

**Children's Literature as Character Education:**  
**Moral Judgment in *The Chronicles of Narnia***

Jeremia Klinga  
University of Tampere  
Faculty of Communication Sciences  
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Tarkastelen pro gradu –tutkielmassani C. S. Lewisin tunnettua *Narnian tarinat* -lastenkirjasarjaa hyvekasvatuksena, joka on kasvava, Suomeen viime vuosina rantautunut moraalikasvatuksen muoto. Tutkimuksessani keskityn erityisesti siihen, minkälaisen kuvan Lewisin kirjasarja antaa moraalista arvioinnista: minkälaisin perustein on mahdollista erottaa hyvä ja paha, oikea ja väärä. Tukeudun tutkimuksessani sekä Lewisin moraalifilosofiin kirjoituksiin että hyvekasvatuksen traditioon, jotka tukevat toisiaan suurelta osin.

Nykymuotoisen hyvekasvatuksen (Character Education) pioneerit ovat hiljattain todenneet C. S. Lewisin olevan erityisen ajankohtainen hyvekasvattaja 2000-luvulle, ja Lewisin lastenkirjojen pohjalta työstetäänkin parhaillaan hyvekasvatuksen opetussuunnitelmaa oppikirjoineen. Sekä hyvekasvattajat että Lewis puolustavat klassista kasvatuskäsitystä, jossa kasvatuksen tarkoituksena on rohkaista lasta omaksumaan universaaleiksi tunnustettuja, laajasti eri kulttuureissa ilmeneviä hyveitä ja kasvamaan niiden pohjalta hyveelliseksi ihmiseksi. Oleellinen osa hyvekasvatusta on moraalisen arviointikyvyn kehittäminen, joka toimii hyveellisen toiminnan pohjana.

Narnia-sarjan kuvaus moraalista arvioinnista lähtee Lewisin filosofian mukaisesti oletuksesta, että on olemassa objektiivinen hyvä ja paha – universaali moraalilaki, johon ihmisen oikeudentaju ja omatunto pohjimmiltaan perustuvat. Sarjan päähenkilöt oppivat täten universaaliin moraalilakiin perustuvaa arviointia: seikkailujensa alkumetreillä henkilöhahmot tekevät karkeita virheitä arviointikyvyssään katastrofaalisin seurauksin, mutta tarinan edetessä he oppivat perustamaan moraalisen päättelynsä objektiivisina kuvattuihin logiikan ja moraalien perimmäisiin lakeihin. Korkein moraalisen arvioinnin muoto löytyy kuitenkin hyve-eettisestä imitaation perinteestä, kun lapset alkavat pitää jaloa Aslan-leijonaa arviointinsa perustana. Henkilöhahmojen moraalisen kasvun lisäksi tutkimus kiinnittää huomiota siihen, miten Narnia-sarja kuvaa yksilön moraalisen arviointikyvyn suhdetta kulttuuriin ilmiöihin kuten kasvatukseen ja yhteiskuntaan.

Tutkimukseni valottaa tapaa, jolla Narnia-sarja kannustaa lukijaansa oppimaan perusteltua moraalista arviointia sekä tavoittelemaan johdonmukaista ja hyveellistä elämää sen pohjalta. Toisaalta lastensarja painottaa aikuisten roolia lasten moraalikäsitysten vahvistamisessa. Tulokset vahvistavat, että Narnia-kirjasarjan kuvaus moraalista arviointikyvystä on laajalti yhtenevää sekä Lewisin kasvatustieteen kanssa. Koska *Narnian tarinoita* käytetään tietoisesti hyvekasvatuksen välineenä, annan tutkimukseni tulososiossa myös ehdotukseni, miten hyvekasvattajat voisivat hyödyntää kirjasarjan kohtauksia opettaessaan lapsille moraalista arviointia.

Asiasanat: C. S. Lewis, *Narnian tarinat*, hyvekasvatus, moraalinen arviointikyky, lastenkirjallisuus

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## 1 Introduction

The present research sets out to study the function of Clive Staple Lewis's (1898–1963) children's series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, in fostering children's moral growth. C. S. Lewis's Narnia novels are known as exceptionally popular children's books, having sold "more than 100 million copies in 47 languages" (Pike et al. 71). The novels have not only been popular but they have collected lasting appreciation from critics. For instance, *The Last Battle* (1956) won the highly esteemed *Carnegie Medal* in the year of its publication, and in 2008 *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was selected as the best children's book of all time by BookTrust (McGrath 271). Even more importantly for the present research, Lewis's children's series is marked with moral themes and virtuous characters, as commonly noted in the reviews of the series (for instance, N. Lewis 583; Ross 513; Ojala and Saarinen 125). Gayne J. Anacker even argues that the "moral resonance" of the novels is among the most loved attributes of the series (130). As Lewis's children's series is, on one hand, both popular and readily available in multiple languages and, on the other hand, markedly moral in tone, it appears to form a particularly promising object of study in considering children's literature as a means of educating children morally.

In light of these notions, it is quite surprising that C. S. Lewis's children's series has only recently gained the attention of researchers in the specific field of moral education (Pike et al.). In the past few years, *The Chronicles of Narnia* has drawn interest in a growing branch of moral education called the Character Education movement, which, in agreement with the Narnia novels, places emphasis on traditional virtues and developing one's moral character. In addition to the moral quality of his children's literature, C. S. Lewis also interests the character educators due to his extensive theoretical writings on moral and educational philosophy that appear to go hand in hand with the moral message of his children's series. According to Mark Pike et al., these two sources – the philosophical treatises and a lengthy children's series with a moral emphasis – make Lewis an exceptionally resourceful author for contemporary character educators, and they claim that he is "a highly relevant but largely neglected character educator for 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Pike et al. 71).

Discussions on the moral elements of the Narnia novels appear to focus predominantly on the portrayal of the Narnian characters and especially their actions that often express a certain virtue or vice. For instance, Pike et al. note that the virtues inherent in the series are “displayed—or not displayed—by the characters” (77) and that the novels “depict virtuous actions that are admirable and have beneficial consequences and, on the other hand, actions that are not virtuous and generally have negative consequences” (78). Likewise, Thomas Lickona emphasizes the role of the characters in bringing about the desired moral effect of the series by writing that, when encountered by the “unforgettable characters” such as the White Witch and Aslan, the child readers of the series “feel repelled by the evil and are drawn, irresistibly, to the good” (“What” 247).

Apart from moral action, there are also other elements in the moral fabric of the Narnia novels that are relevant from a character educational point of view. One of these is the Narnian emphasis on moral judgment – one’s capacity to discern between good and evil, right and wrong – as Glen Mynott notes that the protagonists (and the readers) are initiated into “the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil” (40). Moral judgment also constitutes one of the primary subjects that Lewis emphasized in his moral philosophy, and the Narnia novels clearly draw from Lewis’s actual beliefs on the subject. The significant role of moral judgment in the Narnia books appears not to have been studied adequately in any character educational discussions on the children’s series, however, and the present study attempts to fill this gap.

The aim of the present research, then, is to analyze the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Chronicles of Narnia* in the light of Lewis’s moral philosophy and Character Education. The Narnian kind of moral judgment is constructed out of multiple elements in the novels, ranging from beliefs concerning the nature of morality to actual practices of moral judgment, and the present research attempts to analyze the concept from multiple perspectives. Throughout the analysis, the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Chronicles* will be contrasted with Lewis’s theoretical works on moral judgment. Additionally, on a more general level, the study views *The Chronicles* as a form of

Character Education, considering the function of the novels as aiming to convey ideas about moral judgment to their child readership.

The present study builds on the previous research on C. S. Lewis's contribution to contemporary Character Education. *The Chronicles of Narnia* has been studied from a character educational perspective by Mark Pike, Victoria Nesfield, and Thomas Lickona, who identified 12 core virtues in the novels that are congruent with the aims of contemporary Character Education and founded the Narnian Virtues project to utilize the books for moral education (Pike et al.). According to the project website, the aims of the Narnian Virtues project include designing a character educational Narnia curriculum for English classes, including study books to be read alongside Lewis's novels ("About the Project"). The educators have also conducted research to study the effects of their curriculum. In their initial study, the researchers tested the Narnian Virtues material in schools in the UK and received feedback from the students who tried to apply the Narnian virtues to their own lives (Pike et al. 84). Inspired by the results of the study, the character educators implemented a large, empirical "3-year research project to further test the Narnian Virtues character education curriculum" (84), which is currently underway. In conclusion to their initial research, Pike et al. suggest that both Lewis's educational philosophy and the Narnia books "warrant more attention from character educators and researchers than they have received so far" (71). By paying more detailed attention to the intricate role that moral judgment plays in the moral fabric of *The Chronicles*, the present thesis sheds further light on the value of Lewis's children's series for Character Education, and the study hopes to have practical implications for the contemporary character educational applications of the series, too.

In its Finnish context, the thesis also represents one of the first studies on the role of narrative fiction in Character Education, with prior research including a doctoral dissertation on oral narratives (Liutta) and a master's thesis on Roald Dahl's children's books (Nieminen). In general, moral education in the vein of Character Education is still a novel concept in the Finnish educational context: Arja Liutta suggests in her dissertation that this approach might reach Finland in the next 10

to 15 years (90). Since Liutta's estimation in 2011, there have been clear signs of growing interest towards virtues-based moral schooling in Finland. For example, 2014 saw the launching of *Hyveet elämässä* ('Virtues in Life'), a virtues-centered moral education program for kindergartens and schools (Kylliäinen). Also, the recently published *Huomaa hyvä!* ('See the Good!') manuals seek to help educators recognize and strengthen virtues in the children (Uusitalo-Malmivaara and Vuorinen). In addition to contributing to the character educational discussions on *The Chronicles*, then, this thesis aims to raise awareness of Character Education as a possible form of moral education in Finland and emphasizes the role of children's literature in it.

The thesis unfolds in the following manner: The background chapter discusses the concepts of children's literature, Character Education, and the role of children's literature in ethics. The subsequent theory chapter focuses on expounding Lewis's moral philosophy and the concept of moral judgment to the extent they are relevant for understanding the phenomenon of moral judgment in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The analysis section, then, studies the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Chronicles* in light of Lewis's moral philosophy. Finally, the relevant findings will be considered in the conclusion section, along with a discussion of the Narnia novels as a form of Character Education.

## **2 Background: Children's Literature and Moral Education**

As the present study touches on theories of both children's fiction and moral education, these two topics will be discussed further in this background chapter. The first section considers the definition of children's literature used in the thesis. Given the complexity of definitions for children's literature, a definition will be opted for that is rooted in literary criticism but that also caters to the specific needs of the present study. Then, the phenomenon of contemporary moral education will be discussed, with an emphasis on the Character Education movement which is the most relevant strand of moral education for the present study. The last section considers the connection between (children's) literature and ethics as well as some relevant characteristics of *The Chronicles of Narnia* as children's literature.

### **2.1 Defining Children's Literature**

Finding a comprehensive definition for children's literature has proven so difficult that some have even contended that there cannot be a single definition for children's literature due to the diversity and complexity of the genre (Gubar 210). Nonetheless, in the absence of an overall definition there can still exist multiple definitions for children's literature, with each definition suggesting "some part of the complex truth" (Nodelman 137). What is attempted here, then, is to provide a definition that is especially helpful for considerations of children's literature in moral education.

A thorough definition of children's literature will have to start with a definition of childhood. Dictionaries commonly define a child as a person of certain age, and some of them are quite specific in their definition such as the Macmillan Dictionary which defines a child as a person from birth to "about 14 years old" ("Child"). Childhood, as the term is understood here, is necessarily more than a timespan in one's life, however. John Rowe Townsend has noted that, "Before there could be children's books, there had to be children" (17). What Townsend suggests is that, while there have always been children, children's literature became a separate genre only after childhood was recognized and emphasized as a special season in the span of human life.

The beginnings of childhood as it is understood nowadays are commonly seen in the Victorian period. Kimberley Reynolds notes that childhood had been regarded as a distinct category even before the Victorians, but the Victorians nevertheless created “a more self-conscious and sustained myth of childhood than any that had gone before” (2). Apart from the fact that childhood began to be idealized and distinguished as a special phase in one’s life, there were other reasons for the newfound emphasis on childhood, too. For instance, the emergence of industrial capitalism had an important role for the new concept, as more parents became financially able to invest in their children (Reynolds 5). It is important to note that these changes began with the adults, who had renewed ideas about childhood and the money to create it accordingly. In this sense, childhood is essentially a grown-up convention: it is created by the parents and guardians who invest in the childhood of their children. This is especially true of the definition of childhood implicit in “children’s literature”, as Peter Hunt (51) notes that each children’s writer “creates or constructs the childhood that they then address.” The child in “children’s literature”, therefore, can be said to reveal primarily beliefs and attitudes about the child rather than being a real portrayal of an actual child (51).

Apart from considering the child, one also needs to discuss what is meant by children’s *literature*. Emer O’Sullivan starts by asking whether children’s literature is primarily literature written *for*, *by*, or *about* children, and he concludes that the most defining characteristic of children’s literature lies in its audience: it is literature written *for* children (16). After all, children’s literature is rarely written by children, and literature about children is mostly aimed at an adult readership (16).

If children’s literature only referred to literature that has been written primarily with a child readership in mind, however, it would exclude a wealth of literature that could potentially be understood as children’s literature. It is generally acknowledged that most pre-modern writings that are nowadays read mostly by children (such as ancient folklore and fairy tales) were not originally intended for a child readership in particular (Townsend 17; Nikolajeva, *Reading* 182; Susina 179; E. O’Sullivan 18). It was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century that literature written primarily for children started to appear at large, and this is often thought to have constituted the point in history

when children's literature became a genre of its own (Nikolajeva, "Children's Literature" 315; E. O'Sullivan 18).

The exclusion of pre-modern writings from the concept of children's literature might be problematic in the light of moral education, which might value such texts because of their emphasis on moral issues. A suitable definition for the present study, then, needs to leave room for texts that were not primarily meant as children's literature but have later become to be considered as such, as is the case with many fables, for instance. Including texts such as the fable in the definition of children's literature is especially relevant for the present study since, as will be argued below, *The Chronicles of Narnia* highlights the fable as one of the genres suitable for moral education. Also included would need to be texts that have been posthumously appropriated for a child readership. A typical example of the latter could be seen, for example, in the many children's versions of *Robinson Crusoe*, which was primarily intended for an adult audience (Nikolajeva, "Children's Literature" 317).

What we would arrive at, then, approximates Torben Weinreich's definition of children's literature as

literature which is written and published for children, that is to say, both the literature which is written for children and that which was originally written for adults but which has been re-worked with children in mind. (128)

Weinreich's definition still leaves out texts that are understood nowadays as children's literature but that were originally written for adults and did not undergo any changes. To account for this deficit, children's literature can be here defined as "literature purposed for children", as such a definition leaves the question open whether it was primarily intended for children by its original author or not. What is significant is that it is purposed for children at the present. Thus, children's literature, as understood here, is necessarily bound to the ideas of what is appropriate for children in each generation.

As it is the adult who decides on what is appropriate for the child, this takes us to the question of the inevitable adult presence in children's literature. On one hand, as mentioned above, the (adult)

author decides on the concept of childhood present in the children's book. On the other hand, the difference in power between the author and the reader is significantly great. This element of power difference in age and in status between the author and the intended audience is perhaps the main characteristic which distinguishes children's literature from general fiction, and it is commonly emphasized in descriptions of children's literature (see, for instance, Sarland 56; Nikolajeva, "Children's Literature" 323; E. O'Sullivan 16). Together, these two characteristics can be seen to give children's literature a distinctive didactic outlook. As children's literature conveys the author's views of childhood and as the child is likely to be influenced by the views due to the power difference between the author and the child, children's literature has an inherent educative function that attempts to shape the child reader's self-image towards the one projected in the text. What kind of images of childhood are preferred by the adults, however, is a question related to moral education that is discussed in the following section.

## **2.2 Moral and Character Education**

Diverse theories and practices are nowadays listed under the umbrella term of moral education,<sup>1</sup> which Marvin W. Berkowitz (897–98) takes to mean "any form of intentional education aimed at promoting the growth of moral functioning." David Carr ("Moral Education" 24–25) identifies three main branches of moral education in the post-war field of education: the cognitive psychology-based Kohlbergianism, followed by the Values Clarification movement, and the Character Education movement. The primary focus in this chapter will be on Character Education, as Lewis has drawn interest mainly within the Character Education movement and as the understanding of moral judgment in the present study is more relevant for Character Education than the other strands. For instance, Kohlbergianism deals with moral judgment, too, but it focuses solely on moral reasoning, which is only a part of moral judgment as the concept is understood in this study. Values Clarification,

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<sup>1</sup> While the field has other names with different connotations such as *values education* (esp. in the UK) and *character education* (USA), the term *moral education* will be preferred in this study because of its claimed "internationally recognised" status (Berkowitz 897) and to avoid misunderstanding with the specific strand of Character Education referred to in this study.

on the other hand, is based on moral relativism (Steutel and Carr 3), which sees values as relative; an idea that is in stark contrast with the objective portrayal of morality present in both Character Education and *The Chronicles* as discussed later in the study.

Historically speaking, understanding “moral education” separately from education in general is quite a modern phenomenon. It is commonly observed that, at least since the Ancient Greeks, one of the primary foci of education in general has always been on building the learner’s moral character (Arthur, “Traditional Approaches” 80; Haldane 157; Kristjánsson 135; Barrow 160; Salls 1). A dramatic shift occurred in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when varying reasons such as anti-traditionalism, value relativism and, in its aftermath, fear of indoctrination caused the tradition to cease almost entirely, and a larger emphasis on technical skills and knowledge replaced traditional interest in morality (Kristjánsson 135–36). The idea that values are relative affected the teaching profession, too, making teachers hesitant about influencing the pupils’ morals explicitly (Ryan and Kilpatrick 20; Arthur, *Education* 113). Nonetheless, a refusal to address values explicitly in a school curriculum does not remove the fact that education transmits values, as James Arthur notes, “There is no such thing as a ‘value-free’ school ethos” (*Education* 117). If schools affect the values of their pupils in any case, it appears to be more sensible to consider the promoted values consciously rather than ignore the phenomenon. Perhaps this explains in part why the situation is changing. Kristján Kristjánsson, for instance, notes that, recently, “the tide has turned dramatically [...] in favour of moral education in general, and character education in particular, at the school level” (136).

