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## Seven for Seven: *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* and the Literary Tradition

### **Abstract**

Examines the motif of the seven cardinal sins within *Voyage*, linking each of the seven lost lords of Narnia to a particular vice and showing how the crew of the *Dawn Treader* resists the vices to which they succumbed. This essay is meant to be read with Schuknecht, Mattison "C.S. Lewis's Debt to Dante" in the same issue, as each comments on the other.

### **Additional Keywords**

Lewis, C.S. *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"*—Sources; Lewis, C.S. *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"*—Symbolism; Seven deadly sins in the *Chronicles of Narnia*



EVEN FOR SEVEN:

*The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"*  
AND THE LITERARY TRADITION

THOMAS L. MARTIN

FOR YEARS CRITICS HAVE SEEN THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS in The Chronicles of Narnia as an organizing principle across the seven books. Edmund's insatiable hunger for Turkish Delight sets the plot conflict in motion in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Jill's sloth causes her to forget the signs Aslan gives her and leads to the central difficulties she and Eustace face in *The Silver Chair*. But after those two vices align with two of the stories, Doris Myers notes, there is little agreement among the critics on how the rest of the stories complete the pattern (227). The same pattern-matching has been tried, she adds, between the stories and the Seven Cardinal Virtues and also the Seven Sacraments. More recently, Michael Ward has attempted to align the books with the seven planets of medieval cosmology, receiving more attention from the media for his thesis than uniform enthusiasm from Lewis scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly these orders of seven are significant to Lewis as a Christian and a scholar of Medieval and Renaissance literature. And whether these elements are present in The Chronicles as schematically as some critics suggest, they are present in his stories in other ways. Vices and virtues will never be far away in fantasy stories like these made up of young heroes and their adventures in the marvelous realms where testing is a common occurrence and where they learn to overcome by strength of character. But if one were to look for the Seven Deadly Sins, or perhaps the Seven Virtues, among his stories, one might look in a more natural place than across the range of the novels and in such precise a fashion. Lewis admitted that he didn't think a second book would come after the first, or a third after the second.<sup>2</sup> I realize that critics like Ward offer counterarguments, but I will not rehearse

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Bray, Brown "Planet Narnia Spin," and Vaus.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis's letter to Laurence Krieg of April 21st 57: "The series was not planned beforehand as she [Krieg's mother] thinks. When I wrote *The Lion* I did not know I was going to write any more. Then I wrote *P. Caspian* as a sequel and still didn't think there would be any more, and when I had done the *Voyage* I felt quite sure it would be the last. But I found I was wrong" (848).

arguments for or against these ideas here. Lewis's grand scheme is made clear by him in at least one important letter and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> But as for the Seven Deadly Sins and Cardinal Seven Virtues, they can be found more clearly and explicitly among *The Chronicles* in another place.

*The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* is rich with allusion across the literary tradition, and a significant portion of the story is directly and discernably formed around the Seven Capital Sins and their opposing Virtues. To realize this is to shed light on the story as Lewis tells it. As we proceed, however, it is important to realize that the most direct one-to-one correspondence or diagrammatic precision in such matters of literary analysis is likely never desirable for the critic reading the work—nor for the author fashioning it in the first place. We should remember that Lewis writes for a modern audience, albeit in this case of children: but to understand Lewis's literary method and how he combines effective storytelling in a modern context with an allegory of ancient materials—for a contemporary readership that has exceeded a hundred million—is a key as valuable as any other in unlocking the meaning of his stories.

If in a literary context *how* the story means is as important as *what* it means, then we do well to keep a literary method in mind as we explore the patterns. The reader following this third installment in Lewis's fantasy novels is presented with a number of different story elements, all of which cohere in the narrative as it emerges from the page, but also in a surplus of meaning well beyond. The sea voyage on which Caspian and his party embark, with its many fantastical adventures that call upon all their heroic resources, evokes Homer's Ulysses, a character who is actually named in the tale (261). Peter Schakel sees other analogues as well, including "Aeneas, Huckleberry Finn, and many other predecessors" (63). Elizabeth Hardy sees nautical motifs from *The Faerie Queene*. Charles Huttar sees the Celtic immram, the tale of a journey of fantastical adventures through various islands in search of the Otherworld. Robert Boenig sees *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, and Boenig and Ward see Mandeville's *Travels*. Without exhausting the analogs, we can understand how these references give satisfaction to readers who recognize some of the literary models a writer like Lewis likely has in mind. Allusions to other works in a venerable narrative tradition not only invoke genre conventions by which the story is properly understood but also give it extra life or vitality. Insofar as the story maintains its narrative unity and independence in the midst of the

