaver cannot, for human beings should go before animals. Then Peter even pins his hope on Susan by using the awkward reason of “ladies first.” The dialogues cited above indicate Peter’s timidity, but it is understandable because all of them are afraid of Aslan. Their awe can be demonstrated by the repeated use of “whisper.” Nonetheless, Peter manages to go first at last when he realizes he is the eldest and should be a role model for the others.

However, Peter encounters with a more challenging situation to test his courage after the meeting when Lucy and Susan are in danger. “Peter did not feel very brave; indeed, he felt he

was going to be sick” (*LWW*, p. 122). The narrator’s description of Peter’s feeling here clearly presents his fear and weakness, but he has no choice but to save his siblings. “He rushed straight up to the monster and aimed a slash of his sword at its side” (*LWW*, p. 122). Peter’s love for her siblings and his responsibility to protect them stimulate his courage. The verb “rushed” accentuates Peter’s unpreparedness and the urgency of the action. Peter has no time to think but to act. Moreover, Peter’s valour is presented through his straight action towards the wolf. His second action of plunging his sword “between the brute’s forelegs into its heart” (*LWW*, p. 122) also demonstrates Peter’s bravery.

It should be noted that Peter’s dauntless action is mostly because he cares about his family, which is also his motivation to fight. After the battle, Peter rubs “the sweat off his face and out of his eyes” (*LWW*, p. 123). The sweat in his eyes suggests Peter’s fear and terror, while the sweat on his face implies that Peter has taken strenuous pains to success. If the mission of protecting family members is the first impetus for Peter to gain courage, then his destiny to save Narnia is the second one.

After Peter wins his first battle, he gains full strength and courage on the final one. When Peter is fighting with the White Witch in battle, “the stone knife and Peter’s sword [are] flashing so quickly that they looked like three knives and three swords” (*LWW*, p. 162). The narrator’s description of the fighting clearly demonstrates that Peter has grown into a true warrior. In contrast with his first battle with the wolf, Peter has become highly skilful and is capable of handling his sword now. Furthermore, instead of fighting forcedly, Peter can fight against the witch intrepidly and valorously. Lucy also recognizes the change in Peter through his face, which is “so pale and stern and he seemed so much older” (*LWW*, p. 164). The description indicates that the experience in battle makes Peter grow up, and turns Peter into a man with extreme courage and valour.

Edmund is another example of how a young boy can become a brave warrior in battle. Different from Peter, Edmund exhibits his talent for fighting in his first but also the most important battle. He is not only courageous but also intellectual, as is shown in the novel:

[Peter says]The Witch was turning our troops into stone right and left. But nothing would stop him. He fought his way through three ogres to where she was just turning one of your leopards into a statue. And when he reached her he had the sense to being his sword smashing down on her wand instead of trying to go for her directly and simply getting a statue himself for his pains. (*LWW*, p. 164)

Edmund is so brave, dauntless and wise to fight with the Witch that even Peter respects him greatly. Though fighting for the first time, Edmund has the sense to smash the witch's wand first. He is courageous, as is demonstrated by the quotation cited above, he can fight his way straight to the White Witch and "nothing would stop him." However, besides bravery, the most important thing for a warrior is to keep a cool head and to know what the best thing to do is. Edmund understands clearly and makes his courage and wisdom into practice. Though Edmund is "terribly wounded," Peter's army "would have been beaten" if Edmund had not smashed the Witch's wand, because he wins over "some chance" (*LWW*, p. 164) for the army. Edmund thus represents an intelligent warrior with great valour in the novel, which can be an excellent example of inspiring children that how to be heroic and outsmart enemy.

Besides the two human characters that represent the brave warriors in the novel, Mr Beaver shows his extreme courage as well. Mr Beaver is not a valorous warrior per se, and he is rather cautious. When he meets the four children for the first time, he is afraid of being seen by the Witch's side, therefore, he always looks out at them "from behind a tree," and then "immediately draw back" (*LWW*, p. 63). Furthermore, he dares not to speak loudly, and makes sounds like "Hush," "S-s-s-sh" (*LWW*, pp. 63, 65) or says to the four children "in a hoarse throaty whisper" (*LWW*, p. 64), because he is afraid of being heard as well. When he leads the children to his dam, he walks in "quick space, and always in the thickest parts of the forest" (*LWW*, p. 67). All these descriptions above demonstrate overtly Mr Beaver's prudence

and timidity. Likewise, the examples cited above indicate that Mr Beaver is risking his life to meet the four children as well.