Concerning the Character Education movement, Carr (“Moral Education” 390) writes that the movement originated in the USA but is “now steadily gaining ground in other parts of the world such as the United Kingdom.” What brought Character Education to public attention in the USA is commonly thought to be the influential writings of Thomas Lickona and William Kilpatrick in the 1990s (Kristjánsson 147), and Character Education is here understood in the form advocated by the aforementioned authors. What both Kilpatrick and Lickona had in mind was a renaissance of the traditional practice of building good character through virtues, as they both define Character

Education essentially as “cultivation of virtues” (Ryan & Kilpatrick 19; Lickona, “Character Education” 78). These virtues (or lack of them), then, make up one’s *character*, which is taken to mean “an interlocked set of personal values which normally guide conduct” (Arthur, *Education* 2).

The definition of Character Education as “cultivation of virtues” invites the question of what are the virtues to be cultivated, in other words, of who decides on the virtues that are to be cultivated. The conviction of most character educators appears to be that there are certain basic virtues that are objectively good, as Arthur notes that character educators generally believe that moral values are “objectively grounded in human nature and experience” (*Education* 115). Also, Lickona argues that the concepts of virtues and virtuous character imply a belief in objective moral truth, and he asserts that there are “objectively good human characters such as wisdom, honesty, kindness, and self-discipline” (“Character Education” 77). Because, in this view, virtues are objective, they are seen to transcend cultural, religious and historical barriers (Lickona, “Character Education” 77; Lickona et al.). If there indeed exist virtues that transcend culture, it is quite sensible to argue that public education in a pluralistic society would do well in focusing (at least) on such values. In practice, however, there is no complete consensus among the Character Education theorists on the actual lists of universal virtues, but Kristjánsson (138) notes that “virtues such as reliability, honesty, self-respect, responsibility, truthfulness and compassion figure on most lists.”

Another relevant question concerning Character Education involves the *means*: how virtues are learned and taught efficiently. Kristjánsson (138–39) notes that, in addition to the belief in universal basic values, forms of contemporary Character Education are in general characterized by what he calls “methodological substantivism” – a preference of content over method of teaching. Despite this general tendency, it appears that the form of Character Education promoted by Kilpatrick and Lickona emphasizes the Aristotelian understanding of moral development as habit formation. For instance, Lickona (“Character Education” 78) calls Aristotle’s theory of acquiring virtues through habit formation as a “core theoretical principle.” Also, Kilpatrick defines Character Education specifically as instilling virtue “through the formation of good habits” (Ryan & Kilpatrick 19).

In the light of these core characteristics of Character Education, it is easy to observe why C. S. Lewis has gained the attention of character educators such as Lickona. First of all, C. S. Lewis advocated objective morality and compiled a list of eight core virtues that he believed to be universal. While Lewis's theory on objective morality will be discussed in more detail later, for now it is enough to observe that Lewis's theory is acknowledged to be "congruent with contemporary discussions of character education" (Pike et al. 72). Moreover, Lewis shared similar ideas with contemporary character education about virtue and growth in it: "a man who perseveres in doing just actions gets in the end a certain quality" and "it is this quality rather than the particular actions which we mean when we talk of a 'virtue'" (*Mere Christianity* 72–73). Not only Lewis's philosophy, but also *The Chronicles of Narnia* exemplifies similar beliefs, as Pike et al. note that the Narnia novels are "excellent examples of literature's ability to illuminate how events are shaped and character is formed by the moral choices we make" (71).

As a framework on moral education, Character Education has not been exempt from critical evaluations, although it has certain advantages in comparison to the other popular strands. For instance, Kristjánsson notes that, on one hand, the attempt to set up a universal set of basic values is criticized as a form of domination (141), especially by those subscribing to relativistic views of morality, and on the other hand, the basic virtues have been criticized as too basic to be of practical help in real-life cases (147). Despite the criticisms, Character Education stands out as a comprehensive framework in moral education. Compared to Kohlbergianism, for instance, which focuses solely on reasoning skills, Character Education has a more holistic goal to influence the moral character of the learners. This includes educating the three components of character that Lickona calls moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action: the facilitation of cognitive differentiation between right and wrong, the cultivation of (appropriate) moral feelings, and morally-informed habits and action ("What" 241). This advantage is relevant also for the present study, as moral judgment (in the way the concept is understood here) has both cognitive and emotional elements in it. Moreover, as will be argued below, the comprehensiveness of Character Education makes it a relevant framework

when one considers children's literature as moral education, which will be dealt with in the next section.

### **2.3 Ethics, Children's Fiction, and Narnia**

The close link between literature and the teaching of ethics has been noted since the beginning of philosophy as a discipline. Plato wrote already on the effect fables on children and suggested that "the first stories that [children] hear should be so composed as to bring the fairest lessons of virtue to their ears" (*Republic* 378e). Modern research also emphasizes the importance and unique possibilities that fiction has for moral education. For instance, Maria Nikolajeva mentions that fiction helps children ponder ethical dilemmas "in a safe mode" and that it provides "ethical experience not easily available in real life" (*Reading* 177–78).

Authorities in contemporary moral education also appear to agree upon the worth of fiction for moral growth. Sheryl O'Sullivan (641) argues that Lawrence Kohlberg, the founder of Kohlbergianism, would have acknowledged the role literature read during the developmental years has for the moral character of the children, irrespective of whether the reading is accompanied by any explicit instruction on morals. The pioneering character educator Thomas Lickona ("What" 247) also notes that literature has a special place in moral education as it can bring about "a felt sense of right and wrong" in the children. Different strands of moral education are not equally suited for considering children's literature as moral education, however. Carr argues that what is needed is a framework that does "appropriate justice to the moral interplay of [...] reason and emotion", as literature is likely to challenge both the head and the heart ("Contribution" 137). In light of the holistic view of morality in Character Education mentioned above that pays attention to both moral knowledge and emotions, it seems that Character Education fits well with the particular features of children's literature in moral education.

The role of narrative fiction in ethics has been emphasized particularly by Martha C. Nussbaum. Nussbaum's basic argument can be summed up in the notion that "narrative articulates the complexities of moral life in more fruitful ways than the abstract theorizing characteristic of

philosophy” (Brady 581). Consequently, narrative fiction has a special place in ethics that cannot be replaced by anything else, as Nussbaum argues that “certain truths about human life can only be fittingly and accurately stated in the language and forms characteristic of the narrative artist” (5). Nussbaum’s notions reflect an older view of fiction as the highest form of moral education. In this tradition, the medieval poet Sir Philip Sidney, for instance, considered fiction as ethically superior to philosophy, as it is able to combine moral precepts with concrete examples (Potolsky 65). This idea of the unique ethical properties of fiction appears to be also present in *Character Education*, as Lickona remarks,

We can talk to children in abstract terms about deceit and hatred and loyalty and love, but when they come face to face with those qualities enflashed in unforgettable characters, like the Wicked White Witch and the great and gentle Aslan in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, they feel repelled by the evil and are drawn, irresistibly, to the good. (“What” 247)

It is interesting that Lickona chooses to use *The Chronicles of Narnia* as an example of the ability of literature to transmit moral values, which adds to the anecdotal evidence of the series’ effectiveness in bringing about moral changes in the readers.

While Nussbaum’s position deals with narrative fiction in general, children’s literature appears to be especially connected to the idea of literature as conveying moral values. This is because children’s literature is “more educational, instructive, and intentional” than general fiction (Nikolajeva, “Children’s Literature” 313). While mainstream literature is categorized according to different literary epochs such as Romanticism and Enlightenment, the history of children’s literature is “instead related to pedagogical views and has oscillated between two extremes: education and pleasure (315). Jan Susina also notes that the “twin purposes of instruction and delight have long been accepted as the primary goals of children’s literature” (178).

As Lewis’s children’s series is sometimes seen negatively as too didactic a series, it is worthwhile to consider further the “twin purposes” of instruction and pleasure and their connotations in children’s literature. The general idea is that children’s literature used to be highly didactic, but in modernity it has moved away from its didactic past and reached a more aesthetic form (see, for instance, Trousdale 1227–28; Susina 179–82). Children’s authors such as Edward Lear and Lewis

Carroll are often viewed as the first writers of aesthetic children's literature (Trousdale 1228; Nelson 14; Susina 182), and David Rudd (4) notes that some one-sided historical accounts even consider the time they started writing as the beginning of "proper" children's literature, ruling out the didactic phase of the past altogether. Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, didacticism in children's literature has been on the decrease to the extent that that today most books written for a child readership attempt to avoid didacticism of any kind (Trousdale 1228–29). In mainstream children's books today, then, if matters of morality ever need to be taken up, they are often in the form of questions (1228–29), and Claudia Nelson (15) even points out that "overt didacticism is now often seen as an artistic flaw."

The idea of didacticism as belonging to the past is relevant for consideration of *The Chronicles of Narnia* as children's literature, as *The Chronicles* is often considered a particularly didactic children's book when considered against the time of its publication. Thus, Mynott (40) notes that "the didactic narrative of Lewis's text may well have seemed a bit 'old fashioned' when *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was published in 1950." Consequently, according to the narrative that didacticism in children's literature belongs to the manipulative past (and that modern children's literature ought to be free from it), the didactic elements in Lewis's children's novels are likely to be viewed in a negative light.

The generalized historical shift from instruction to pleasure is not as simple as many accounts imply, nonetheless. Firstly, the situation today is often exaggerated, as the publishing of children's literature with special focus to educate morally or religiously is strong even in the present age (Rudd 4; Grenby and Immel xv). The two elements need not be mutually exclusive, either. Nikolajeva notes that "we intuitively recognize as the best children's books" the ones that reconcile both didacticism and aesthetics ("Children's Literature" 315). Most importantly, it can be argued that all narrative writing is didactic (Booth 151–52). Charles Sarland (57) agrees on this position by writing that "all writing is ideological since all writing either assumes values even when not overtly espousing them." Thus, while it might be a helpful generalization in some respects to say that children's literature has

shifted from didacticism towards aesthetics, the real change appears to have been in the quality of didacticism rather than in kind.

Considering *The Chronicles of Narnia*, there also appear to be two kinds of opinions when it comes to their didacticism. While most scholars would perhaps agree with Naomi Lewis (582) that the Narnia series is “morally and theologically didactic”, there are others who do not hold the same opinion. Francisca Goldsmith, for instance, argues that Lewis influences the readers “without didacticism” (479). Perhaps the difference in the opinions lies in the degree of didacticism attached to the series: Goldsmith probably agrees that *The Chronicles* is didactic in a sense, but not to the degree that it would disturb one’s pleasure in reading the series. This idea is also present in Lewis’s thinking, as he opines in one of his personal letters that “art can teach [...] without at all ceasing to be art” (“To I. O. Evans” 918).

While *The Chronicles* gives critics somewhat mixed feelings concerning didacticism, explicit didacticism can be seen to have certain advantages over implicit didacticism, contrary to the common opinion. In a theory chapter on the ancient Greek literary concepts of mimesis (showing) and diegesis (telling), Herman Rapaport quotes an extract from Milton where the Devil is described in a highly diagetical way, as “the narrator is attempting to prejudice the reader, so that he or she won’t sympathize with a character who is the epitome of sinful pride” (74). It is difficult to dispute that such writing is clearly guiding the reading experience, but so are all other forms of writing. Rapaport (74–75) notes that “there is the argument to be made that since the diegesis is more or less revealing prejudices [...] that it’s more transparent and honest than mimesis, in which so much is implied and concealed.” In the light of this argument, criticisms of the didactic nature of *The Chronicles* could be answered by noting that at least Lewis is being open about the values he is promoting.

In light of the remarks on the didacticism of the Narnia novels, it is perhaps quite surprising that Lewis himself denies that he first had a Christian or a moral message in mind and then worked out a children’s story to promote the ideas. In fact, Lewis claims that he “never started from a message or moral” in writing any of his works of fiction (“Unreal Estates” 123). In the case of Narnia,

“everything began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion” – with no religious or moral meaning assigned to them (Lewis, “Sometimes” 119).

Nevertheless, this is not to claim that Lewis was not intentional about the message of the stories. Anacker (131) notes that, although Lewis claims that the stories began with the pictures, those pictures were “harnessed for a purpose.” Lewis himself admits that after connecting the images and choosing the genre he did start to pay attention to what the message of the series was (“Sometimes” 119). As far as morality is concerned, Lewis notes that the children’s author ought not to ask what morals are good for the children, but “What moral do I need” (“On Three Ways” 105), as the “only moral that is of any value is that which arises inevitably from the whole cast of the author’s mind” (106). This idea that the morals of the story (ought to) stem from the author’s mind probably explains the fact that *The Chronicles of Narnia* portrays many of Lewis’s moral philosophical ideas, which are considered in the following chapter.

### 3 Theory: C. S. Lewis and Moral Judgment

This chapter sets out to discuss the moral philosophical lens that informs the following analysis on moral judgment in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. As the concept of moral judgment takes on different meaning in different moral philosophies, it will be viewed from a viewpoint relevant to C. S. Lewis and the present thesis.

The chapter unfolds, firstly, by considering C. S. Lewis's moral philosophy. Lewis's most pertinent stance on ethics is seen in the Natural Law tradition, which he defended in many of his writings, and he also came up with his own version of Natural Law that is relevant for *The Chronicles* and the portrayal of moral judgment in it as will be argued below. Furthermore, Lewis subscribed to a certain kind of Virtue Ethics, which also has bearings on the Narnian portrayal of moral judgment and which will be addressed, too. Lastly, Lewis's concept of moral discernment will be discussed, to the extent it is relevant for understanding the phenomenon of moral judgment in *The Chronicles*.

#### 3.1 Lewis's Moral Philosophy

This chapter discusses C. S. Lewis's moral philosophy in general terms, with a special emphasis on the elements that are relevant for *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the focus of the present thesis on moral judgment. In personal correspondence, Lewis noted that his primary authority on ethics was Aristotle ("To Corbin Scott Carnell" 979). While it is not in the scope of this study to analyze in detail how Lewis was indebted to Aristotle, Lewis's debt to classical philosophers like Aristotle will be here seen in two broad moral philosophical traditions, the Natural Law theory and Virtue Ethics, both of which are visible in Lewis's philosophy and *The Chronicles*. The chapter begins by discussing the Natural Law theory, as it has more prominence in Lewis's non-fiction, followed by a brief consideration of Virtue Ethics.

It was noted above that modern character educators generally believe in objective moral truth (see Arthur, *Education* 115; Lickona, "Character Education" 77; Pike et al. 71; Kristjánsson 138). How does one argue for such a position? C. S. Lewis was convinced that the moral reality is best explained by the Natural Law theory, which represents a traditional and probably the most elaborate

account of objective morality. Lewis came up with his own version of the theory and called it the “*Tao*” (*Abolition* 701). Understanding Lewis’s *Tao* and the Natural Law tradition behind it is relevant for the present study for multiple reasons. First of all, the connection between Lewis’s *Tao* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* is widely attested. For instance, Pike et al. studied the first three books in the series and found that they depicted “12 universal virtues consistent with the *Tao*” (77) and Tim Mosteller writes that the “*Tao* of Narnia is what philosophers and theologians call Natural Law” (95). Secondly, character educators Pike et al. “make the case for the objective reality of Lewis’s *Tao*” and note that it is “congruent with contemporary discussions of character education” (Pike et al. 71–72). Moreover, the Natural Law tradition informs Lewis’s understanding of moral judgment to a large extent, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

What is meant by Natural Law, then? Charles E. Curran notes that Natural Law theories are a set of “ethical theories that determine what is right or wrong on the basis of the common humanity that all human beings share” (594). As a term, Natural Law might be misleading, however, “for it does not refer to laws of nature as the phrase is used today – that is, to scientific laws” (Christopher). The Natural Law is different from these other kinds of natural law, for instance, in that people can decide whether to follow its promptings or not (Schneewind 520; Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 16). While Natural Law is the established term when discussing the tradition itself, there are other names available for the concept of a universal ethical law that avoid confusion with the popular understanding of a “natural law”. One of the most understandable terms is probably “Moral Law”, which is also used by Lewis (*Mere Christianity* 27). In this study, therefore, when discussing the actual *tradition*, the term “Natural Law” will be used, but when talking about the phenomenon itself, the suggested reality behind the theory, “Moral Law” will be preferred instead.

The Moral Law is a common topic in the bibliography of C. S. Lewis. Here the emphasis will be especially on *The Abolition of Man* (1943), which is taken to be among Lewis’s most important philosophical treatises (Schakel 165; Ojala and Saarinen 119). *The Abolition of Man* includes not only Lewis’s broadest and most elaborate account of the Moral Law, but it is also – more importantly

for the present research – the only one to specifically focus on educational philosophy. In *The Abolition*, Lewis drafts his understanding of the “*Tao*” – “the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are” (*Abolition* 701).

The most important way in which individual Natural Law theories differ from each other are their actual lists of virtues or basic moral knowledge that are thought to form the Moral Law (Curran 594). In like manner, Lewis also attempted to compile a possible list of such values, although he added that “[t]he list makes no pretence of completeness” (*Abolition* 731). The laws are probably not as unique as the method of how Lewis compiled the list: Lewis’s way for illustrating the Moral Law was through a study of literatures of ancient cultures by referring to multiple sources such as the Greek philosophers, early Hinduism, Taoism, and Jewish thought. (Hence the name *Tao*, which could have also been any of the other ancient concepts for the phenomenon.) He observed certain similarities in all the ancient texts and came up with a list of eight universal Laws of the *Tao*, and included the list as an appendix in *The Abolition of Man* (1943). The list is presented in an abbreviated form below.