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<sup>3</sup> Vaus makes the point—often lost in discussions about whether the stories are arranged along the lines of the planets: "In his famous letter to Anne Jenkins (*Collected Letters, Volume III*, pp. 1244-45) Lewis states that 'the whole Narnian story is about Christ' and then he proceeds to lay out the spiritual themes in each of the Narnia books."

allusions, these conscious and artful references to other works convey weighty significance and help realize the story for the literate reader.

An allusive style that converses widely with the literary tradition is evident in *Voyage* throughout its rich narrative language but especially in the recurring pattern of seven. When Edmund, Lucy, and Eustace climb aboard Caspian's ship after passing through the magic picture and falling into the sea, Caspian tells them of the mission on which the *Dawn Treader* has embarked. He and his crew sail eastward in search of seven lords:

"[...] my usurping uncle Miraz got rid of seven friends of my father's (who might have taken my part) by sending them off to explore the unknown Eastern Seas beyond the Lone Islands."

"Yes," said Lucy, "and none of them ever came back." (20-21)

The search for these lost "seven lords" (passim) forms the remainder of the tale. They are all named at the beginning of the adventure: "the Lord Revilian, the Lord Bern, the Lord Argoz, the Lord Mavramorn, the Lord Octesian, the Lord Restimar, and—oh, that other one who's so hard to remember" [...] "The Lord Rhoop," Drinian reminds him (21). We later learn from both the magician Coriakin and Ramandu's daughter that the seven lords set sail "seven years" before (188, 215). So readers might naturally ask, Is it significant that there are seven lords and that they set sail seven years prior? Why is it that the seven lords never returned, and what waylaid them on their journey? As readers proceed with the tale, they learn the stories of these seven lords one by one. Readers join the search for them once Edmund, Lucy, and Eustace board the *Dawn Treader*. There with Caspian and his crew they retrace the steps of the journey these lords made as they traveled east seven years earlier. The remainder of the tale is structured around the seven lost lords and the various decisions they make on their respective journeys that lead to their final outcomes. As Caspian and the *Dawn Treader* adventurers trace the journeys of the seven lords, they embark on much the same quest. What does it all mean?

Is there really a pattern in their stories to suggest vices and virtues? Is it possible they in some way represent Prudentius's Seven Vices or his Seven Champions or Gregory's later list of Seven Deadly Sins? Those vices and their opposing virtues will grow in importance and proliferate across the Middle Ages and continue into the Renaissance in a variety of treatments. Poems, plays, and romances over a lengthy span comprise a vast body of literature that takes up these themes. Readers will be familiar with some of the more

prominent examples such as Dante's *Purgatorio*,<sup>4</sup> Chaucer's *The Parson's Tale*, and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. In one rather elaborate but distant development, the Seven Champions will also become the Seven Champions of Christendom, where the heroes embody less the singular virtues and more the celebrated Christian saints' lives from across Europe. As Rosemond Tuve observes in her study of the allegorical tradition, in the Middle Ages and Renaissance "there is not the slightest rivalry" among divergent lists and treatments of vices and virtues (88; cf. 79). As she describes the tradition, it is a cumulative one that welcomes variety, integrates differences rather than debates them, as it mirrors or shadows divine truths about the nature of good and evil. What we are dealing with from Prudentius onward is clearly a living tradition that still finds its way into new story treatments today.<sup>5</sup>