Furthermore, Mr Beaver's wisdom is introduced when he leads the children to the Stone Table. He knows that the Witch will "keep to the top" with the sledge, so they walk down towards the valley (*LWW*, p. 97). He also brings them to a hiding-place for rest. These considerate and discreet actions suggest Mr Beaver's wisdom and calmness. Mr Tumnus is helping the children regardless of his safety, because he could be turned into stone as soon as the Witch finds him. Moreover, it should be noticed that Mr Beaver is not obliged to meet the children or bring them to Aslan; he does it because he wants to save his friend – Mr Tumnus. Therefore, Mr Beaver can also be regarded as a brave warrior who deserves respect.

Self-sacrifice

In comparison with the moral principles of honesty and integrity, forgiveness, and courage, self-sacrifice is the most important and significant, because it is the ultimate expression of the best a person can be. In this section, the examples of Aslan, Edmund and Lucy all demonstrate that how can a person exceed the limitation of self and achieve the supreme action of self-sacrifice. Aslan, who accepts death at the hand of the White Witch in order to save Edmund's life, is the most distinguished example of self-sacrifice.

As the lord of Narnia, Aslan is a mysterious figure at first, which not only arouses the curiosity of children in the novel, but the readers' as well. King states that "Lewis's most amazing gift as a writer is his ability to make imaginative leaps forward when writing about a subject so that he takes us beyond the merely obvious, the mundane, the everyday" (pp. 584-585). Lewis's description of Aslan is a convincing example to demonstrate King's comments. When Mr Beaver mentions Aslan the first time, all the children in the novel have different feelings about the name (*LWW*, p. 66). Furthermore, the old rhyme in the novel makes Aslan even more mysterious:

Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again. (*LWW*, p. 76)

Readers wonder what kind of creature Aslan is if his coming can turn the wrong right, his roar can drive away sorrow, and he can even defeat winter by baring his teeth and shaking his mane. The description of Aslan above leaves loads of space for imagination. Readers will feel enthusiastic and pleasant to find out who Aslan is along with the four children in the novel.

Apart from Aslan's mysterious and amazing power, his gracious act of self-sacrifice for Edmund arouses readers' immense attraction and respect. In spite of Edmund's past actions, Aslan is willing to die for the sake of saving Edmund's life. He just tells the children "I have settled the matter" (*LWW*, p. 132). The five-word sentence is so simple that it sounds like Aslan has just solved a trifle. However, what he does is to give up his life. When Aslan comes to the Stone Table for death, Lucy and Susan is waiting and hoping that Aslan can fight against his enemy, however, "he made no resistance at all" (*LWW*, p. 140). The phrase "not... at all" emphasizes the disappointment of Lucy and Susan for Aslan's non-resistance; it also reinforces the solemn action of Aslan's self-sacrifice.

Furthermore, the comparison of different actions between Aslan and the rabble manifests the significance of Aslan's self-sacrifice. Aslan chooses to be silent and make no resistance at all. Compared with Aslan's tranquillity and peace, the rabble's "shouting and cheering" (*LWW*, p. 140) seems so dismissive and disdainful. Lewis even criticizes the rabble's behaviour by plainly saying, "*as if* they had done something brave, though...one of those [Aslan's] paws *could have been* the death of them all" (*LWW*, p. 140, my italic). The author's attitude is emphasized by the italics, and readers will feel disgust of the intoxicated rabble. When Aslan has been shaved, the enemies jeer at him, "How many mice have you caught today, Cat? [...] Would you like a saucer of milk, Pussums?" (*LWW*, p. 140) These defiant and

provocative speeches indicate the odious ugly faces of the rabble. They are like the villain who gains power for the moment, but cannot stop flaunting their success. On the contrary, Aslan's calm behaviour reinforces his grace and dignity. Though "the whole crowd of creatures kicking him, hitting him, spitting on him, jeering at him," "he never moved" (*LWW*, p. 141). He endures all the suffering and humiliation only for saving Edmund's life. He even tries to calm Lucy by giving her a "braver, and more beautiful, and more patient" (*LWW*, p. 141) look. Aslan's gentle behaviour denotes his willingness to give up his life, and his benignity to Edmund is also revealed.