<b>The Laws of the Tao</b>	<b>Lewis’s Examples in Ancient Literatures</b>
1. The Law of General Beneficence	<p>“Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.” (Ancient Chinese, <i>Analects</i>)</p> <p>“Do to men what you wish men to do to you.” (Christian, <i>Matthew 7:12</i>)</p>
2. The Law of Special Beneficence	<p>“Has he insulted his elder sister?” (Babylonian, <i>List of Sins</i>)</p> <p>“Natural affection is a thing right and according to Nature.” (Greek)</p>
3. Duties to Parents, Elders, Ancestors	<p>“Children, old men, the poor, and the sick, should be considered as the lords of the atmosphere.” (Hindu, <i>Janet</i>)</p> <p>“I tended the old man, I gave him my staff.” (Ancient Egyptian)</p>
4. Duties to Children and Posterity	<p>“To marry and to beget children.” (Greek, <i>List of Duties</i>)</p> <p>“The Master said, Respect the young.” (Ancient Chinese, <i>Analects</i>)</p>

5. The Law of Justice	<p>“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” (Ancient Jewish, <i>Exodus 20:14</i>)</p> <p>“Justice is the settled and permanent intention of rendering to each man his rights.” (Roman, Justinian, <i>Institutions</i>)</p>
6. The Law of Good Faith and Veracity	<p>“I sought no trickery, nor swore false oaths.” (Anglo-Saxon, <i>Beowulf</i>)</p> <p>“In Nástrond (= Hell) I saw the perjurers.” (Old Norse, <i>Volospá</i>)</p>
7. The Law of Mercy	<p>“In the Dalebura tribe a woman, a cripple from birth, was carried about by the tribespeople in turn until her death at the age of sixty-six” ... “They never desert the sick.” (Australian Aborigines)</p> <p>“Has he failed to set a prisoner free?” (Babylonian, <i>List of Sins</i>)</p>
8. The Law of Magnanimity	<p>“Praise and imitate that man to whom, while life is pleasing, death is not grievous.” (Stoic, Seneca)</p> <p>“The Master said, Love learning and if attacked be ready to die for the Good Way.” (Ancient Chinese, <i>Analects</i>)</p>

**Table 1. “Illustrations of the *Tao*” in Lewis’s *The Abolition of Man* (731–38), Abbreviated.**

In his writings, Lewis emphasized the bearings that the Moral Law has for moral authorities. He argued that “[u]ntil quite modern times all teachers and even all men” believed in objective value statements (*Abolition* 699). In addition to believing in the *Tao*, in the old understanding of values, “both the kind of man the teachers wished to produce and their motives for producing him were prescribed by the *Tao*—a norm to which the teachers themselves were subjected and from which they claimed no liberty to depart” (721). Thus, Lewis argues that the Moral Law gave teachers the right to impose certain values on the learners, as they did not decide the values artificially but based their teaching on virtues that were thought to be part of humanity. In Lewis’s thinking, then, there is a Moral Law in the universe to which everyone has access and on which educators can ground their moral education. This idea is, of course, relevant for considerations of moral judgment: if there indeed exist objective values, then, in this view, judging well would mean judging in accordance with the universal morality.

Apart from the Natural Law tradition as seen in the *Tao*, Lewis appears to have subscribed to a certain virtue-ethical understanding of morality that also informs his concept of moral judgment. This is relevant for both *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the character educational focus of the present study,

as they are both based on a virtue-ethical understanding of what it means to lead a good life. For instance, Anacker (140) argues that in the Narnia novels the “central focus of the stories is upon who we are as persons” and, consequently, Lewis’s children’s series “argues strongly that virtue ethics is the proper framework in which to do ethical theory.” Furthermore, as Kristjánsson (136) notes that, since character educators often speak about virtues in similar terms to virtue ethicists, the modern-day Character Education seems to stem to some extent from the modern Virtue Ethics. Virtue Ethics is a multi-faceted strand of moral philosophy, yet it will be here discussed mostly in general terms, focusing on those aspects most relevant for the present analysis and especially for the concept of moral judgment in the Narnia novels.

Perhaps the most defining element of Virtue Ethics – which is also the most relevant characteristic for the present study – lies in its primary focus on the moral agent instead of moral acts (Garcia 840; Louden 491; Bunnin and Yu 728). This distinguishes Virtue Ethics from the other two main strands of ethics, Kantianism and Consequentialism. While Kantianism attempts to define certain universal moral duties that ought to inform individual acts and a Consequentialist asks whether the consequences of a certain act are good or not, in Virtue Ethics, the primary ethical question is “What kind of person should I be?” (Bunnin and Yu 728; Arthur, *Education* 42). For C. S. Lewis, the effects on the moral agent clearly take primacy over the moral acts: “the truth is that right actions done for the wrong reason do not help to build the internal quality or character called a ‘virtue’, and it is this quality or character that really matters” (*Mere Christianity* 72). The same trait is also present in *The Chronicles of Narnia* (Anacker 140) and affects moral judgment to a great extent: in considerations of good and evil, one ought to pay attention primarily to the effects on one’s character.

A second virtue-ethical notion that is especially relevant to *The Chronicles* is seen in the idea that a morally right action is commonly thought to be defined as what a virtuous character would do in a specific situation (Louden 495). An influential form of this virtue-ethical approach is seen in the Christian tradition of *imitatio Christi*, the imitation of Christ (Lawler and Salzman 465), to which Lewis also subscribed. Lewis interpreted that, for Christians, what it means to live a morally good

life is to follow the virtuous agent's – the Christ's – example. He writes, "For you are no longer thinking simply about right and wrong; you are trying to catch the good infection from a Person" (*Mere Christianity* 152). The idea of imitating the virtuous agent is central to understanding Narnian moral judgment with Aslan as the epitome of virtue that the protagonists imitate.

Before moving on to considerations of moral judgment, it is worthwhile to ask, in light of the moral educational focus of the present research, whether Natural Law and Virtue Ethics are taken seriously by philosophers anymore, especially since they are age-old and appear to stand in contrast with many modern ideas on morality. Indeed, both traditions used to be the dominant alternatives in their respective areas of ethics until the Enlightenment. For instance, Curran notes that "[m]ost of the classical moral philosophers in the Western tradition adopted some sort of natural law theory" (594). Likewise, concerning Virtue Ethics, Robert B. Louden estimates that a certain form of virtue-ethical understanding of morality "represented the dominant outlook in both western and eastern schools of moral thought until the Enlightenment" (491). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that both traditions have been steadily on the rise after the publication of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Tapio Puolimatka (14) notes that there has been a shift toward an acknowledgement of moral objectivism within moral philosophy in recent decades, and a part of that shift has been a reappraisal of the classical Natural Law tradition. Virtues Ethics has gained even more significant popularity after the publication of Lewis's works, as Anacker, for example, calls the resurgence of Virtue Ethics as "one of the most remarkable developments in recent philosophy" (140). Consequently, the reappraisals of both Natural Law and Virtue Ethics appear to speak to their relevance as frameworks in contemporary moral education despite their antiquity.

Based on this chapter, it appears that a general understanding of the moral philosophical traditions of Natural Law and Virtue Ethics provides common ground for discussions on C. S. Lewis, *The Chronicles*, and Character Education. In the following section, then, Lewis's concept of moral judgment will be discussed, which is based on the two traditions discussed in this chapter.

### 3.2 Moral Judgment

The previous section discussed the Natural Law theory and Virtue Ethics as the main theoretical traditions in understanding C. S. Lewis's moral philosophy. While these traditions aid in understanding the nature of moral knowledge in general, there still remains the question of how one is to access such knowledge and discern between good and evil in practice. For this, what needs to be considered is the concept of moral judgment. Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu (446) give moral judgment two definitions. Firstly, it may mean the "content of a proposition that typically discriminates between good or bad or between right and wrong and determines what should be done in a moral context." Secondly, it may mean "the capacity to make such judgments or to make them well" (Bunnin and Yu 446). Here, moral judgment will be considered as one's "capacity to judge well" (in the second sense given by Bunnin and Yu). As one's standpoint in moral philosophy affects one's understanding of moral judgment to a large extent, what is meant by "judging well" in this context is judging correctly in the light of Moral Law and Virtue Ethics.

What are the capacities a human being has for moral judgment? Different periods and traditions have given different answers to the question. For instance, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, moral judgment was understood primarily as a rational and conscious capacity seen in forms of moral reasoning (Mercier 131). Lately, empirical studies in moral psychology have suggested that, instead, intuition and emotion play a larger role in actual instances of moral judgment (132). C. S. Lewis's non-fiction and *The Chronicles of Narnia* emphasize the conscious aspects of moral judgment such as moral reasoning. In addition, intuition<sup>2</sup> plays an important role, too, as will be discussed below. Emotions, however, are not portrayed at all as a capacity of judgment. This is probably because in Lewis's thinking emotions are subjected to reasoning:

No emotion is, in itself, a judgement; in that sense all emotions and sentiments are logical. But they can be reasonable or unreasonable as they conform to Reason or fail to conform. The heart never takes the place of the head: but it can, and should, obey it. (*Abolition* 702)

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<sup>2</sup> Without lingering on the topic, it will be here noted that Lewis's understanding of intuition differs from the way modern moral psychologists use the term. For Lewis, intuition accounts for one's awareness of the basic principles from which conscious moral conclusions are inferred (as observed below), while the psychologists tend to treat it as an alternative to conscious moral reasoning (see Haidt, for instance).

As Lewis did not consider emotions as a source of moral truth, the present study leaves out detailed considerations of moral emotion and, instead, focuses on reasoning and intuition as one's primary capacities for (correct) judgment. This is not to say that Lewis would have dismissed the critical effect of emotions on good judgment, however. In fact, Lewis himself noted that "the task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts", by which he meant encouraging good emotions or "just sentiments" (*Abolition* 699; see Pelsler 12–22 for a larger account of Lewis's understanding of moral emotions). However important a role emotions play in judgment as a motivational force, in Lewis's view they are not necessarily shaped or governed by the Moral Law. Therefore, emotions ought not to be taken as a standard of judgment but, instead, they need to be trained in the right direction in accordance with one's understanding of the Law.

Lewis wrote on aspects of moral judgment in a wide array of essays and books, but the clearest outline of his thought on the subject can be seen in the essay "Why I Am Not a Pacifist", in which Lewis first attempts to answer the "general question: how do we decide what is good or evil?" (281) and then applies it to the specific case of pacifism. In the essay, Lewis gives three ways of correcting mistakes in our sense of right and wrong: Reason, Conscience, and Authority ("Why" 281–83). It will be argued in this study that these three also represent, essentially, the forms of moral judgment portrayed in *The Chronicles*. In the following subchapters, then, these three concepts will be discussed in the aforementioned order.

### **3.2.1 Judgments of Fact: Theoretical Reason**

Lewis begins his treatment of moral judgment by illustrating the concept of "Reason", which he defines as "the whole man judging" about "truth and falsehood" ("Why" 281). By "Reason" Lewis means the Aristotelian concept of "Theoretical Reason", which he defines as "the connecting by inference of propositions, ultimately derived from sense data, with further propositions" (*Abolition* 707). This kind of reasoning is essentially deductive reasoning, which is understood to lie behind the Natural Law theory, Kohlbergianism and ancient philosophers' theories (Harman et al. 241). Deductive reasoning is based on logical inferences from premises to a conclusion, valid reasoning

meaning that “it is impossible to assert the premises and deny the conclusion without contradiction” (Colman). Deductive reasoning about truth and falsehood will be referred to in this study as “Theoretical Reason” or “Logic”, the latter being the Narnian term for the concept, introduced in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (131).

In order for logical reasoning to be sound, it needs to follow the laws of logic. Lewis demanded that any theory of knowledge would have to admit this: “you reach a self-contradiction if you say that logical inference is, in principle, invalid” (“*De Futilitate*” 270). This is because, a theory “which explained everything else in the whole universe but which made it impossible to believe that our thinking was valid [...] would itself have been reached by thinking” and thereby contradict itself (*Miracles* 313). Consequently, if one is to say anything that claims any truth value, one needs to believe in the basic laws of logic such as the validity of inference.

Lewis’s idea of the irrefutable basic principles of logic stems from the Aristotelian concept of the First Principles of Theoretical Reason. Lewis believed that these First Principles (the laws of logic) are innately available in human beings and accessible through *intuition*, which he defines as “the mind perceiving self-evident truth” (“Why 282”). Awareness of the laws does not mean that all human communication would be sound, however. There is an important difference to be made between the First Principles (that are objectively true) and the actual conclusions arrived at through inference. As human thinking is prone to error, one is “driven to combine a steadfast faith in inference as such with a wholesome skepticism about each particular instance of inference in the mind of a human thinker” (“*De Futilitate*” 270).

If it is true that human beings are innately aware of the objective principles concerning logical thought, then it implies that logical reasoning may arrive at objective truth, provided that the deduction arrives truthfully from the First Principles. But how is it connected to *moral* judgment? After all, Lewis notices that Theoretical Reason cannot judge whether something is good or evil, but only whether a statement is true or false (“Why” 281). (The argument that one *ought to* be truthful is a moral judgment that cannot be deduced from the First Principles of Theoretical Reason.) Lewis

believed that there were other human capacities needed for making judgments of value, and these will be considered next.

### 3.2.2 Judgments of Value: *Conscientia* and Practical Reason

Turning to judgments of value, Lewis notes that the “usual answer is that we decide by conscience” (“Why” 281). Lewis agrees with this position, although his concept of the conscience differs from the popular account. In Lewis’s understanding, conscience has two meanings: “(a) the pressure a man feels upon his will to do what he thinks is right; (b) his judgement as to what the content of right and wrong are” (281). Similar division is adopted by the character educator Thomas Lickona (“What” 246) who differentiates between the *emotional* and *cognitive* senses of the conscience, comparable to Lewis’s senses (a) and (b), respectively. As is the case with many of his ethical concepts, Lewis draws his understanding of the conscience from traditional sources. The clearest accounts of the conscience in the Lewis corpus are seen in his historical study of the words Conscience and Conscious (*Studies* 181–213). To avoid confusion with the terms, the emotional side of conscience in sense (a) is here called *Conscientia* (the Latin name for the concept), while the cognitive understanding of conscience in sense (b) will be referred to as Practical Reason, which is what Lewis means with the term. Both senses of the conscience occur in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, but as *Conscientia* does not have a significant role in Lewis’s theory nor in *The Chronicles*, it will be only dealt with briefly.

Concerning *Conscientia*, Lewis writes that its basic function is to bear “witness to the fact, say, that we committed a murder” (*Studies* 190). Lewis held an unwavering opinion that *Conscientia* is “not to be argued with, but obeyed” (“Why” 281). However, as *Conscientia* is simply “always to be followed”, Lewis does not seem to devote much space to it as regards moral judgment (281). Although *Conscientia* binds one to act according to one’s sense of right and wrong, it does not itself tell what right and wrong are, however, but “we are supposed to know that in some other way” (*Studies* 190).

Lewis notes that this other element of the conscience in sense (b) – knowing what is good and evil – has different names in alternative traditions such as “practical reason, moral sense, reflection,

the Categorical Imperative, or the super-ego” (*Studies* 194). Out of these, Lewis finds the Aristotelian concept of Practical Reason the most useful, as Lewis believed that Reason is the capacity utilized, not only in judgments of fact, but also in value judgments (*Miracles* 331). Though substantively similar, the essential difference between Theoretical and Practical Reason is that, while Theoretical Reason is based ultimately on the laws of logic, Practical Reason draws on the “First Principles of Practical Reason,” that is, the universal principles of morality.

According to Lewis, just as one perceives the laws of logic innately, one also understands the “First Principles” of morality by intuition:

We “just see” that there is no reason why my neighbour’s happiness should be sacrificed to my own, as we “just see” that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to another. If we cannot prove either axiom, that is not because they are irrational but because they are self-evident and all proofs depend on them. (*Miracles* 331)

In the example, justice (rendering to each their due; in this context to the neighbor) is given as a moral intuition that one “just sees”. For Lewis, such “First Principles of Practical Reason” equal to the Laws of the *Tao*: they are the premises that (correct) value judgments rests upon (*Abolition* 712). Lewis gave an example of how one can deduce other moral judgments from these basic principles: “our duty to do good to all men is an axiom of Practical Reason, and our duty to do good to our descendants is a clear deduction from it” (*Abolition* 713). Lewis’s example could be written as follows,

1. One ought to do good to all men. (a Law of the *Tao*, intuitively “just seen”)
2. Our descendants are men.
3. Therefore, one ought to do good to one’s descendants.<sup>3</sup>

This example shows that one can draw more specific moral principles from the first principles by the way of logical deduction.

Finally, it seems that Lewis did not want to over-emphasize the difference between the concepts of Theoretical and Practical Reason. After all, the main difference between Theoretical and Practical Reason are the different “first principles” on which they are based that also explain the different

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<sup>3</sup> Lewis’s example appears not to have been well thought out in light of his own theory, however. The resulting “duty to do good to our descendants” (*Abolition* 713) is almost identical with the “Law of Special Beneficence” (733), so apparently it ought to be “just seen” like the “Law of General Beneficence” (731), from which it was deduced.

conclusions. Maybe for this reason, Lewis sometimes speaks of the two together as simply “Reason”. For instance, in *The Abolition* Lewis notes that we need to “extend the word Reason to include what our ancestors called Practical Reason” (707). This is relevant for considering the portrayal of the two kinds of reasoning in Narnia: it will be observed in the analysis that, although the children are trained in Logic and learning to discern the moral intuitions separately, the two forms of reasoning most often work together. For Lewis, then, once the different capacities have been introduced, Reason means logical reasoning based on inference about both scientific and moral matters.<sup>4</sup>

Before moving on, a few critical remarks are due concerning the scientific credibility of the concept of Practical Reason. At first glance, the concept appears to have a clear advantage in moral philosophy, as it seems to account for the “is–ought fallacy” – the basic question in moral philosophy of “how, if at all, we can legitimately move from *is* to *ought*, from describing how things do in fact stand, to expressing an urgent concern either that they be changed or that they be respected, preserved as they are” (Hepburn 446, emphases in original). Lewis agrees that “[f]rom propositions about fact alone no *practical* conclusion can ever be drawn” (*Abolition* 707, emphasis in original). Logic is only concerned with truth and falsehood: strictly speaking, the finding that a man has stolen an item does not yet help determine whether he ought to have done otherwise. If Lewis’s account holds true, however, the is–ought fallacy does not concern it, as it is believed that “Reason can be practical” (712), meaning that Reason has access to the first principles of morality that are themselves undeniable. In that case, one can progress from a premised “ought” to another “ought” by inference: if one knows innately that lying is wrong and catches a friend in the act of theft, then one can condemn the act as morally wrong.