Before we consider the fate of the seven lords of *Voyage*, we should clarify as much as possible the nature of the quest they set out on. From bits of information we gather from various characters, there seems to be some discrepancy about the object of their trip east and that of Caspian and his crew. While the former are sent out "to explore the unknown Eastern Seas beyond the Lone Islands" (20-21), the trip east signals something else for the latter group. Of course, Caspian and his fellows mean to follow the seven's original route, but from the first time it is discussed in the tale, the *Dawn Treader's* crew are animated by the possibility that the trip east might take them to Aslan's Country. The smallest of their number, Reepicheep, has the greatest faith in that regard: "Why should we not come to the very eastern end of the world? And what might we find there? I expect to find Aslan's own country. It is always from the east, across the sea, that the great Lion comes to us" (21). For Reepicheep's fellow travelers who might not share his sense of expectation, the signs become increasingly clear: that is precisely where they are heading the farther eastward they sail. Edmund is immediately taken with the idea, while Lucy wonders whether Aslan's Country might be only a spiritual place and not one reachable by ship. Over the course of the voyage, they all come to share Reepicheep's expectation as those signs accumulate and they reach its outer rim. Caspian almost loses his head when they see its border so overcome is he with desire for the place.

Clearly, the *Dawn Treader* is heading east with the possibility that its voyagers might reach Aslan's world. The question is whether the seven lords

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<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* in light of the *Purgatorio*, see Mattison Schuknecht's "C.S. Lewis's Debt to Dante: *The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'* and *Purgatorio*" in this issue of *Mythlore*.

<sup>5</sup> As is well known, film and even anime have clearly taken up the theme in our time, with such movies appearing as *Seven* and anime series *Fullmetal Alchemist* among others.

could reasonably be expected to entertain that same possibility. To be sure, Reepicheep possesses additional information given him earlier in his life—by a dryad, no less—about Aslan’s Country: “Doubt not, Reepicheep, / To find all you seek, / There is the utter East” (22). He is all but promised that he will arrive at his longed-for destination. But when he and his companions first talk about traveling east from Narnia, once they pass the Lone Islands the obvious conclusion for them is that they might indeed reach Aslan’s Country. It seems reasonable that the seven lords would have considered this possibility. For them, as well, the signs accumulate, though perhaps too late. The last three lords arrive at Aslan’s Table, an important threshold event that determines whether they will be allowed to go forward or not. But we are getting ahead of the story. For now, let us say that readers could reasonably expect that these lords of Narnia should know Aslan’s Country lies to the east and, if true to their given rank and sworn fealty, they might at least have a responsibility to return and report their findings, if not press on to find Aslan, “the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea” (117-18). Because they never returned, Caspian assumes they were killed. Clearly, the expectation was to return, not to decide what they would do on their own. There is no expectation that they could do what they wish. Indeed, some element of selfishness shows up in each of their stories that begins to throw light on their deeper character.

Now that we have some better sense of their quest, we should make a few preliminary comments on how these seven lords might relate to the deadly sins. First of all, they are “seven friends of my father’s” who, Caspian says, “might have taken my part” (20). The conditional “might” suggests that are they are not partisans for Miraz, nor is it certain they would have pressed Caspian’s claim to the throne. The seven lords might have gone one way or the other, and so Miraz dispatches them for pragmatic reasons. In light of this, the seven lords are clearly not the embodiments of vices as we might expect in a medieval morality play. They are characters that, from all appearances, arise organically from Lewis’s story and not from a pre-arranged template.

The point as we approach these characters is not that Lewis created a code or a crossword for clever readers but that he chose allegory for a specific reason.<sup>6</sup> Or we might say that he updated allegory for that reason. The allegory is subtle and hardly comes in the regularized and iconographic treatments familiar to us from the Middle Ages. While the older kind of allegory might seem to us translucent as stained glass, the other’s figures are perhaps darker and more rooted in particulars of the earth. We tend to think of allegory solely

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<sup>6</sup> Thanks for this and other fine comments to Charles Ross of Purdue University who reviewed this essay before publication.

in the former guise and rarely in the latter, but allegory as a literary mode both then and now is a much more complicated affair than we generally acknowledge.

Recall one of the features of allegory from Henry Peacham's memorable definition in *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577), who compares metaphor to a single star and allegory to a constellation. While the figures we associate with the modern novel might be flesh-and-blood individuals with their own unique motivations, their arrangement itself in Lewis's *Voyage* is suggestive. Here we have seven lords on their seven-year journey. If the analysis in the following pages proves true, then the point is that the kind of allegory Lewis creates in his adventure story begins in realistic particulars of lived experience but then connects to something on a spiritual plane entirely universal. The former achieves verisimilitude for a modern audience while the latter ties human life to eternal verities. Allegory touches past, present, and future. It evokes truths we all face. In a word, allegory connects heaven and earth.