Aslan is not obliged to save Edmund, therefore, his action of self-sacrifice is worthy of admiration. Differing from Jesus, who is the Son of God and is chosen by God to sacrifice his life to save humankind with his blood, Aslan is not -- he is only the King of Narnia. However, Aslan sacrifices his life not only to save Edmund, but also to save Narnia. This is because the prophecy says, "when two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve sit on those four thrones, then it will be the end not only of the White Witch's reign but of her life" (*LWW*, pp. 78-79). Hence, in order to make the prophecy become true, Aslan protects Edmund from being killed with the sacrifice of his own life. From this respect, Aslan saves Narnia. Though he is resurrected afterwards, the action of self-sacrifice is more miserable than death. As is introduced above, Aslan endures physical as well as emotional suffering, which is beyond imagination. Therefore, Aslan is an excellent example of how to exceed the limitation in terms of sacrifice.

Though it is Aslan that is killed "in a traitor's stead" willingly and gets resurrected, Edmund also revives to some extent. The most important is that he has learned how to sacrifice. Although not knowing what Aslan has done for him, Edmund acts bravely and fearlessly in the battle of fighting against the White Witch. In order to prevent the soldiers from being turned into the statues by the witch, Edmund risks his life to break the witch's

wand courageously and successfully. He is terribly wounded for this dauntless action: “He was covered with blood, his mouth was open, and his face a nasty green colour” (*LWW*, p. 164). Describing with one sentence, the narrator presents Edmund’s vital situation explicitly. “Blood,” “open mouth,” and “green face” all indicate the serious condition of Edmund’s wound. Therefore, Edmund’s action is no longer the simple behaviour of valour; on the contrary, it concerns the serious problem of life and death. His selfless action on the battlefield clearly demonstrates that Edmund has learned the meaning of self-sacrifice and wishes to put it to the test.

Lucy also learns the importance of devotion through her action of saving wounded people. When she pours a few drops of cordial into Edmund’s mouth and wants to see whether Edmund is fully recovered, Aslan urges her to save more people immediately. He says to Lucy, “There are other people wounded,” but Lucy answers “crossly,” “Yes, I know [...] Wait a minute” (*LWW*, p. 165). Aslan does not speak straight to Lucy to force her to leave; he wants Lucy to find out his hint by herself. However, Lucy seems not to realize what Aslan means, moreover, she even acts “crossly,” which implies her blame for Aslan’s insensibility. Therefore, Aslan speaks out directly “in a graver voice”: “others also are at the point of death. Must *more* people die for Edmund?” (*LWW*, p. 165, author’s italic) The importance and gravity of saving other people’s life is emphasized by the use of the italic “more” and the comparative form “graver”. Here conveys the message that it is more important to take others’ interests into consideration.

This essay has discussed the four distinguished and important moral values in *LWW*, i.e. honesty and integrity, forgiveness, courage, and self-sacrifice. By using the devices of talking animals, fascinating images as well as enchantment, the narrator expresses didactic messages in an entertaining manner. Starting with moral qualities, *LWW* demonstrates how moral values are expressed in action. Though David Holbrook states that “C. S. Lewis conveys to his

readers a powerful unconscious message that the world is full of malignancy; that one must be continually alert; that aggression is glorious, exciting and fully justified” (p. 124), Holbrook has failed to see the positive messages in the novel. *LWW* has inspired children to exceed the limitation of themselves and become the best people they can be. The moral values of integrity and courage are more than principles, they become actions as characters both forgive and sacrifice themselves in the course of right.

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