While the idea of the First Principles accounts for the is–ought fallacy, Lewis himself admits that the First Principles themselves do not “admit proof”, however (*Abolition* 712). This problem

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<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, Lewis’s emphasis on the role of reasoning in acquiring true knowledge of the world appears to even have included the aesthetic: “We must, then, grant logic to the reality; we must, if we are to have any moral standards, grant it moral standards too. And there is really no reason why our reaction to a beautiful landscape should not be the response, however humanly blurred and partial, to a something that is really there” (“*De Futilitate*” 273). This aspect is also present in *The Abolition* and has recently gained interest (Pelser 12–22) but is not relevant for *moral* judgment, nevertheless.

probably lies behind Lewis's attempt to illustrate the theory with observation from different cultures, as seen in the theory of the *Tao*, instead of proving it:

I am not trying to *provide* [the *Tao*'s] validity from common consent. Its validity cannot be deduced. For those who do not perceive its rationality, even universal consent could not prove it. (*Abolition* 731; emphasis in original)

This, in turn, is a serious lack from a scientific point of view. As Lewis presumes that people see the rationality of the idea, the strength of the theory seems to rest on its claimed "explanatory power" rather than any strictly scientific observation. (Lewis would probably have added, though, that the strictly scientific methods are themselves based on intuitions of logic "just seen" similar to moral intuitions.)

Generally speaking, then, there are two means of moral judgment that Lewis deems objective in light of the Moral Law: intuitive knowledge of the first principles of morality and inference from them based on the laws of logic. In Lewis's thinking, there is also a third way that does not follow as directly from the Moral Law, which will be discussed in the remaining section.

### 3.2.3 Authority and Moral Imitation

Apart from Theoretical and Practical Reason, Lewis notes that *authority* "also has to be frequently used instead of reasoning itself as a method of getting conclusions" ("Why" 282). According to Lewis, it is right (and necessary, as otherwise "we should have to live like savages") to consult an authority "if the man has good reason to believe the authority wiser and better than himself" (283). Authority may take multiple forms, but when it comes to Narnia, there is a special kind of "authority as a substitute for argument" ("Why" 283) that is especially relevant to the children's series. This is seen in the way the protagonists imitate Aslan and other virtuous characters in the novels. Behind this lies the Christian idea of *imitatio Christi* and the virtue-ethical emphasis on imitation in general, as Aristotle noted that the primary way of judging between good and evil is following the example of a virtuous character (Dunne 55; Carr and Steutel 9).

The role of imitation has a long tradition in considerations of moral judgment when it comes to a work of narrative fiction such as *The Chronicles*. Potolsky (50) notes that "following the best human

role models and imitating trusted conventions” used to be thought as one of the main functions of literature in general from the ancient Rome to the early modern era. Potolsky specifically mentions the ideas of the medieval scholar Sir Philip Sidney, who, following the Aristotelian idea, thought that “the power of fiction to offer noble models of conduct makes it the highest form of teaching” as imitation allows the author to provide “forceful images of virtue and vice, moving the reader to self-improvement” (65). Although Potolsky notes that such a view of literature receded drastically by the end of the eighteenth century (65), there have been new attempts to restore it. Wayne Booth (254–55), for one, asserts that, in creating morally virtuous characters, real authors are able to come up with characters that are essentially more virtuous than themselves, as their philosophical ideals of a virtuous person surpasses their own attempts to live out high morality. A real reader who surrenders to a text with such superior characters, then, finds himself “to some degree shaped into those patterns” (Booth 272). This is what Booth playfully calls “hypocrisy upward” in which the reader, although not as virtuous as the characters, takes on their superior roles and pretends to be like them, until the reader actually becomes more like them (272). *The Chronicles* appears to form a good example of literature that aims to bring about such change in the readers through imitation, considering the fact that Aslan is clearly intended as a role model for the Narnian children and the child readers (as argued in the analysis).

Lastly, it is worth discussing whether imitation could be seen as another capacity of judgment in addition to the ones mentioned so far. It was stated above that Lewis identifies two capacities for judgment, reasoning and intuition, while emotions were not considered a form of judgment. Yet it may be reasonable to speak of imitation as using another capacity in addition to reasoning and intuition. While moral reasoning requires logical thinking, imitation could be seen to require primarily imagination, as the task is not to decide (by reasoning based on facts) what Aslan *does* in a situation but to find out (by the way of imagination) what he *would do*. Lewis explained the difference between the two conscious capacities by noting that “reason is the natural organ of truth, but imagination is the organ of meaning” (“Bluspes” 265). Peter J. Schakel interprets Lewis’s statement

to mean that imagination is needed “to give meaning to morality, to connect its principles to life, to bridge the gap between theory and practice” (164). In the present context, imagination renders one capable of picturing what a virtuous person would do in a given situation. Although imagination is clearly the capacity involved in moral imitation and thus relevant for the present study, it was purposely left out of the listing above as one of the primary capacities for moral judgment. This is because one needs to rely on one’s moral knowledge (gained by intuition and logic) about the moral justness of the person in question in order to truly trust their moral authority. It is, consequently, rather the capacity utilized for the particular form of authority. Other forms of authority such as moral commandments in a sacred text may require different capacities.

All of the aforementioned ways of moral judgment – Logic, Conscience, and Imitation – have a central role in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. They, together with the Moral Law and certain cultural elements in moral judgment, create the central aspects in the portrayal of moral judgment in the Narnia series, which will be studied in the following analysis. Before moving into the analysis, however, it is necessary to note at this point what is meant with the Narnia novels *as* Character Education in the present study.

It has been observed in the present theory chapter that C. S. Lewis’s moral philosophy and *The Chronicles of Narnia* share a similar moral philosophical framework with the Character Education movement. This framework is seen in the present study broadly as a belief in objective morality and a general virtue-ethical understanding of morality, comparable roughly to the classical traditions of Natural Law and Virtue Ethics, respectively. Moreover, the present section shows that Lewis’s understanding of moral judgment (both in his non-fiction and *The Chronicles*) is drawn coherently from the same framework. Consequently, it is here suggested that the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Chronicles* is “character educational” to the extent it flows from the philosophical beliefs behind Character Education. Moreover, according to the Aristotelian view of the moral function of literature, narrative fiction could be seen as a prime means for such moral education. The following analysis on the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Chronicles*, then, on one hand, studies the phenomenon of

moral judgment in the series and, on the other hand, reveals interesting insights into the character educational function of the novels.

#### **4 Analysis: Moral Judgment in *The Chronicles of Narnia***

Moral judgment in the Narnia novels is a broad and multifaceted phenomenon. There are at least three levels at which the reader encounters portrayal of judgment between right and wrong, good and evil in *The Chronicles*. At the deepest level, considerations of moral judgment begin from general beliefs about morality, without which there are no notions of good and evil. Secondly, the actual instances of judgment by the characters reveal how one is able to judge morally. Thirdly, *The Chronicles of Narnia* comments on a number of cultural aspects of judgment such as the roles that education and literature play in moral judgment.

This analysis sets out to analyze judgment in the Narnia series at all of the aforementioned levels. The analysis unfolds as follows: The first section analyzes the basic beliefs concerning morality in Narnia. It will be argued that these beliefs are illustrated in the “Deep Magic”, the Narnian concept of the universal Moral Law, which is communicated to the reader largely through didactic narration. The second chapter pays attention to the general elements of Narnian moral judgment, based on an analysis of the characters’ practices in moral judgment. The basic elements will be seen in the concepts of Logic, Conscience, and Imitation. Lastly, a few cultural aspects in Narnian moral judgment will be studied, namely upbringing, education, the moral beliefs of a society, and the use of literature in moral arguments. All of these different elements, then, will shed light on the overall sense of how judgment between good and evil, right and wrong is portrayed in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

##### **4.1 Moral Framework of Narnia: “Deep Magic” and Didactic Narrator**

Behind any practice of moral judgment lies one’s beliefs about the concepts of good and evil. It has been observed that in Narnia there is a belief in objective good and evil, the “*Tao* of Narnia” (Mosteller 95). In this section, the analysis will focus on studying the *Tao*, the Moral Law, in Narnia and on considering its role in the portrayal of moral judgment in Narnia. What will be proposed here is that, while explicit instances of the Moral Law are few in the *Chronicles*, the presence of *Tao* that appears to permeate the series is largely due to the didactic narrator, who interprets everything to the

reader from an essentially Moral Law perspective. Finally, some pedagogical implications of the didactic narrator are considered.

As noted above, Lewis understood the basic principles of morality to stem from a law of nature that people are inherently aware of. Abstract and theoretical concepts such as the laws of nature are seldom brought to the fore in fiction, however, which probably explains the fact that, although many critics talk about the Moral Law in Narnia, there are few explicit illustrations of it. Nevertheless, there appears to be a single scene in Narnia that explicitly mentions the Moral Law. Schakel (166, 176) notes that the *Tao* can be found in the concept of “Deep Magic” in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (hence, *LWW*). The only explicit descriptions of the “Deep Magic” appear when Aslan bids the Witch to tell him and the others of the Deep Magic. She replies,

“Tell you what is written on the very Table of Stone which stands beside us? Tell you what is written in letters deep as a spear is long on the fire-stones on the Secret Hill? Tell you what is engraved on the sceptre of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea? You at least know the Magic which the Emperor put into Narnia at the very beginning. You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to kill.” (*LWW* 175)

There are several good reasons to identify this description of the “Deep Magic” as Lewis’s Narnian version of the Moral Law. For example, the “Table of Stone” (*LWW* 175) clearly recalls Moses’ “Tablets of Stone”, a fact which Lewis also admits in one of his letters: “the stone table *is* meant to remind one of Moses’ table” (“To Patricia Mackey” 1157; emphasis in original). This points towards the Moral Law, as the Tablets of Stone contained the Ten Commandments – a set of moral principles quite like the Laws of the *Tao*. Lewis himself included parts of the Ten Commandments in his “Illustrations of the *Tao*” (*Abolition* 731–38), and thus believed that they were (at least partly) included in the *Tao*. The contents of the Deep Magic (written on the Stone Table) are not given explicitly, but at least one aspect is revealed: it contains moral obligations to punish wicked deeds, as suggested by the Witch’s demand for the blood of traitors based on it (*LWW* 175). This aspect also suggests that it could be interpreted as the Moral Law. Finally, the Witch once refers to the Deep Magic as “the Law” (*LWW* 176), which makes it clear that the Deep Magic is not “magic” in the original sense of the word but rather a Law containing binding moral commandments. These

examples will suffice to draw the apparent connection between Lewis's theory of the *Tao* and the Narnian Deep Magic.

The explicit passage on the "Deep Magic" gives the impression that the Moral Law is somehow woven into the fabric of the universe, as seen in the Witch's notion that the Emperor put the Magic "into Narnia at the very beginning" (*LWW* 175). This is in agreement with Lewis's actual beliefs about the Moral Law, which he linked to the concept of Reason. Lewis writes that Reason "exists absolutely on its own", outside the human mind and irrespective of whether human beings are rational or not (*Miracles* 325). He argues for his position by noting that, "Unless all that we take to be knowledge is an illusion, we must hold that in thinking we are not reading rationality into an irrational universe but responding to a rationality with which the universe has always been saturated" ("*De Futilitate*" 268). As Lewis's Reason includes Practical Reason (and with it, judgments of value), this "Reason" contains the Moral Law, too. Lewis notes that if one is to believe in objective value judgments, then "the Reason in which the universe is saturated is also moral" ("*De Futilitate*" 270). What such a depiction of the Deep Magic suggests is that moral values in Narnia are not arbitrary and subjective but rather have a real moral standard, built into the very fabric of the universe.

On the other hand, the implied author (the author revealed by the text) of the Narnia novels makes it plain that the Moral Law, or the Deep Magic, exists within the characters, too, as they are depicted as having an inherent knowledge of good and evil. For instance, when Edmund is about to lead his siblings to the White Witch, the narrator notes that he "managed to believe – or to pretend he believed" (*LWW* 151) that the Witch would not be excessively evil towards them. The narrator then reveals why Edmund cannot excuse his wicked idea: "deep down inside him he really knew that the White Witch was bad and cruel" (*LWW* 152). The "Deep Magic" is here portrayed as something that one cannot escape: even a wicked person knows ultimately what is good and evil, and is therefore held morally accountable. That the objective moral principles are portrayed as being "deep down inside" the character neatly conveys the narrator's idea of the Deep Magic as located "deep down" in a person's soul innermost being. This is, again, in line with Lewis's philosophical notion that the

Reason (which contains the basic moral principles) exists in the universe on its own but at the same time within a human mind: the universal Reason is “the source of my own imperfect and intermittent rationality” (*Miracles* 325) and the “power” employed in moral judgment is Reason (331).

From these observations of the Moral Law it can be inferred that moral judgment in Narnia is shown as having an objective basis. In addition, Lewis clearly intended the moral universe of Narnia to be similar to what he believed was true of the actual world: there is “a real Right and Wrong” (*Mere Christianity* 17). Explicit illustrations of the Moral Law in Narnia are rare and do not account for the anecdotal evidence of the presence of the *Tao* that permeates the series as a whole, however. What could account for the presence of Moral Law on the surface level in Narnia, by contrast, is the firm belief in objective morality that is present in the moral judgments by the narrator. Unwavering judgments on the morality of the acts and characters in Narnia work to assert the idea of objective morality implicitly.

Mynott writes that “Lewis provides his readers with a wise adult narrator who guides them through the story” (40). The reader can trust the guidance of the narrator, as Mynott describes that the Narnian narrator is “all-knowing” (42). The narrator is not quite “all-knowing” in every sense of the concept, though. This can be observed in the following examples, for instance:

[...] since that moment no one can truly claim to have seen Reepicheep the Mouse. But my belief is that he came safe to Aslan’s country and is alive there to this day. (*VDT* 540)

In fact I really think [Edmund] might have given up the whole plan and gone back and owned up and made friends with the others, if he hadn’t happened to say to himself, “When I’m King of Narnia the first thing I shall do will be to make some decent roads.” (*LWW* 152)

These examples will suffice to make the case that the narrator has boundaries to his knowledge. There is something that connects the two examples. In the case of Reepicheep the Mouse, the narrator is not able to follow Reepicheep to the Narnian version of the afterlife, the Aslan’s country, as it belongs to the realm of the divine. Also, although he knows people’s thoughts and even futurity, he does not know about possible events that never took place – this would also require special divine insight.

Although the narrator is not omniscient in some domains of knowledge, when it comes to moral judgment there is no space for indeterminacy: the narrator knows what is good and evil without a sense of ambiguity. This can be seen, for instance, in the way the narrator reveals the character of the protagonists: Lucy is “a very truthful girl” (*LWW* 121), while Edmund “was becoming a nastier person every minute” (*LWW* 129). The narrator also wants to make certain that the readers are not left to themselves with the characters’ faulty judgments. Consequently, in *The Horse and His Boy* when Shasta reasons that his friend Aravis has probably left him and judges that it would be “just the sort of thing Aravis would do” (*HB* 244), the narrator jumps in and corrects Shasta’s judgment as follows:

In this idea about Aravis Shasta was once more quite wrong. She was proud and could be hard enough but she was true as steel and would never have deserted a companion, whether she liked him or not. (*HB* 244)

The narrator’s ability in moral judgment appears to be in line with the *Tao* in Narnia: he is an example of an adult who functions “within the *Tao*” (*Abolition* 727), and is thus able to discern between good and evil. He is also perfectly skilled in moral judgment and has access to all relevant knowledge, even people’s thoughts and inner motives. Therefore, he is able to exercise moral judgment without error, regardless of the fact that he is not divine. As the narrator, who believes firmly and unquestionably in objective moral truth, guides the reader all through the stories, the reader, in turn, has a sensation that the Moral Law is everywhere.

Now the fact that the narrator leaves no ambiguity in moral matters has the effect that moral dilemmas are not left for the reader to decide. The implicit idea appears to be that the readers are not encouraged to interpret morality on their own, but they are invited to observe how someone who comprehends the universal Moral Law would view each moral dilemma. As critics such as Mynott view such a portrayal of moral judgment in a negative light, it is worthwhile, before moving on to the next topic, to consider how it might affect the readers’ view of moral judgment.

How one sees such a view of moral judgment is clearly influenced by one’s moral philosophical beliefs. This can be illustrated by contrasting Lewis’s didactic narrator with Philip Pullman’s

(allegedly) non-didactic narrator. Naomi Wood (244) notes that the narrator in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* series does not tell the reader how to think about the moral dilemmas "at least not in the direct and regulated manner of Lewis' narrator." Nikolajeva notes that the "ambiguity of good and evil" in Pullman's trilogy is "based on the postmodern concept of indeterminacy, of the relativity of good and evil" ("Fairy Tale" 148). For those who subscribe to moral relativism, it could be argued that the children would be better left with their own judgments rather than those by the intrusive, biased adults in the stories. After all, who is the children's writer to impose *their* set of values to the young?