So while we say that each lord is *posse peccare* in his individual story, we understand that taken together they may be *allegoria* of the Seven Deadly Sins. As suggested, the narrative realization is subtle for a modern audience whose sensibilities run in the direction of realist storytelling. But with the adventure story format Lewis adopts opens up to the fantastic and to the supernatural. The suggestion that we are all on a journey, a quest, an odyssey, is not far away. Traditionally, these stories show humankind on the brink of a larger, cosmic story. And even if we don't initially see the full design of the seven lords and the Seven Deadly Sins, we do sense that something goes wrong in each case, that the seven lords miss out on something greater that Caspian and his crew manage to find. There is a contrast between these two sets of characters we are meant to see. That the stories of the seven lords who go their own way so easily diverge—unlike that of Caspian and his travelers—may also play a role. That is where we begin the analysis, in any event, as we consider each lord and his story.

The discovery of the first lord, Bern, comes early in the book, when Caspian and his companions land on the island of Felimath. They discover Bern alive there. They learn that of all the seven lords and their journey eastward from Narnia, he is the first to stop his quest. He ends his journey when he falls in love with a woman: "I came thus far with my six fellows, loved a girl of the islands, and felt I had had enough of the sea" (49). Is this a vice? Could it possibly be one of the deadly sins? If so, it doesn't necessarily sound like full-blown lust. But whatever leads Bern to his action, it certainly outweighs the quest to "look for new lands beyond the Eastern Ocean" (*Prince Caspian* 61).



Here, Lewis's comments on Prudentius in *The Allegory of Love* are useful: "It should be noticed that Prudentius' seven champions do not exactly correspond with the familiar list of the seven deadly sins in later writers." So an author like Prudentius might be working with the Seven Deadly Sins and Cardinal Virtues, though we should not always expect a perfect identification between the literary enactments and the abstract qualities, certainly not in growing and changing traditions like this one, either moral or literary. Lewis explains that "*Luxuria*, in the medieval sense, does not appear at all [...]" (88). That medieval sense he speaks of, of course, is 'lust' or 'lechery,' but Prudentius's *Luxuria* in his poem is ease and excess pleasure that leads to a loss of resolve and reputation. We owe much to the early fifth-century Prudentius for the catalog of the Seven Deadly Sins, especially as they are countered by Seven Cardinal Virtues.<sup>7</sup>

Don King notes the same passage in Lewis's *Allegory* but finds *luxuria* among the tales in *Miraz*.<sup>8</sup> Yet as a murderer and a tyrant whose thirst for power knows no bounds, *Miraz* is a collection of quite a few more vices than that. Besides Lewis's comments in *Allegory*, his fellow Inkling Charles Williams provides a useful definition of *luxuria* in the sense we have here. Speaking of the character Richard Furnival in *All Hallows' Eve*, the narrator says: "Luxury stole gently out within him and in that warm air flowed about him; luxury, *luxuria*, the quiet distilled *luxuria* of his wishes and habits, the delicate sweet lechery of idleness, the tasting of unhallowed peace" (99). Richard is not a particularly bad character and is really rather a decent friend as well as a good civil servant. But it is this unsanctioned passivity of his *luxuria* that prevents

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<sup>7</sup> From the *Psychomachia*:

venerat occiduis mundi de finibus hostis  
Luxuria, extinctae iam dudum prodiga fama,  
delibuta comas, oculis vaga, languida voce,  
perdita deliciis, vitae cui causa voluptas,  
elumbem mollire animum, petulanter amoenas  
haurire inlecebras et fractos solvere sensus. (310-15)

(From the western bounds of the world had come their foe Indulgence [*Luxuria*], one that had long lost her repute and so cared not to save it; her locks perfumed, her eyes shifting, her voice listless, abandoned in voluptuousness she lived only for pleasure, to make her spirit soft and nerveless, in wantonness to drain alluring delights, to enfeeble and undo her understanding. [Translation Thomson's])

<sup>8</sup> I think that King takes Lewis's comment on the modern sense of *luxuria* as "sin of the profiteer" too far in the direction of those who gather profits by direct exploits. The sense we have here countenances rather those who allow profits to fall to them and those who extend such passive advantages into a general life of pleasure-seeking. While *luxuria* can include quite a wide spectrum of immoral behavior, I think that if Lewis is working with it at all in this story, it is closer to the *luxuria* we see in the description by Williams.

him from acting to this point in the tale. It is his *luxuria* that has made him ineffectual and that he must overcome when faced with the heroic challenge to protect Lester and Betty from the evil designs of Simon the Clerk. What Richard turns away from, Bern turns into in Lewis's tale.

Bern, with an over-attention to his present ease and self-preservation, "felt [he] had had enough of the sea." Bern's name is the Scandinavian word for 'bear' and (Hinten notes) the English Renaissance word for 'warrior' (35). We might say in the present case that Bern hibernates rather than protects. He neither finds a way to stand up to Miraz, nor is he able to go forward in the eastward quest to find new lands. Is it not also well rumored that Aslan's Country lies beyond the east? Bern establishes himself in apparently the very first island on which the seven lords land in their journey. Besides buying back a few slaves to work as freemen on his estate, he never stands up to the slave trade that leads to human misery around him. Bern strikes out on his own, unlike Caspian and his crew who stick together and do good together for the duration of their voyage, and so his power is limited. Bern's decision exchanges one relatively powerless position in Narnia for another in Felimath.

The choice that leads him to his present condition, of course, is the decision to marry. Bern sounds very much like the character in the Gospels who said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" (Luke 14:20). The disregarded invitation there as here, of course, is to a feast: only three of Lewis's lords make it so far as the feast, but clearly Bern does not. He is the first of the seven Narnian lords to end his voyage and indeed hardly sets out at all. Is there sufficient evidence to conclude that Bern had greater reason to go forward? Although his rank and breeding might have suggested more, in light of expectations mentioned here, Bern decides to settle down and preserve himself at the first opportunity. Might a vice not necessarily be the embodiment of evil but a kind of choice we typically make when we choose lesser goods over greater? We shall see that Caspian later faces precisely the same decision Bern does: marry or finish the quest. Of course, Caspian chooses differently than does Bern, and the contrast is significant. Bern's name also suggests the English *burn*, and clearly he decides to attend to his immediate, "burning" personal desires rather than continuing on his quest. While Caspian's choice to delay his connubial bliss is a difficult one for him, his decision makes all the difference to his story. That is, a moral causality is obvious in his decision, as the choice he makes ultimately makes him. Caspian's choice to subordinate burning desire to higher good forms his character and ensures the success of his voyage—both for him and his fellow travelers bound to him.

What Caspian does Bern fails to do. What he does might be a lesser sin than that of the lords who come to a worse end, and so might be

remediated. However, not all the seven lords will be so fortunate. Caspian and his crew intervene to do what Bern and the other lords might have done had they remained united: they overthrow the corrupt government in the Lone Islands and establish once again rightful Narnian rule. As we consider Bern's choice in relation to that of the other Narnian lords—and those in contrast to choices made by Caspian and his company as they negotiate the same terrain—a pattern begins to emerge. As we study that pattern, we must remember that the Seven Deadly Sins are not simply items from some long-ago casuist's checklist, but rather denote a wide swath of human psychological and religious experience. Lewis is concerned with vices and virtues throughout his writings. Can we allow Lewis in this tale to refresh the list of sins, draw from an earlier vocabulary of human behavior, fine tune our understanding of moral truths, and put a new face on them for his audience?