It has been noted already that all literature is didactic and affects its readership either covertly or overtly, so the question is rather *how* the specific kind of didacticism might influence the reader. When it comes to the didactic narrator in Narnia, the presence of a reliable adult narrator in children's literature could be seen as an example of care for children. At least some critics have paid attention to the positive aspects of the didactic narrator: Barbara Wall (18) remarks concerning the didactic narrators in Lewis's and Dahl's children's books that, "Many child readers respond favourably to the sense of security given to them by the familiar voice of the explaining, rather patronising, narrator". Wood (242) appears to agree with Wall by saying that the narrator's "degree of control does offer a degree of security: under the narrator's guiding hand, only so much can go wrong in Narnia." There appear to be arguments for both kinds of didacticism, then, depending on one's philosophical position. When it comes to considering children's literature as Character Education – the viewpoint adopted in this thesis – Lewis's kind of didacticism appears to be well suited for it: character educators, after all, put little emphasis on novelty and creativity on moral matters, emphasizing conformity to the traditional virtues instead.

The previous analysis shows that the "Deep Magic" and, to a greater extent, the didactic narrator in *The Chronicles of Narnia* function to establish a definitive moral framework with clear values: the universal Moral Law that Lewis refers to as the *Tao*. However, this says little about how the capacity for such moral judgement is developed, or about how one can apply moral principles when judging

specific cases in life. These are mainly observed in the way the literary characters, especially the protagonists, learn moral judgment. In the following, these aspects are focused on in order to observe what the actual practice of moral judgment is like in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

#### 4.2 Narnian Lessons in Moral Judgment

In this section, the analysis will focus on the general elements of moral judgment in Narnia, as seen from the viewpoint of the characters in the story. What is proposed here is that the main constituents of judgment in the moral fabric of Narnia are exemplified by the three informal “lessons” that the Pevensie children are given by their grown-up tutors who stand “within the *Tao*”, in other words, who have themselves adopted the universal moral maxims and practice moral judgment based on them. These elements are essentially the same three ways of moral judgment that Lewis describes in his essay “Why I Am Not a Pacifist”, which suggests that the Narnia novels constitute a serious attempt to influence the readers in their judgment skills.

At the beginning of *The Lion*, the Pevensie children have serious problems with moral judgment. For instance, Lucy follows a “strange creature” (who is about to abduct her) into the woods (*LWW* 116), Edmund reveals details to an evil Witch about his family with grave consequences (*LWW* 125), and Susan and Peter make hasty evaluations of the evidence at hand and fail to do justice to Lucy’s claims (*LWW* 130). Nevertheless, by the end of book the Pevensie children appear to have mastered moral judgment. They have become kings and queens, which clearly entails highly developed moral judgment:

And they made good laws and kept the peace and saved good trees from being unnecessarily cut down, and liberated young dwarfs and young satyrs from being sent to school, and generally stopped busybodies and interferers and encouraged ordinary people who wanted to live and let live. (*LWW* 194)

What accounts for the protagonists’ development from their humble beginnings at the start of *The Lion* to being masters in moral judgment at the end of the novel and in the sequels?

It will be here suggested that the answer lies in a series of informal “lessons” that the children are offered in the story. Mynott has noted how the implied author of *The Lion* uses three male adult

characters – Professor Kirke, Mr Beaver, and Aslan – as secondary narrators who tell the children how they ought to interpret certain events and actions. With his narrators, then, Lewis attempts to initiate both the protagonists and the readers of the stories into “the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil” (Mynott 40).

While Mynott’s suggestion captures the general contents of the lessons, it is still quite vague. In this analysis, Mynott’s notion of the children’s encounters with the adults as lessons in morality will be developed further, and it will be proposed that each of the three encounters with the “adult guides” of the children reveal a particular aspect of moral judgment that, together, make up the core of the holistic view of moral judgment in Narnia. First, Professor Kirke initiates the children into deductive reasoning by helping them evaluate Lucy’s case for Narnia. Secondly, Mr Beaver helps the children become aware of the power of moral intuition that is essential for value judgments of the classical kind, as seen in the concept of Practical Reason. Finally, Aslan stands for the ultimate example of morality. After meeting the Lion, the children’s primary way of judging between what is good and evil essentially stems out of the knowledge of Aslan by imitating him. The present chapter, then, analyzes Narnian moral judgment as constituting primarily from these three elements: Logic, Conscience (including Practical Reason), and Imitation. Before analyzing the individual elements, however, the implications of the child characters’ faulty judgment at the beginning of the series will be considered in more detail, as it is contrasted with the subsequent lessons in judgment and as it highlights the children’s need for learning moral judgment of a better kind.

#### **4.2.1 Narnian Children in Need of Better Judgment**

This section sets out to analyze examples of the kind of moral judgment that the children practice prior to their learning a better kind of moral judgment in Narnia. These examples will show that the children are in need of moral instructors when it comes to exercising good judgment. This also appears to reveal the implied author’s concern that his readers may have similar needs to which the Narnia novels are a possible solution. The examples in this chapter are all taken from scenes where the protagonists have not yet been taught moral judgment in Narnia or where they have not been in

Narnia long enough to have absorbed the stronger kind of morality that the world beyond the wardrobe fosters in them.

The children's deficient competence in moral judgment at the threshold of their Narnian experience is most clearly observed in the scenes where they lack moral judgment altogether. For instance, when Lucy Pevensie ends up in the magical world and finds a Faun there, she never stops to ask herself whether the creature is to be trusted. Instead, she finds herself "walking through the wood arm in arm with this strange creature as if they had known one another all their lives" (*LWW* 116). Although the narrator does not comment on Lucy's lack of judgment explicitly, the reader is left wondering whether Lucy's mother ever warned her about trusting strangers, let alone "strange creatures", in the way little children are commonly warned. Likewise, Edmund fails to stop and judge the situation at a crucial moment when he enters Narnia for the first time. When the evil White Witch, pretending to be a Queen, starts asking Edmund about his siblings, the narrator highlights Edmund's lack of discernment by pointing out that he "never asked himself why the Queen should be so inquisitive" (*LWW* 125). Quite like Lucy, Edmund is trusting a complete stranger with intimate details of his life, and this despite the fact that he "did not like the way she looked at him" (*LWW* 123). These examples of Lucy and Edmund clearly depict the lack of what Thomas Lickona calls *moral awareness* – they "simply don't see the ways that the situation at hand involves a moral issue and calls for moral judgment" ("What" 242).

Another way the protagonists' deficient moral judgment skills are portrayed is found in the scenes where the children attempt to fight against injustice towards them but are not able to oppose the evil acts with clear argumentation. Thus, on hearing that Mr Tumnus had planned to abduct her, Lucy first politely tries to ask him not to do it, "Oh, but you won't, Mr Tumnus, [...] You won't, will you?" (*LWW* 118). Finally, Lucy confronts him by remarking that he "really mustn't" abduct her (*LWW* 118), not augmenting the imperative with appeals to any moral principle. Luckily, the Faun's heart melts and he brings Lucy back to the entrance to her world. Although this scene clearly resembles the tradition of romantic child heroes in children's literature who save the situation by their

innocence (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 31), it also shows the naivety of Lucy's moral judgment. Likewise, in a scene in *The Magician's Nephew* (*MN*) when Uncle Andrew does not let Digory and Polly out of his room, the children first ask, "Will you let us out, please?" (*MN* 16). As the plea goes unnoticed, the children then turn to an imperative:

"Look here, Uncle Andrew," said Digory, "it really is dinner time and they'll be looking for us in a moment. You must really let us out."

"Must?" said Uncle Andrew. (*MN* 16)

When their imperative fails, Digory and Polly "dare not say anything" and decide to try to "humour him" instead, with equally poor results (*MN* 16). Thus, the children fail to argue for their moral imperatives, although they instinctively appear to know them as just.

There are a few instances where the children actually provide their claims with moral arguments before learning judgment from the adult figures in Narnia. Yet even then the arguments are faulty and hasty. Edmund's arguments, for instance, do not follow the laws of logic. This can be observed in an early scene, where Lucy meets Edmund in Narnia and tells him about her second meeting with the Faun and reveals that the Queen is actually, according to the Faun, a terrible Witch. Edmund does not quite like this statement and feels ill inside. He then says to Lucy that "You can't always believe what Fauns say" (*LWW* 128), a moral statement, which is – taken literally – quite true, as one cannot really "always" believe what anyone says. Edmund's remark is not correct deductive thinking, however, as it moves from general to particular, making the point that *sometimes* the Fauns ought not to be trusted but at the same time leaving it open whether one ought to believe this particular Faun. Thus, it does not answer the question whether Lucy ought to believe Mr Tumnus the Faun. Lucy does not apparently notice the faulty logic behind the application of Edmund's argument, however, as she rather asks how Edmund came to learn the information about the Fauns. Edmund's answer shows his ignorance of logic: the only argument he gives in support of his claim is that "[e]veryone knows it [...] ask anybody you like" (*LWW* 128). With this generalization, Edmund evades the question, and clearly attempts to hurt Lucy by making her feel stupid for not knowing what "everyone knows".

This dialogue shows that the children do not practice nor expect from each other sound logic in their arguments.

The older Pevensie siblings do not fare much better. Susan and Peter's competence in moral judgment at the beginning of the series is put to the test when Lucy and Edmund return from the magical world. Lucy has got supporting testimony for her claims about Narnia: "The others will have to believe in Narnia now that both of us have been there" (*LWW* 128). Lucy then sets the argument before the older siblings, who turn to Edmund for a sort of hearing. However, Edmund decides "to do the meanest and most spiteful thing he could think of" and denies his experience (*LWW* 129), and a moral dilemma is born. Losing what she thought to be a watertight argument, Lucy does not argue further for her claims but shuts down emotionally instead (*LWW* 121, 129). The older siblings are depicted as making their judgment of the case hastily based on presuppositions and, consequently, fail to study Lucy's case further. Peter and Susan's competence in judgment is portrayed as more mature than their younger siblings in that they discuss the case together and appear to think about some alternative possibilities, but it is not mature enough to solve the dilemma, which signals their need for better practices.

Although the kind of faults the children have in their moral argumentation skills are probably commonplace and comparatively harmless in reality, the Narnia novels add weight to the seriousness of correct argumentation by depicting that simple mistakes in moral judgment, even when made by children, can bring about drastic consequences. Thus, for instance, Edmund's lack of moral awareness when questioned by the White Witch turns out to be a matter of life and death. First of all, by revealing information about him and his siblings, Edmund is depicted as having placed him and his siblings in danger of their lives, as the White Witch is looking to kill the humans who fit the old prophecy of two kings and two queens who will end her reign (*LWW* 148). Secondly, Edmund also trusted the Queen with information about Lucy's meeting with the Faun (*LWW* 125), which results in the Witch turning Mr Tumnus into stone. Thirdly, Edmund's lack of judgment eventually requires Aslan's death on his behalf, adding to the costly consequences of his simple mistake.

In addition to Edmund's example, there is a scene where faulty moral reasoning, practiced with good intentions, brings about enormous negative consequences. In *The Magician's Nephew*, the young Digory attempts to save England by taking the White Witch back to her own world where Digory had foolishly awakened her. Digory's decision to confront the Witch is portrayed as an unselfish case of moral judgment. The reader is notified that Digory leaves out a crucial element in his moral reasoning, however: he forgets to test one of his premises, as the narrator points out that he "did not know that she had lost any of [her magical powers] by coming into our world" (MN 52). Consequently, the Witch would have been comparatively easy to disarm in England, whereas in the other worlds she would be able to do terrible magic. Ignorant of this turn of events, Digory moves ahead with his plan and sends the Witch to another world with a magical ring. The witch ends up in the newly-created Narnia, where she does not only become the White Witch that rules Narnia cruelly for a hundred years, but by taking the Witch to Narnia, Digory is responsible for introducing the concept of evil to the otherwise unspoiled world: "'You see, friends,' [Aslan] said, 'that before the new, clean world I gave you is seven hours old, a force of evil has already entered it; waked and brought hither by this son of Adam'" (MN 80). The hyperbolic consequences that come out of both Edmund's and Digory's failures to judge well at the critical moment convey the implied author's message that moral judgment is not a trivial matter but a vital skill without which one can cause great harm to both oneself and one's fellow creatures. In Narnia at least, failure in moral judgment, even when carried out with good intentions, can bring about cosmic consequences.

All of the examples above portray the children as deficient in moral judgment on their own. Often their judgment is based on faulty arguments, and at times they fail to stop and recognize a need for moral judgment altogether. With these scenes the implied author suggests that children do not naturally become sufficiently good at moral judgment; they need to be taught correct judgment. These examples stand in contrast with the developed and robust kind of moral judgment in Narnia that is taught to the protagonists by their superiors in a series of informal "lessons". This proper kind of

moral judgment, as seen in the “lessons” will be analyzed next, in the order the aspects of moral judgment are introduced in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

#### 4.2.2 Professor Kirke and Logic

This section sets out to analyze the most basic form of moral judgment in *The Chronicles of Narnia* as seen in logical reasoning about truth and falsehood. The conversation between the older Pevensie siblings and Professor Kirke at the beginning of *The Lion*, which initiates the children into thorough logical reasoning in the first place, is a perfect example of Theoretical Reason applied to a moral dilemma. What will be analyzed here is how the conversation portrays the role of Theoretical Reason (or “Logic” as the Professor calls it; *LWW* 131) in moral judgment, and the conversation is here taken to reveal general ideas about logical reasoning that the implied author wishes for his child readers to adopt.

That the conversation between Susan, Peter, and Professor Kirke is an example of Theoretical rather than Practical Reason is seen already in the question the conversation sets out to ask. The Professor’s question to the children concerns the truthfulness or falsehood of Lucy’s claims and does not draw on value judgments: “‘How do you know,’ he asked, ‘that your sister’s story is not true?’” (*LWW* 130). The question whether Lucy is speaking the truth or not is one of Theoretical Reason, as truth and falsehood concern facts and not yet values (although, of course, any claim for the preference of truth over falsehood would have to contain a value statement). Apart from the conversation between the children and the Professor, there are other moral conversations that utilize Logic in the series, but as the logical reasoning is mixed with value judgments in them, they will be dealt with in the next chapter. The conversation analyzed here works as a prime illustration of the classical concept of Theoretical Reason precisely on the grounds that it is purely logical, whether this aspect was intended by Lewis or not.

The scene with the older Pevensie siblings and Professor Kirke portrays correct application of Logic as an essential and highly effective means of moral judgment. Through the scene the implied author suggests that a brief moment of intentional ethical judgment based on logical inference can

change a moral evaluation upside down. On their own, the children see two options – that Lucy is “either going queer in the head or else turning into a most frightful liar” (*LWW* 130), but a moment with the Professor has already expanded the alternatives to three, and the most probable alternative is the one the children had left out altogether.

The Professor’s summary of the case is the first example of a thorough logical argument in *The Chronicles*:

There are only three possibilities. Either your sister is telling lies, or she is mad, or she is telling the truth. You know she doesn’t tell lies and it is obvious she is not mad. For the moment then, and unless any further evidence turns up, we must assume that she is telling the truth. (*LWW* 131)

The Professor’s argument could be rewritten as follows:

1. Lucy is lying, mad, or in the right.
2. Lucy is not in the habit of lying and, therefore probably does not lie now, either.
3. One can observe her to see that she is not mad.
4. Therefore, she has to be in the right, unless other evidence shows up.

Professor Kirke’s treatment of the moral dilemma shows how the novel recommends reaching logical conclusions through a clear analysis of the evidence at hand. It has left out all redundancies and only keeps the elements required for the sake of argument.

“Logic” is portrayed in the scene as a powerful tool that, if mastered, helps one to evaluate the strength of different claims. This effect is created by the Professor’s example as he skillfully chooses different approaches to counter different arguments. For instance, in order to help the children judge between Lucy and Edmund’s accounts, he appeals to their *past experience*: “does your experience lead you to regard your brother or your sister as the more reliable?” (*LWW* 131). The implication is not only that experience is a reliable source of evidence, but also that past behavior can predict present and future behavior. The Professor stresses this by noting that “a charge of lying against someone whom you have always found truthful is a very serious thing; a very serious thing indeed” (*LWW* 131). This also indicates a virtue-ethical understanding of virtues and vices as relatively stable indicators of one’s behavior, an idea which is also shared in *Character Education* (see Arthur, *Education* 2).

Apart from experience, *observation of the facts* is given as another source for arguments, and it is used to counter the alternative view – that Lucy has lost her sanity: “‘Madness, you mean?’ said the Professor quite coolly. ‘Oh, you can make your minds easy about that. One has only to look at her and talk to her to see that she is not mad’” (*LWW* 131). The Professor’s argument oversimplifies the reality (as a mentally ill person can appear sane in many respects), but a simple refutation of the claim works to keep the structure of argumentation clear, nevertheless.

In addition, a crucial element in Narnian “Logic” is awareness and honesty with one’s *presuppositions*. This is best attested in the Professor’s decision not to leave out any possibilities prematurely. Susan and Peter give reasons for doubting Lucy’s account: the wardrobe leads to Narnia only sometimes and not always, and Lucy came away from the Wardrobe after hiding there for a few minutes but claimed to have been there for hours (*LWW* 131). Here the Professor takes an unexpected turn in the argument and starts to bring up the children’s presuppositions and unquestioned premises. What is special in the Professor’s treatment of the situation is that he subjects the miraculous to investigation in the same manner as he would subject ordinary events. For instance, when Susan notes that Lucy was in the wardrobe only for a few minutes but claims to have been there for hours, Professor Kirke maintains that it is exactly what supports Lucy’s case: “if, I say, she had got into another world, I should not be at all surprised to find that the other world had a separate time of its own” (*LWW* 132). Also, the Professor notes that girls of Lucy’s age would be unlikely to come up with such a developed story, where even time runs differently (*LWW* 132). The implication of the situation is that, if one is to do logical reasoning, then one needs to go all the way and come into the enterprise without undue presuppositions, and give every possibility a fair hearing. What the children, in turn, are supposed to learn from this is being aware of their preconceived ideas and to be open for (rational) possibilities beyond their experience.