The second of Lewis's seven lords of Narnia is Octesian, who has a unique story of his own in *Voyage*. Readers will recall he is the second lord that Caspian's party encounters in their journey. Of course, they don't quite meet Octesian as such, but only his remains in the form of a decorative arm-ring, and so conclude what his story must have been. The party lands on an uncharted island east of the Lone Islands. Eustace strays from the rest of the company and finds himself in a valley on the island and then inside a dead dragon's lair. He rests in the dragon's lair a while, but when he awakes he discovers that he himself has turned into a dragon. The vain and self-important Eustace has become a hideous, fire-breathing dragon. As Lewis describes this kind of literature elsewhere, his inside has become his outside. Eustace is far more than the greed associated with a dragon's lair would suggest. For his meager understanding of the world, Eustace has from the beginning of the tale an overweening sense of superiority over every new person and thing he encounters. Temperamentally, he is closed off to anything that might challenge his smug superiority and narrow view of himself and the world. What is worse, he selfishly puts himself in the best light and those around him always in the worst. Many attempts to help him on his journey are misconstrued, for "he had persuaded himself that they [Caspian and the Pevensies] were all fiends in human form" (74).

But Eustace is unmistakably the fiend now. Eustace's pride had already made him terribly tough-skinned, prickly, and self-important. Up to this point in the tale, his pride makes him nearly impossible to live with. But once his inside-dragon becomes an outside-dragon, Eustace is able to realize what he is. He takes stock of himself and sees how hideous he has been to everyone: "It was, however, clear to everyone that Eustace's character had been rather improved by becoming a dragon. He was anxious to help" (107). After taking a good look at himself in the water's reflection and in the reactions of others who

nonetheless love him, he begins to humble himself and regret his dreadful behavior. But it is only when Aslan appears that Eustace is really able to change his nature. He emerges from a deep skinning and transformational cleansing as a new boy.

Octesian evidently came to the same dragonish fate as Eustace, but how he fares after that is unclear. What, if anything, does this second lost lord's name mean? Is it a whimsical creation for Lewis's tale, or does it resonate with overtones of Octavian the Roman emperor or something else? Might that suggest a proud and imperious nature? Are we indeed dealing with pride here? Whatever the name suggests, the lord Octesian has evidently succumbed to much the same lure that left Eustace a dragon. But he, unlike Eustace, was never able to pass through his trial successfully, and so he meets his end there. Caspian later dubs the place Dragon Island where all that remains of Octesian is his diamond-studded arm-ring.

As Caspian and his party continue eastward, we see that each of the Narnian lords stops his journey east after some distinct decision he makes, which may indeed entail a moral test of some sort. As we continue our search for a pattern across their seven stories, we see that Caspian's party faces the same trials that waylay the seven lords. Caspian and his traveling companions must indeed overcome those trials if they are to make their way east and complete the quest the seven lords never completed. Eustace finds a way out of his *superbia* or pride through loathing his former behavior, humbling himself, and serving others—even as he receives unconditional love from his friends, hopeful stories of recovery from Reepicheep, and the thoroughgoing transformation he seeks from Aslan. Not only does Eustace successfully pass Octesian's test of *superbia*, but Caspian passes through Bern's test of *luxuria*. Although Caspian falls in love with Ramandu's daughter in the middle of his journey as Bern does on his, he will not stop as Bern does. No, Caspian and his crew must soldier on eastward. But when his quest is finished, Caspian will return: "'Lady,' said Caspian, 'I hope to speak with you again when I have broken the enchantments.' And Ramandu's daughter looked at him and smiled" (211).<sup>9</sup> Because of the way Caspian handles the potential *luxuria* of this situation—and heroic literature is full of those who lose their way to hastily

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<sup>9</sup> Regarding the sleepers, Caspian references the Sleeping Beauty story in an earlier conversation with Ramandu's daughter. The two seek truth from a literary story. As they do, a like-mindedness and affinity is evident in the exchange. In fact, a love is clearly growing between Caspian and the Princess. She responds, "But here [...] it is different. Here he cannot kiss the princess till he has dissolved the enchantment" (218). His response: "Then [...] in the name of Aslan, show me how to set about that work at once" (218-19).

indulgent or ill-advised loves—he both completes his quest and ultimately gains the love he seeks. He proves his heroic virtue *and* receives the boon of his love, the one good augmenting and completing the other. We learn later that “Caspian married Ramandu’s daughter and they all reached Narnia in the end, and she became a great queen and the mother and grandmother of great kings” (270).