Logic is not portrayed as a way to reach arrogant certainty, however, but it is connected with the idea of *probability*. For instance, the Professor’s argument is not portrayed as claiming absolute certainty. The Professor simply works out the evidence and finds Lucy’s case the most convincing

“unless any further evidence turns up” (*LWW* 131). He is clearly in need of evidence before he can carry out actual moral judgments. Therefore, he is not presented as an infallible judge but as someone who has mastered the skill of deductive reasoning and needs to top it up with knowledge of the individual case in order to judge well.

When it comes to moral judgment in Narnia, the children’s lengthy moral conversation with the Professor can be seen as an “introduction to the basics of moral judgment”, and it marks a definite change in the way the children judge. What the implied author teaches the children (and the child readers) through the scene is breaking the evidence into logically meaningful units and deducing logical conclusions based on observation, experience, and probability, among other things. Although the Professor’s argumentation itself might not be complete, the implication of the passage, nevertheless, is that unbiased moral reasoning can lead to possibilities not considered otherwise and can arrive at truth, as will be revealed to the children when they finally enter Narnia. Also implied is that moral dilemmas are best discussed with other people – that discussing moral dilemmas with others can broaden one’s perspective and make it more likely for one to practice better judgment.

It seems that all of the elements in Narnian “Logic” coincide with Lewis’s actual beliefs about Reason (even the hint at supernaturalism, as seen in Lewis’s book *Miracles*, a rational argument for miraculous events). It may not be a coincidence that Logic is introduced before the other two kinds of moral judgment in the novels, as it is clearly the lightest and “easiest” form of moral judgment, and the other forms presuppose and are built on it. Lewis also called Theoretical Reason (or Logic) the “most useful analogy” to understanding Practical Reason (“Why” 281). In his philosophical works, by making his readers first understand the way logical inference works, Lewis thought to help them understand that our moral evaluation of good and evil work in a similar fashion. In the same way, the Professor’s “lesson” on Logic can be seen to prepare the children for the subsequent lessons on explicitly moral evaluation. The next chapter, then, considers the portrayal of Conscience, or value judgments, in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

### 4.2.3 *Conscientia*, Mr Beaver, and Practical Reason

While the previous section focused on the most basic form of moral judgment in Narnia, reasoning about truth and falsehood, this section concentrates on judgments about good and evil, that is, judgments of value. For Lewis, the means of judging between good and evil lies in his concept of the conscience. As held by Lewis (“Why” 281), there are two aspects to the conscience: the emotional (*Conscientia*) and the cognitive (Practical Reason). While both senses are relevant to understanding moral judgment, *Conscientia* has considerably less prominence in Narnia than Practical Reason. Thus, the section unfolds by first considering the portrayal of *Conscientia* in Narnia in brief, followed by a more detailed consideration of Practical Reason and the related concept of moral intuition, which is the most relevant element that distinguishes it from Theoretical Reason.

The few explicit instances of *Conscientia* in *The Chronicles* are all connected with Lucy:

[...] Lucy’s conscience smote her and she said, “I think I really must go and see Eustace. Seasickness is horrid, you know.” (*VDT* 434)

[...] All the others were there with him waiting, and Lucy’s conscience smote her when she saw their anxious faces and realized how long she had forgotten them. (*VDT* 503)

The examples portray the conscience as smiting a person after they have done something wrong or as they are neglecting a certain duty. The conscience is also clearly portrayed as subjective. This can be observed in the fact that when Lucy feels that she must go and see the seasick cabin member, the others do not share her opinion: Caspian (also presented as a morally admirable person) suggests that Lucy’s magical healing drops would be “wasted on a thing like seasickness” (*VDT* 434). Irrespective of the subjectivity of its demands (as it is based on one’s knowledge of good and evil which is, in turn, subject to change) the conscience is nevertheless not to be argued with. (Lewis might have thought that working against one’s conscience, even though it would not be objective, might harden the conscience, damaging its functionality.) Thus, Lucy does not start questioning her conscience (for instance, by challenging its demands with Caspian’s opinions) but, instead, simply obeys it. Since Lucy is portrayed as a virtuous character throughout the series, it is implied that following her conscience is the right thing to do, although the narrator does not say it explicitly.

All of the aforementioned qualities of the conscience appear to be in line with Lewis's understanding of *Conscientia*. Lewis does not deal with explicit questions related to *Conscientia* extensively in his theory or in *The Chronicles*, perhaps for the reason that it is in his thinking simply to be obeyed, making it a topic easy to cover quickly. The more interesting topic is considering one's knowledge of good and evil, which can be improved. Therefore, without lingering on Conscience for any longer, the remaining part of this chapter focuses on the portrayal of Practical Reason in the Narnia novels.

As explained previously, Practical Reason differs from Theoretical Reason in that the premises from which the "practical" conclusions are drawn contain value judgments, whereas Theoretical Reason draws on universal "intellectual principles" ("On Living" 364). One recognizes these principles, whether logical or moral, through what Lewis calls "intuition" ("Why" 283), and therefore, the starting point of learning Practical Reason is to recognize what the correct intuitions are. What will be considered next, then, is how the Narnian characters are portrayed to arrive at value judgments through the help of moral intuition.

The implied author suggests that, on their own, the children fail to consciously listen to the witness of the Moral Law "deep down inside" them. Thus, Edmund attempts to excuse his obedience to the Witch, although it "wasn't a very good excuse, however, for deep down inside him he really knew that the White Witch was bad and cruel" (*LWW* 152). As they are not aware of them, the children need help in recognizing the moral intuitions, which is provided to them in the form of Mr Beaver's informal "lesson". In the scene, Mr Beaver tells Edmund's siblings that they need not look for him, as he tells them that "we know already where he's gone", to meet the Witch herself (*LWW* 148). The siblings deny the charge against Edmund on the grounds that he could not do something so evil, but Mr Beaver appeals to their intuitions:

"Can't he?" said Mr Beaver, looking very hard at the three children, and everything they wanted to say died on their lips, for each felt suddenly quite certain inside that this was exactly what Edmund had done. (*LWW* 149)

This example reveals how one is able to utilize moral intuition to arrive at true moral knowledge. On the conscious level, the children do not want to accept that their brother would be evil. However, Mr Beaver is convinced that they know the moral truth inside them and, by insisting them to “feel” the thoughts at a deeper level, is able to make them realize it consciously. Thus, the children are portrayed as needing outside help to learn to discern moral intuition, which also explains why Edmund, who had no-one to accompany him when encountered by the Witch, did not stop and listen to the warning signals.

The function of the intuitions is to reveal to the children whether a person is good or evil, and it appears to be at its strongest when the children encounter characters that are extremely good or evil. Thus, deep down inside, Edmund “really knew that the White Witch was bad and cruel” (*LWW* 152). In another scene in *Prince Caspian (PC)*, Susan recognizes Aslan (the epitome of virtue) regardless of her attempts of self-denial: “I really believed it was him tonight, when you woke us up. I mean, deep down inside. Or I could have, if I’d let myself.” (*PC* 386). The essential difference between Edmund’s and Susan’s instances of moral intuition is that, while moral intuition warns Edmund of an evil character, Susan recognizes a righteous character on the same basis. The similarity of the examples lies in the fact that moral intuition includes primarily knowledge about the goodness of characters, not acts.

The Narnian portrayal of moral intuition as revealing primarily information about the moral character of another person is interesting in light of the fact that the Laws of *Tao* (the basic intuitions) are all about the rightness or wrongness of particular acts. In this sense the Narnian moral intuitions are not in agreement with Lewis’s theoretical account of the *Tao*. It is a debated question whether one recognizes a good act or person first, in other words, whether one recognizes good acts as what a good person would do, or a good person from the acts they are practicing. There are some modern researchers who argue that there may be some truth in the primacy of characters in moral judgment. Eric Luis Uhlmann et al., for instance, claim that “when making moral evaluations, it appears as if individuals are often not asking themselves ‘is this act right or wrong’ but rather are asking

themselves ‘is this person good or bad?’” (72). Whether the primacy in reality lies on acts or characters, the Narnian kind of moral intuition is character-based in this sense – approximating a special kind of virtue-ethical understanding of moral intuition.

In addition to the kind of moral knowledge intuition conveys, the way in which the intuitions are formed is also peculiar. The scene with Mr Beaver suggests that one comes to have the moral intuition by beholding the outward appearance of the others:

“I didn’t like to mention it before (he being your brother and all) but the moment I set eyes on that brother of yours I said to myself “Traucherous”. He had the look of one who has been with the Witch and eaten her food. You can always tell them if you’ve lived long in Narnia; something about their eyes.” (*LWW* 149)

Mr Beaver reveals that the process by which one comes to have the moral knowledge about the person is visual: Edmund had “the look of one who has been with the Witch” (*LWW* 149). The visual element in receiving intuition is further emphasized by the fact that it is the visual organ that is especially telling, as seen in Mr Beaver’s statement that assessing the evil characters’ wickedness is connected to “something about their eyes” (*LWW* 149). Once one has received the required visual data for moral intuition, however, then one needs only to meditate on it, which can be done even though the person in question would not be present. Thus, the Pevensie children also recognize intuitively that Edmund has become evil, although he is not to be seen there and then (*LWW* 149).

Regardless of the vagueness concerning the reception of the needed sense data for moral intuition (“something about their eyes”), intuition is nevertheless portrayed as an exceptionally effective means of acquiring true moral knowledge, as implied by Mr Beaver’s being able to “always tell them” (*LWW* 149). Furthermore, moral intuition is portrayed as something that can be tested. Mr Beaver knows that the kind of evil look Edmund had is attained only by meeting the Witch and eating her food, so he tests his hypothesis by asking whether Edmund has indeed been to Narnia before. As the children tell him he has been there by himself, his hypothesis on the events appears more credible to the others. Therefore, although the children’s moral intuitions tell them that Mr Beaver is in the right even before any logical argumentation, Mr Beaver makes the children believe in it further by

providing evidence for his theory, which suggests that intuition is both non-rational and rational: one “just sees” it, but it can be tested by the way of logical inquiry.

The curious way in which moral intuition is connected to outward appearance and impressions does not occur exclusively in the scene with Mr Beaver; rather, it represents a common phenomenon in *The Chronicles* in general. Wood (2001, 249) notes that in Narnia, “We’re frequently told that looks, particularly the eyes, tell observant people all they need to know about whom to trust.” For instance, Digory notices that Jadis the Witch’s face has the “same hungry and greedy look which he had lately seen on Uncle Andrew’s” (MN 42). Polly sees a connection between the Witch and the vicious Uncle Andrew, too: “there was a sort of likeness between her face and his, something in the expression. It was the look that all wicked Magicians have” (MN 45). The fact that both of the children see the same connection between the two magicians suggests that their impressions were not merely subjective opinions but rather instances of truthful judgment: the magicians do not simply *look* wicked; they *are* wicked and even their faces reveal it.

One does not recognize only evil characters by their looks, but both good and evil characters are revealed by it once one learns the practice. An especially telling scene to illustrate this is found in *The Magician’s Nephew*, where Digory and Polly enter a room full of petrified people and start judging them based on their faces. The people closest to the entrance of the room are judged to be good by the children: “All the faces they could see were certainly nice” (MN 34). As they move on, the faces begin to look more evil: “The faces here looked very strong and proud and happy, but they looked cruel” (MN 34). Finally, Digory and Polly come to the Witch who was exceedingly beautiful but “with a look of such fierceness and pride that it took your breath away” (MN 34). The children’s impressions based on the faces are portrayed as trustworthy sources of judgment, and the faces are portrayed as revealing information not only about the moral character of the people but also some more detailed information such as their contentment in life.

The looks of a face can even tell of a sudden change for the better. In *The Silver Chair*, when the children meet the enchanted Prince Rilian for the first time, he “looked both bold and kind, though

there was something about his face that didn't seem quite right" (SC 619) and the children are not able to fully trust him. When the children finally set him free and break the spell, the narrator notes that "the something wrong, whatever it was, had vanished from his face" (SC 626). The numerous examples above point to the centrality of impression to moral judgment in Narnia: one is able to tell whether someone is good or evil based on intuition that is, in turn, informed by impression.

It is clear that the Narnian portrayal of how one is to arrive at the moral intuitions differs from Lewis's actual ideas about moral intuitions utilized in *Practical Reason*. When Lewis wrote about "intuitive knowledge" in the process of *Practical Reason*, he meant the universal ability of people to "just see" that certain moral maxims are always true: "if there can be a difference of opinion which does not reveal one of the parties as a moral idiot, then it is not an intuition" ("Why" 283). Thus, the statement that "health and harmony are good" is a moral intuition (as one "just sees" it), whereas "all strong drink is forbidden" is not (283). Such a picture of moral intuition is clearly different from the idea present in the Narnia novels that looks betray moral character. The fact that Lewis's actual beliefs on intuition diverge from the Narnian model of intuition suggests that Lewis did not intend the reader to pick up the emphasis on impression as a real characteristic of moral intuition. In the novels, the emphasis on appearance as an indicator of morality may have served a purely artistic function for Lewis, as it may be difficult to portray something as vague as moral intuition without reference to some physical element. Also, it could help a child reader to visualize the morality of a literary character better when it is reinforced with visual cues that agree with the moral qualities.

Intuition is not all there is to *Practical Reason*, however. In both Lewis's theory and *The Chronicles*, the moral knowledge attained intuitively becomes truly effective only after it is used in conscious moral reasoning, which is clearly a point that Lewis would have wanted his readers to learn. Once the Narnian characters have learnt to hearken to the moral intuitions within themselves, they are then able to practice effective *Practical Reason*. For instance, in the scene with the Beaver, moral intuition made the children, it appears, only aware that their brother has indeed become evil. The rest of the conclusion (that Edmund had gone to see the Witch) is arrived at through logical

inference that takes advantage of the intuition. This can be observed in the way Mr Beaver came up with the conclusion. Firstly, he recognized from Edmund's eyes that he had "been with the Witch and eaten her food" (*LWW* 149). Then, although the text does not explicitly say it, Mr Beaver made a logical inference that he had gone to the Witch to betray the others to her (*LWW* 149). Thus, the knowledge provided by moral intuition is used as a premise for reasoning. This aspect of the Narnian moral intuition is clearly connected to Lewis's idea of the "first principles of Practical Reason" – the children are intuitively aware of some value judgments in their hearts that they then are able to use in their conscious acts of reasoning.

The scene with Mr Beaver and the children is a vivid example of how to recognize the moral intuitions within oneself, but it is not a particularly clear example of Practical Reason otherwise, as it leaves out certain steps in the logical argument. A better example of Practical Reason in use can be seen in a conversation between Digory (who is, interestingly, Professor Kirke, the master of Logic) and his evil Uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew*. In the scene, Digory attempts to confront Uncle Andrew by poor argumentation in vain. By observing Uncle Andrew's black magic, he then learns that magic is real. Based on this understanding, he comes up with the first solid argument against Uncle Andrew:

"[...] I didn't believe in Magic till today. I see now it's real. Well, if it is, I suppose all the old fairy tales are more or less true. And you're simply a wicked, cruel magician like the ones in the stories. Well, I've never read a story in which people of that sort weren't paid out in the end, and I bet you will be. And serve you right." (*MN* 22)

Digory's argument (perhaps the future Professor Kirke's first successful one) is a clear use of Logic in moral judgment. He learns that magic is real, which is a judgment of fact. However, the argument also includes a value judgment ("you're simply a wicked, cruel magician"), which Digory learns intuitively by looking at Uncle Andrew's face (*MN* 42). Digory's argument could be sketched as follows:

1. Magic is true. (a judgment of fact)
2. Therefore, old fairy tales are likely to contain truth as well.
3. Cruel magicians are punished at the end of all fairy tales.
4. Uncle Andrew is a wicked Magician. (a judgment of value)
5. Therefore, he will be punished at the end.

Interestingly, Digory's kind of Practical Reason which combines Logic with a moral intuition is portrayed as carrying weight in communication and as an especially effective way of confronting evil. What Digory argues eventually comes true (which shows that Digory's judgment was true), but even in the moment his argument has an effect on the villain: "Of all the things Digory had said this was the first that really went home. Uncle Andrew started and there came over his face a look of such horror that, beast though he was, you could almost feel sorry for him" (*MN* 22). The effectiveness of moral reasoning is further emphasized by the fact that Digory, a child, is able to confront an evil adult by resorting to it. Thus, in Narnia, while intuition is a trustworthy source of moral judgment even on its own, it shows its full potential in moral judgment only when combined with Logic to form coherent instances of Practical Reason.

Also, as the scene with Digory shows, in the end, Logic and value judgments often work together in arguments, suggesting that after the concepts of Logic and moral intuition have been introduced, it is no longer feasible to talk about "Theoretical Reason" and "Practical Reason" separately. Rather, we can simply talk about Reason that draws on two kinds of premises: logical and moral. Thus, in *The Abolition* Lewis notes that we need to "extend the word Reason to include what our ancestors called Practical Reason" (*Abolition* 707).

The previous and the present section suggest that much of Lewis's essential notions on moral reasoning in his non-fiction are also to be found in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, although some elements take more literary forms in his fiction. Apart from Reason, there is a wholly another way of moral judgment – imitation – which appears to (at least partially) substitute the two earlier forms and which is portrayed as the highest model of judgment. It will be considered next.

#### **4.2.4 Imitation of Aslan**

So far, it has been analyzed how the Narnian protagonists acquire and utilize Logic and Conscience as ways of moral judgment, and the two can be seen as forming the backbone of their judgment. Yet there is still a third major element in Narnian moral judgment – imitation of a virtuous character – which is revealed in what Mynott sees as the third "lesson" that the Pevensie children receive from

their adult guides, this time indirectly from Aslan. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Pevensie children pick it up last, as imitation also represents the ultimate way of judgment in Lewis's thinking.

After their acquaintance with Aslan, the Pevensie children's rudimentary skills in judgment give way to another form of judgment. This is seen, for instance, in the following example in *The Last Battle*: "'Don't try to stop me, Peter,' said Lucy, 'I am sure Aslan would not. I am sure it is not wrong to mourn for Narnia'" (*LB* 753). Essentially, this form of judgment approximates the virtue-ethical approach to moral judgment. After all, a virtue ethicist asks what a virtuous person would do in given situations (Louden 495). Similarly, the children ask what a virtuous person – in this case, Aslan – would do in the situation at hand. Moral imitation of this sort involves two major elements: firstly, becoming acquainted with the virtuous character and observing his traits and, secondly, imagining how those traits could be applied to the present situation. While the children imitate Aslan in many nuanced ways, the present analysis focuses on a few essential and recurring characteristics of Aslan that are also clearly imitated by the children.

One of the primary characteristics of Aslan imitated by the children is his portrayal as someone who is able to reconcile justice with mercy. The sense of Aslan's perfect commitment to justice is conveyed to the reader through his unwavering obedience to the Narnian concept of the Moral Law as seen in the Deep Magic. Even a suggestion of working against the Moral Law is too much for him: "'Work against the Emperor's Magic?'" said Aslan, turning to her with something like a frown on his face. And nobody ever made that suggestion to him again" (*LWW* 176). On one hand, then, Aslan is perfectly just. On the other hand, he is also characterized as merciful and loving. This trait is most clearly exemplified when Aslan sacrifices his own life to save Edmund, who deserves death for his betrayal of the others. In the end, Aslan is resurrected, however, due to "a magic deeper still" (*LWW* 185), which Schakel (177) interprets as "the power of love, the strength of the Good". What this suggests is that Aslan not only upholds the Moral Law, but he also stands above the Law. He honors the demand of the Law that Edmund's betrayal requires a death, but then he willfully acts out of mercy to exchange his own life with Edmund's. After the event, what Aslan did to Edmund comes to

describe his character. This is seen, for example, when King Tirian considers the difference between Aslan and Tash, the Calormene god: “He meant to go on and ask how the terrible god Tash who fed on the blood of his people could possibly be the same as the good Lion by whose blood all Narnia was saved” (*LB* 686). These traits of justice and mercy are also found together around the character of Aslan. For example, when giving orders to the first human King and Queen of Narnia, Aslan commands them to be “just and merciful” (*MN* 99), and, on the other hand, he later warns that there will be rulers on Earth who do not care about “justice and mercy” (*MN* 102).

The way Aslan reconciles justice with mercy works as an example for the children in moral judgment. This can be seen, for instance, in a scene where the characters are deciding what to do about Rabadash, a foreign traitor. King Lune tells the offender that “by the law of nations as well as by all reasons of prudent policy” they have the right to kill him (*HB* 306), implying that the universally accepted moral laws ascertain their right to execute the traitor. Edmund, inspired by what Aslan did to him, is ready to give up this right in order to show mercy: “But even a traitor may mend. I have known one that did” (*HB* 305). Edmund’s merciful approach is confirmed to be in line with Aslan’s thinking when Aslan suddenly shows up and judges the traitor: instead of punishing the traitor with death, Aslan turns him into an ass and notes: “Justice shall be mixed with mercy. You shall not always be an Ass” (*HB* 307). Although Aslan came and judged the traitor himself, Edmund is portrayed as someone who would have been able to judge mercifully as he had observed (and felt) the mercy of Aslan’s way of judging himself.

Another recurring characteristic of Aslan that is imitated by the children can be found in the idea that he is “good but not safe”: “‘Then he isn’t safe?’ said Lucy. ‘Safe?’ said Mr Beaver; [...] ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you’” (*LWW* 146). This characteristic of Aslan as somehow good yet fearsome is present, for instance, in the symbolism that, in addition to his Lion form, he takes the form of a Lamb in another scene (*VDT* 540). This points to the fact that Aslan’s characteristic as both the meek Lamb and the fearsome Lion is inspired by depictions of Christ as both the Lamb of God and the Lion of Judah (Edwards 34).

This second characteristic of Aslan appears to be imitated by the Pevensie children in situations requiring fierceness such as battles. Whenever the children are required to take arms, they are not afraid to do so yet they always fight fairly. This is observed, for instance, in a scene where Peter the rightful High King of Narnia challenges Miraz, an evil ruler who has usurped the Narnian throne, to a duel. The men are both described as skilled swordsmen (*VDT* 405), but the essential difference between them lies in their character. When Peter falls on one knee, the usurper is quick to use the opportunity for his advantage but he fails. When Miraz falls, on the contrary, Peter is described as having “stepped back, waiting for him to rise” (*VDT* 405). Edmund then comments on the scene: “Need he be as gentlemanly as all that? I suppose he must. Comes of being a Knight *and* a High King. I suppose it is what Aslan would like” (*VDT* 406). Peter imitates Aslan in that he is fierce and not afraid to confront anyone, but, on the other hand, he is also gentle and fair. The motivation lies in his admiration for Aslan, as Edmund estimates (correctly) that “it is what Aslan would like” (*VDT* 406).

Although imitation is closely connected with Aslan, the Narnia novels do not, however, suggest that moral imitation would only be restricted to perfect moral agents like Aslan, as he is not the only “virtuous agent” that is imitated in Narnia. For instance, in a scene in *The Silver Chair*, Eustace’s judgment in the situation is based on imitating another virtuous character he has met in Narnia earlier: “If my old friend Reepicheep the Mouse were here, he would say we could not now refuse the adventures of Bism without a great impeachment to our honour” (*SC* 645). As Eustace has acquainted himself with Reepicheep earlier, he is able to tell what Reepicheep would suggest for them to do, even though the mouse is not present himself. However, Reepicheep is not portrayed as an unfailing model to be imitated and, therefore, it is difficult to say whether imitating Reepicheep in the situation would have been a good decision or not. After all, Aslan questions Reepicheep’s understanding of honor (probably the most outstanding trait in his character) elsewhere in the series: “I have sometimes wondered, friend, [...] whether you do not think too much about your honour” (*PC* 412). These extracts suggest that, although Aslan the most suitable “virtuous agent” to be imitated, imitation of a

virtuous character in Narnia does not only concern him and the characters can also learn from each other.

Also, the implied author does not suggest that moral imitation ought to contradict or replace other forms of judgment. This can be observed in *The Last Battle*, where a false Aslan appears. The Narnians are dismayed at the orders of the fake Aslan and doubt whether the real Aslan would be like that: “you think it is really Aslan who is killing the Wood-Nymphs and making you all slaves to the King of Calormen?” (*LB* 688). In the end, the Narnians who simply believe uncritically in the false Aslan are doomed, while those who discern that the real Aslan would be good (it is implied that they know what good means) are able to imitate the real Aslan, even though he is not present. Consequently, being able to judge good and evil is portrayed as a prerequisite for recognizing a virtuous character. Otherwise imitation would equal blind trust in a character who might as well be evil.

Although most of the Narnian protagonists learn moral imitation by getting to know Aslan personally, there are also other way such as history and stories that are depicted as additional means through which one can learn to know the virtuous character. King Tirian, for instance, only knows Aslan from stories of old (*LB* 690), but is, nevertheless, able to tell the difference between the real Aslan and a counterfeit (*LB* 686). Consequently, King Tirian functions as a model for the real readers of the story who get to know Aslan through literature. The fact that Aslan is a literary character does not constitute a problem from a moral educational point of view, as Gregory Currie points out that “it is possible to imitate merely imagined people” (336). Furthermore, it could be argued that literary characters are even better objects of imitation than real people, as they are “transparent in a way real people can never be” (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* x).

As the other forms of judgment give way to imitation to a large extent, the Narnia novels implicitly suggest that imitating a virtuous agent is the ultimate way of moral judgment. The same seems to be true of Lewis’s philosophy in general. Lewis thought that, ultimately, what it means to

be good is to follow the virtuous person's – in Lewis's view, the Christ's – example. He writes to Christians,

For you are no longer thinking simply about right and wrong; you are trying to catch the good infection from a Person. It is more like painting a portrait than like obeying a set of rules. And the odd thing is that while in one way it is much harder than keeping rules, in another way it is far easier" (*Mere Christianity* 152)

This quote suggests that imitation is not about staying merely at the level of right and wrong, but going beyond it, moving from questions of what is right and wrong to trying to be good in a dynamic way. It is also a highly creative way of judgment, as implied by Lewis's comparison of imitation to "painting a portrait" (152). Apparently, this is where Lewis also thought that didacticism and aesthetics converge: morality, at its highest form, is more like art than doctrine.

In this and the previous sections, it has been showed how the Narnia novels portray moral judgment as consisting of three major elements – Logic, Conscience, and Imitation. These are largely in line with Lewis's philosophy, which suggests that Lewis wished his readership to learn better at moral judgment in their actual lives through reading the Narnia novels. The elements studied in this section have touched on what the capacity and practice of moral judgment is like. The remaining section of the analysis, however, touches on cultural aspects of moral judgment: how does one learn moral judgment, and, if moral knowledge is claimed to be innately available through the Moral Law, how does culture affect one's moral judgment?

### **4.3 Culture and Moral Judgment in *The Chronicles***

What have been analyzed so far are the portrayal of the Moral Law and the essential elements of moral judgment in Narnia seen in Logic, Conscience, and Imitation. Apart from these, the Narnian portrayal of moral judgment touches on cultural aspects of moral judgment such as the role of upbringing for one's moral judgment. While there are many nuanced cultural elements that relate to judgment in Narnia, the present section focuses on a few recurring aspects, namely, upbringing, education, literature, and the moral beliefs of a community.

Before moving on to the analysis, a note will be due on the seeming contradiction between the portrayal of moral judgment as linked to the universal Moral Law and one's learning it through culture. Lewis acknowledged that culture has an effect on one's capacity to see the Moral Law, but did not see it as a threat to his theory. Although he held that the Moral Law is "universal" in that it is innately accessible to people of different cultures and generations, Lewis believed that one's awareness of the Moral Law is largely culture-bound. This can be seen in the fact that the way to be instructed in the Moral Law is to go "back to your nurse and your father, to all the poets and sages and law givers" ("On Ethics" 313). Elsewhere, Lewis also notes that one learns the Moral Law "from parents and teachers, and friends and books, as we learn everything else" (*Mere Christianity* 21). This idea that one learns both the Moral Law and moral judgment culturally is not only true of Lewis's philosophy in general but also of the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, as will be suggested in the analysis below.

#### 4.3.1 Upbringing and Education

The first part of this section considers the roles that upbringing and education play concerning the children's moral judgment in *The Chronicles*. The section broadens the analysis on Narnian moral judgment by considering what expectations and attitudes are shown towards parents and teachers when it comes to teaching good judgment to children. In his non-fiction, Lewis shows considerable critique towards education in general and moral education in particular – attitudes which are clearly present in his children's series, too, as will be shown below.

The Narnia novels (like children's fiction in general) have little to say about the parents of the protagonists and, consequently, about their upbringing. Nonetheless, there is a passage where the moral upbringing of one of the children is brought up, and it appears to reflect Lewis's concerns on the subject. When he encounters a moral dilemma in *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory connects the universal moral imperatives to his mother who has reinforced them in him: "Mother [...] wouldn't like it – awfully strict about keeping promises – and not stealing – and all that sort of thing. *She'd* tell me not to do it – quick as anything – if she was here" (*MN* 94; emphasis in original). These moral

principles introduced by Digory's mother are clearly helpful in moral judgment, as Digory is able to turn away the Witch's enticing proposals by referring to them (*MN* 94). The implied author highlights Digory's mother as a good example of a moral educator and uses Digory's successful judgment as an opportunity to criticize the modern parents' failure to reinforce these moral principles in their children, as seen in the narrator's comment that "[t]hings like Do Not Steal were, I think, hammered into boys' heads a good deal harder in those days than they are now" (*MN* 92). At the beginning of *The Magician's Nephew*, the reader is told that the story "happened long ago when your grandfather was a child" (*MN* 11). This comment reveals that the stories take place in Lewis's mental image of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and together with the previous quotes, the narrator suggests that contemporary parents would do good to learn from the moral educational practices that took place in the home back then.

The question rises, from a Moral Law perspective, whether Digory's morality is portrayed as having been simply taught by his Mother, with no regard to objective truth or claims of intrinsic goodness present in Lewis's theory of the *Tao*. A closer look at the novel reveals that this is not the case, however. The implied author is clearly aware of the question, as the view of morality as simply growing out of one's culture is expressed by one of the villains. The wicked Uncle Andrew despises Digory's moral imperatives at the beginning of the book and hints that they are only arbitrary and not universal:

"Oh, I see. You mean that little boys ought to keep their promises. Very true: most right and proper, I'm sure, and I'm very glad you have been taught to do it. But of course you must understand that rules of that sort, however excellent they may be for little boys – and servants – and women – and even people in general, can't possibly be expected to apply to profound students and great thinkers and sages. [...] Men like me, who possess hidden wisdom, are freed from common rules [...]. (*MN* 19)

While Uncle Andrew's challenge is never explicitly refuted by commenting that the moral rules are ultimate and universal, they are implicitly shown to be such by the overall perspective of the Moral Law in the novels. Also, Uncle Andrew is shown to have been inherently aware of his vices, as he is depicted as showing feelings of remorse, when he enters Narnia and fears that he has come to the afterlife: "Is this the end? I can't bear it. I never meant to be a Magician. It's all a misunderstanding"

(*MN* 59). Also, Uncle Andrew himself is portrayed at the end of the book as having “learned his lesson” and having become “a nicer and less selfish old man than he had ever been before” (*MN* 106). These extracts imply that the view of moral maxims as simply taught to people without reference to any universal authority is not believed (deep down inside) even by the characters who criticize it. Consequently, Digory has not been taught moral principles simply because little children ought to be instructed in them, but because they are universally applicable.

Apart from upbringing, the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Chronicles of Narnia* comments on the role of education, too. The Professor appears to be of the opinion that formal education ought to have helped the children acquire the skills for logical reasoning of his sort. This is apparent in the Professor’s remarks provoked by their ignorance such as “Why don’t they teach logic at these schools?” (*LWW* 131) and “I wonder what they *do* teach them at these schools” (*LWW* 132; emphasis in original). These comments probably reflect Lewis’s general suspicion towards the supposed progress of the modern education system, as seen in *The Abolition of Man*. Lewis writes that, instead of educators and their ambitious (and often faulty) programs, it is the “real mothers, real nurses, and (above all) real children” who have preserved “the human race in such sanity as it still possesses” (*Abolition* 721). The quote implies that, while Lewis is somewhat hopeful of the moral education in the home, he is suspicious of the school’s ability to provide its input. The most hopeful he is of the “real children”, as they still possess the capability of learning the correct moral maxims.

The examples above suggest that, while schools are expected to teach logical thought that is needed for proper moral reasoning, parents (and mothers in particular) are expected to reinforce the moral principles in the home, providing ethical maxims from which moral arguments can be deduced. This progression from first acquiring the core virtues and moral maxims to learning moral reasoning later is age-old. Lewis quotes (and agrees with) Aristotle that, first, “the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought” and only when

the age for reflective thought comes, the pupil who has been thus trained in “ordinate affections” or “just sentiments” will easily find the first principles in Ethics, but to the corrupt man they will never be visible at all and he can make no progress in that science. (*Abolition* 700)

Thus, because the Narnian characters have been endowed with virtues, they are also able to carry out moral judgments in the way of the Moral Law. This can be seen, for instance, in Eustace when he reveals his rationale for not leaving his Narnian friends in trouble: “I’d rather be killed fighting for Narnia than grow old and stupid at home and perhaps go about in a Bath chair and then die in the end just the same” (*LB* 720). The fact that Eustace prefers a valiant death in battle to living in peace but as a coward shows that he (his emotional self) has already been taught in the virtues of honor and courage, after which making the judgment by comparing the different alternatives is depicted as requiring comparatively little strain.

The Narnia novels strongly suggest that other grown-ups who master the skills ought to take up the tasks if the homes or the schools should have been unsuccessful. Thus, Professor Kirke’s demonstration of logic functions as a substitute for the school’s neglect of the skill, and Mr Beaver initiates the children into moral intuitions, and Aslan sets himself as a moral example for them. These scenes also resemble to some extent the way Lewis himself learnt logic and virtue. Especially the way the children learn Logic from Professor Kirke is reminiscent of Lewis’s own introduction to logical thought by a retired head teacher, whose name “Kirk” already hints at the similitude with the literary character. In his autobiography, Lewis (*Surprised* 155–56) depicts how Kirkpatrick’s logical precision was introduced to him especially in common discussions, which resembles the informal setting around the scene with the Professor in *The Chronicles*. “If ever a man came near to being a purely logical entity, that man was Kirk” (*Surprised* 157). Sometime afterwards, Lewis met another person who influenced his moral judgment. In his battalion in *WWI*, Lewis met “one Johnson”, and in him he “found dialectical sharpness such as I had hitherto known only in Kirk” (222). Logic, however, Lewis had already learnt, and this time the “important thing was that he was a man of conscience” (222). Lewis describes that he “accepted his principles at once” (223), as he did not have a better set of morals, either. The comrade also became the first moral example Lewis imitated: “When a boor first enters the society of courteous people what can he do, for a while, except imitate the motions? How can he learn except by imitation?” (223).

In the light of the analysis above, the awareness of the Moral Law needed for moral judgment is, on one hand, innately available in people but, on the other hand, requires being activated through acculturation processes by the people surrounding the children. Thus, Lewis's statement that one learns the Moral Law "from parents and teachers, and friends and books, as we learn everything else" (*Mere Christianity* 21) means that one learns the first principles in the same way, for instance, that one learns to speak or to read: the capacity is innate but requires activation. It is different, however, from other innate capabilities such as the ability to see, which does not require help from the others but is entirely activated by nature.

Education and upbringing represent active ways in which culture affects one's moral judgment. There is also a higher, more unconscious level of cultural influence, as seen in the implicit moral beliefs in one's society at large, to which the analysis will turn next.

#### **4.3.2 Free Narnians: Moral Judgment and Cultural Beliefs**

This section sets out to analyze the relationship between moral judgment and beliefs that are deeply ingrained in one's culture in *The Chronicles*. While there are perhaps many nuanced ways in which culture affects one's moral judgment in the Narnia novels, this section focuses on a single aspect that is clearly and undoubtedly manifested in the characters' moral judgment, namely the concept of freedom. Throughout the children's series, the kingdom of Narnia is portrayed as upholding high morality, in contrast to some of the neighboring countries, especially the southern country of Calormen. This chapter, then, opens by briefly analyzing the Narnian concept of freedom, contrasted with the portrayal of physical and mental slavery in Calormen. Finally, it will be shown how the concept of freedom in one's culture affects the moral judgment of the characters.

The idea of personal freedom in Narnia is present from the very beginning of its creation, and it is most clearly seen in the prohibition of physical slavery. In *The Magician's Nephew* Aslan exhorts Narnia's first rulers to rule Narnian animals "kindly and fairly, remembering that they are not slaves like the dumb beasts of the world you were born in, but Talking Beasts and free subjects" (*MN* 82). The Narnians are aware of the special freedom they have been endowed with and recognize the moral

demands that it places on them, as seen, for instance, in the self-imposed judgment by Bree, a Narnian mare: “A free horse and a talking horse mustn’t steal, of course” (*HB* 214). Bree’s statement suggests that, while dumb beasts would not be expected to behave morally, the fact that she is both free and rational (as seen in the ability to talk) emphasizes the moral expectations on her. Apart from the prohibition of slavery, the Narnian sense of freedom is carried out to cover other aspects of life, too, as observed, for instance, in the facts that the Narnian kings and queens “liberated young dwarfs and satyrs from being sent to school” (*LWW* 194) and the overall sense of self-governance even under the Narnian rulers.

The Narnian emphasis on freedom is contrasted with the portrayal of slavery in the country of Calormen. The physical scenery of Calormen already conveys the ideas of slavery and other forms of moral degeneration as, for instance, the street view of the Calormene capital includes “beggars, ragged children, hens, stray dogs, and bare-footed slaves” (*HB* 230). The link between slavery and the Calormene culture does not only point to physical slavery, however, as seen in the fact that Shasta, an adopted son living in the south of Calormen, feels that his life is “little better than slavery” there (*HB* 208). Ironically, the Calormenes themselves speak of Narnia as a morally inferior country: the Narnians are “hateful [...] to all persons of discernment” (*HB* 257) and “the gods have withheld from the barbarians the light of discretion, as that their poetry is not, like ours, full of choice apophthegms and useful maxims, but is all of love and war” (*HB* 260). This extract suggests that taking pride in their own culture makes the Calormenes unable to see the moral advantages of the Narnians, further blurring their moral judgment.

Narnia and Calormen are also portrayed as competing for cultural domination in the surrounding areas. In a telling scene, Caspian manages to subject the Lone Islands under the Narnian rule again after the islands had been disconnected from the Narnian mainland for a long period of time. The most emphasized consequence of the islands’ disconnection from Narnia has been the introduction of the slave trade, which is connected to Calormen. When interrogated about the slave trade by Caspian, Gumpas, who had been leading the islands in the wrong direction, explains the

rationale behind it: “For export, your Majesty. Sell ‘em to Calormen mostly; and we have other markets” (*VDT* 450). After the islands are connected to Narnia, the slave trade ends, which also suggests that one of the main differences between the Narnian and Calormene cultures lies in their conceptions of freedom.

The most explicit way in which the Narnian and Calormene concepts of freedom affect one’s moral judgment can be seen in a scene on the Calormene girl, Aravis, who is offered, according to the customs of the land, to be the bride of a vicious, old man. Seeing no honorable escape from the situation, she attempts to commit suicide but is prevented from doing so by her horse who suddenly starts to speak (*HB* 222). It seems that Aravis’s attempt to kill herself was perceived by her as a noble thing to do, influenced by her culture, as she notes concerning her inability to commit suicide: “And I became full of shame for none of my lineage ought to fear death more than the biting of a gnat” (*MN* 222). The Talking Horse, a Narnian, then introduces how Aravis’s situation would be different if she only were in Narnia: “‘O my mistress,’ answered the mare, ‘if you were in Narnia you would be happy, for in that land no maiden is forced to marry against her will’” (*HB* 222). When able to see the situation through the lens of the Narnian moral culture, Aravis perceives hope, rejoicing in not having done any harm to herself, and decides to flee to the morally superior country of Narnia (*HB* 222). The emphasized aspect in the moral superiority of Narnia is that of freedom: one’s will is valued above rigid customs, and therefore, one can have a say in choosing one’s marriage partner, for instance. What this passage suggests is that the idea of what is virtuous and vicious in one’s culture affects one’s moral judgment to a great extent – in fact, is a matter of life and death in extreme cases like Aravis’s. Helped by someone from a morally healthier culture, one is able to see the moral truths more clearly, and, ultimately, by moving to a society with a healthier culture one is able to judge better.

As seen in this analysis, the Narnia novels reveal that deeply held beliefs in one’s culture affect moral judgment critically, as do education and upbringing. These aspects also overlap such as in the case of Lewis’s critique (discussed above) of the society’s beliefs concerning what constitutes good

moral education. The cultural belief that children ought to be taught explicitly and emphatically “[t]hings like Do Not Steal” (*MN* 92) produces educational practices accordingly, which in turn affects the children’s judgment. The next section introduces one more aspect in which culture influences one’s judgment in Narnia: children’s literature, which is, quite interestingly, perhaps the most emphasized aspect when it comes to the role of culture for children’s growth in judgment.

### 4.3.3 Right and Wrong Books: Literature and Judgment

The link between certain genres of literature and sound moral judgment (and discernment in general) is a consistent feature in the portrayal of correct judgment in *The Chronicles*. This reveals what the implied author wants his readers to pick up: a habit of reading books like Narnia so that they would mature in their judgment. This is also true of Lewis’s moral philosophy: one learns moral intuitions, among others, from books (*Mere Christianity* 21) and poets (“On Ethics” 313). This final section of the analysis, then, illustrates this point by analyzing the key passages that connect good judgment with (correct) literature in *The Chronicles*.

One of the primary genres promoted for moral judgment in Narnia is that of fairy tale, which is also mentioned explicitly in the series. The way fairy tales are used in moral judgment can be seen, for instance, in the following argument by Digory:

Very well. I’ll go. But there’s one thing I jolly well mean to say first. I didn’t believe in Magic till today. I see now it’s real. Well, if it is, I suppose all the old fairy tales are more or less true. And you’re simply a wicked, cruel magician like the ones in the stories. Well, I’ve never read a story in which people of that sort weren’t paid out in the end, and I bet you will be. And serve you right. (*MN* 22)

While witnessing “Magic” for the first time makes Digory believe in the moral authority of fairy tales, it is the moral message present in the stories that is emphasized in the extract: in all fairy stories justice will rule in the end, and so it will be in life, too. It is worthwhile to note here that literature does not constitute another *means* of judgment (such as intuition or logic) but rather an additional *authority* for judgments: fairy tales provide Digory with moral knowledge that he then uses as part of his logical reasoning.

The fable is also implicitly given as an example of a morally beneficial genre that is applicable to moral judgment. This is seen in a scene where Edmund questions a robin that is leading the children: “How do we know which side that bird is on? Why shouldn’t it be leading us into a trap?” (*LWW* 138). Peter bases his judgment on why he thinks their guide is trustworthy on “stories”: the robins are “good birds in all the stories I’ve read” (*LWW* 138). Peter’s argument is likely to refer at least partially to Sarah Trimmer’s *Fabulous Histories* (1786), where robins are depicted as teaching moral lessons. While the assumption that certain birds are morally good is hardly helpful for the child reader per se, it has important implications on a more general level. Perhaps the implied author suggests that the child readers of the story, who have probably been told many a fable in their early childhood, ought to stick with the traditional morality that is preserved in them.

What Peter’s argument entails, Wood (249–50) notes, is a belief in “archetypes”, which Wood observes also in other similar simplifications in Narnia is such as “apes are cunning” and “asses stupid”. Wood (250) is critical of the way archetypes are “reinforced rather than questioned” in Narnia, but it is helpful to study such archetypes in light of Lewis’s educational philosophy. For Lewis, the task of the educator is “to train in the pupil those responses which are in themselves appropriate, whether anyone is making them or not” (*Abolition* 702). In Lewis’s philosophy, then, conformity is viewed positively and, consequently, “archetypes” are seen to bring a sense of clarity and safety to one’s conception of the world. As such archetypes are typical of the fable and as there are talking animals in Narnia, *The Chronicles* can be said to include some elements of the fable, too.

The importance of correct reading for one’s moral judgment is emphasized particularly in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, in which the most distinctive quality that separates the poor protagonists from the exemplary ones is their reading habits. On one hand, there is Eustace Scrubb, who is depicted as an annoying, nosy brat. What is emphasized in the description of his character is his deficient reading habits: Eustace is said to have “liked books if they were books of information and had pictures of grain elevators or of fat foreign children doing exercises in model schools” (*VDT* 425). Later on in the story, Eustace runs into problems because of his wrong kind of reading list, which is contrasted

to the other protagonists' reading: when Eustace does not recognize a dragon – his vicious self, as suggested by the fact that he turns into a dragon himself – the narrator explains that “Edmund or Lucy or you would have recognized it at once, but Eustace had read none of the right books” (*VDT* 463). Eustace's wrong kind of reading makes him unaware of the dangers of cruel creatures like dragons – in other words, of virtue and vice, of moral knowledge that is not learned by reading informative books.

The genre highlighted, especially in *The Voyage*, as best for promoting correct moral judgment is that of fantasy. This is seen in the narrator's remark that “Edmund or Lucy or *you* would have recognized it at once” (*VDT* 463; emphasis added), which functions as a self-assertive note that *The Chronicles of Narnia* (a fantasy book) is included in the desired genre. Also, the fact that reading the right books would have made one knowledgeable about dragons points to the genre of fantasy. The implication is that the reader, by reading fantasy books like Narnia with dragons and clear conceptions of good and evil, is doing exactly the right thing – learning vital moral knowledge essential for good judgment – whereas books on information are less helpful in real life. The implied author thus commends fantasy as a specifically well-fitted genre for moral growth, and the Narnia novels as particularly good examples within the genre, affirming the readers of the benefits of their reading. Apart from fantasy, the fable is here, too, portrayed as a helpful genre in the scene. When Eustace the Dragon comes to the others so that they might help him, Lucy asks if “it came to us to be cured like in *Androcles and the Lion*” (*VDT* 469). Lucy's guess, drawn as it is from the “right books” (in this case from a fable in *Aesop's Fables*), is naturally correct.

The implied author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* appears to believe that different genres of children's literature have their proper uses in life. The reason genres like fantasy, fairy tale and fable are promoted for moral judgment in the stories appears to be their emphasis on morality. For instance, Nikolajeva notes that fantasy and fairy tale share the quality of “the quest or combat between good and evil” (“Fairy Tale” 140–41). Also, they form the most common genres where we meet the concept of the romantic hero that is essentially “superior to ordinary human beings” (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric*

30). Such superior characters are “supposed to serve as models not only for the other characters in the story but for the readers as well” (32–33), which highlights their special role in fostering moral growth. There are other genres that are promoted for different benefits, too. This can be seen, for instance, in another passage where Edmund is “the only of the party who had read several detective stories” (*VDT* 482) and saves the others from touching water that turns everything into gold by his quick wits. Thus, while fables, fairy tales, and fantasy are advocated for moral judgment, detective stories are good for learning logical reasoning.

In light of this analysis, it is interesting to observe what Lewis had to say about fairy tales, as far as moral judgment is concerned. At the center appears to be the concept of “mythopoeia”, coined by Lewis’s close friend and colleague, J. R. R. Tolkien. Lewis wrote, for instance, that mythopoeic stories do not merely comment on life but add new experiences one could not have had without it (“Sometimes” 120). In his review on *The Lord of the Rings*, Lewis also noted that the mythopoeic element can be applied, for instance, “to good and evil, to our endless perils, our anguish, and our joys” and “[b]y dipping them in myth we see them more clearly” (“Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Ring*” 117). Considering *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis probably hoped that, by utilizing mythopoeia, he could give the readers such an experience of good and evil that, after tasting it, they could go back to the real world and experience it through the lens of what they had learnt in the world of fantasy. This experience of good and evil brought to the reader through mythopoeia is combined with the cognitive portrayals of moral judgment in the stories: by observing (and imitating) how the characters learn and practice moral judgment, the readers are able to become aware of judging better in accordance with their heightened sense of morality.

Although children’s literature has historically tended to be traditional in terms of morality, Lewis might have already noted that contemporary children’s fiction was becoming less focused on traditional morality. For instance, Digory’s reference to “old” fairy tales as being “more or less true” hints that the older stories are more authoritative when it comes to morality (*MN* 22). Since the publication of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, children’s literature has undergone major changes.

Commenting on the situation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nikolajeva notes that even in Lewis's cherished genre of fantasy "good and evil become ambivalent" (*Rhetoric* 123). This characteristic of modern fantasy would have troubled Lewis. Although he defended the presence of darkness and evil in children's literature, Lewis opined that the categories of good and evil should be kept separate and justice prevail in the end: "Let there be wicked kings and beheadings, battles and dungeons, giants and dragons, and let villains be soundly killed at the end of the book" ("On Three Ways" 104). Lewis thought that confusing the concepts of good and evil in a world which, according to his theory of the *Tao*, was infused with a real Moral Law would be "to give children a false impression" of the reality: "Since it is so likely that they will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage" ("On Three Ways" 104).

Whatever may be true of contemporary children's literature in general, the fact that the Narnia novels are self-assertive about their benefits for training in discernment neatly connects the portrayal of moral judgment in the series to the overall purpose of the present study – considering the Narnia novels *as* Character Education when it comes to moral judgment. Since the novels affirm themselves as good sources on moral judgment, it is perhaps not far from C. S. Lewis's original intention, and certainly not against his moral philosophy, if one views reading *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a form of moral education, in addition to the aesthetic pleasure they provide their readers with.

## 5 Conclusion and Discussion

The present research set out to study *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a form of Character Education, a strand of moral education where C. S. Lewis's moral philosophy and children's literature have recently gained larger interest. While Character Education is concerned with multiple aspects of morality, the present work contributed to the former character educational studies by focusing explicitly on the portrayal of moral discernment in the series: how are the characters (and the readers) encouraged to judge between good and evil, right and wrong, and what are the most relevant elements that affect one's judgment.

The present study suggests that the Narnia series stands in a category entirely of its own when it comes to considering the role of children's literature in influencing the child readers' moral judgment. *The Chronicles* provides a thorough and consistent view of moral judgment that is based on the rich classical tradition to which C. S. Lewis subscribed. Moreover, the Narnian portrayal of moral judgment can be said to represent a largely 'character educational' kind of judgment, drawn as it is to a great extent from the same beliefs that the Character Education movement is based on. Consequently, reading the novels could be seen as an informal kind of Character Education on good judgment.

*The Chronicles* teaches its child readership a respect for and a clear practice of moral discernment. The storyline works to point out the necessity and seriousness of picking up good habits of judgment: the characters need thorough discernment to respond truthfully and justly to the moral dilemmas they face and even a sincere lack of discretion can bring about disasters of cosmic proportions. Most importantly, moral judgment in *The Chronicles* is not arbitrary but the characters are encouraged to judge with reference to objective morality: in order for arguments to have an authentic moral claim on someone, they need to stem coherently from the basic laws of logic and morality that every Narnian rational creature is aware of.

Although Narnia portrays basic morality as objective and innately known to everyone, it also pays attention to the intricate ways culture affects one's judgment. One's moral judgment can be

critically fostered or inhibited, for instance, by the kind of education, moral examples, and society one has been bestowed with. The Narnia books are also self-assertive when it comes to teaching moral judgment, as children's literature is presented as an especially good source on morality throughout the series. Moreover, the stories strongly suggest that, on the one hand, adults are to do their part in passing on correct judgment to the next generation and, on the other hand, that children need to be open to outside influence in order to learn judgment, whether it is from parents, educators, benevolent adults, or children's literature like the Narnia novels.

While any reading experience of the series implicitly conveys an invitation to learn moral judgment, it is also worthwhile to consider whether some of the elements might be helpful for explicit character educational applications. This is especially relevant as *The Chronicles* is being utilized for classroom use by modern character educators such as Pike and Lickona, whose Narnian Virtues project aims to create Character Education textbooks based on Lewis's children's series (Pike et al.). When it comes to teaching moral judgment, it might be suggested based on the present analysis that character educators could make use of, for example, the three informal "lessons" that the Pevensie children go through in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. These encounters introduce the main elements of Lewisian moral judgment to the child protagonists: Professor Kirke initiates the children into the practice of Theoretical Reason; Mr Beaver into Practical Reason; and Aslan becomes the children's source of Moral Imitation of the virtue-ethical sort. These scenes could be used as vivid examples when teaching the traditional understanding of moral judgment as laid out, for instance, in the first part of Lewis's essay titled "Why I Am Not a Pacifist". However, the Narnian portrayal of Practical Reason deviates to some extent from Lewis's actual philosophy by emphasizing (possibly for artistic purposes) the importance of outward appearance in judging moral character, which could be dealt with, for example, by turning the phenomenon into a classroom discussion on why the idea might be problematic in real life.

The present study confirms the view expressed in previous research that C. S. Lewis's both moral philosophy and *The Chronicles of Narnia* are highly relevant sources for the contemporary

Character Education movement (Pike et al.) and adds that they are also greatly relevant when it comes to moral judgment. While the present study focused on the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Chronicles*, a further inquiry into Lewis's other works might reveal additional insights as regards Lewis the character educator's understanding of moral judgment. For instance, in the preface of his novel *That Hideous Strength* (7), Lewis explicitly notes that the sci-fi novel embodies points made in *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis's main work on educational philosophy. Although Lewis's remark hardly addresses moral judgment in particular, it is nevertheless clear that the sci-fi series draws on Lewis's moral philosophy. Thus, it would be worthwhile to analyze in a detailed way how the portrayal of moral judgment in *The Space Trilogy* adds to Lewis's treatment of the subject as a whole, and whether the findings would be of interest for contemporary Character Education.

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