The next of the seven lords Caspian’s party encounter is Restimar. As they continue to trace the path of the seven lords eastward, they come to another island. They arrive at a spot on the island covered with heather near a pool of water. When they sit down in the vegetation, they are pricked by something sharp. They pull from the thick greenery a sword, other bits of armor, and some Narnian coins. They conclude the items must be the remains of the next Narnian lord. But as with the discoveries of the other lords, Caspian and the others will soon face the same test as that of the lord who fell there. They notice that the mail shirt they find has been removed, and no body appears in or anywhere near it. No wild animal—or dragon or armed opponent—could have made a hero wearing such a mail shirt remove it, certainly not without dispatching him first. So did this one lord unarm himself and come to naught? A famous scene early in *The Faerie Queene* Book I shows Red Cross Knight in such a place unarmed and clearly vulnerable: “To rest him selfe, foreby a fountaine syde, / Disarmèd all of yron-coted Plate” (I.vii.2.8-9). Lewis the great modern rehabilitator of Spenser may possibly have such a scene in mind, which doubtless aligns with any number of similar ones across romance literature. Red Cross Knight had also just returned from the House of Pride, where he viewed the Seven Deadly Sins on parade, but apparently learned little of their deadly allure and so imperils himself. Caspian and his party approach the water. Just before Eustace takes a drink, they notice a gold statue deep under its surface. Dazzled by its beauty, they gauge the water’s depth with Caspian’s spear. It turns to gold, as do the toes of Edmund’s boots.

Instantly they realize what they have discovered, and their reactions are telling: “‘The king who owned this island,’ said Caspian slowly, and his face flushed as he spoke, ‘would soon be the richest of all kings of the world’” (136). Caspian claims the island as a Narnian possession in perpetuity and demands of the others sworn secrecy. Caspian’s blush reveals what is already taking place inside of him, and in the others as well, as their ensuing actions show. Former king of Narnia Edmund takes umbrage at what he regards as Caspian’s pulling rank on him. As all these characters stand before the source of unlimited wealth and power in this golden pool, quite a contest of wills follows. Materialistic desires flash forth, and the resulting clash gets so hot at one point that Edmund actually reaches for his sword. Lucy cries out for both of them to stop, pulling rank on them both. In that moment, her reproof is

entirely over the top: “boys [...] [are] all such swaggering, bullying idiots” (136). The appearance of the gold and indeed its very source creates a rising wave of aspiration and hostility in that moment as all three wills cross. Only the arrival of Aslan on the scene pulls them back from the brink. The wave subsides, and they all return to their old selves, realizing as they do the distortions that *avaritia* or greed had worked on them. The gilded Narnian lord who had not been so fortunate as they and succumbed to greed in that place, they conclude, must have been Restimar, whose name literally means ‘resting in a body of water’ (Hinten 40). Reepicheep wisely recommends that the name of the recently dubbed Goldwater Island, this place where Restimar came to his end, be changed to Deathwater Island. The remainder of the party give their sober consent. The test is passed and the lesson learned.

The next Narnian lord they encounter on their journey east is Rhoop. Caspian and his fellow travelers sail into a strange blackness beyond mere darkness that swallows up the ship. They hear a desperate voice cry for help and take aboard a terrified figure who presses them with the utmost urgency to fly from the place. He tells them they have arrived at “the island where dreams come true.” Undeterred by neither the man’s looks nor his warnings, the crew lose themselves in reveries of desire at the mere mention of the place:

“That’s the island I’ve been looking for this long time,” said one of the sailors. “I reckoned I’d find I was married to Nancy if we landed here.”

“And I’d find Tom alive again,” said another. (197)

Everything the heart could ever desire apparently comes to mind. Is unbounded desire a good thing or not? Only if heart could find a mechanism, some magic, for giving it everything it wants, *then* it would be happy. Or so their thoughts seem to run in that moment. The tattered form of a man they take on the ship has already lived in such a place and experienced all it has to offer, and he is prepared to tell them about it. His most immediate advice is to flee while they still can. Dreams are not always the same thing as desires, and indeed what we dream each night is comprised of both desires and fears. What if this island where dreams come true made not only hopes but also fears into reality? What kind of a nightmarish experience would that be? The crew look again at the horror in the face of the man they rescued from this island of dreams, consider his desperate warnings, and rethink the island’s implicit promise. Once they realize the dire straits they are approaching, they commence rowing with all their might in the other direction.

So they do, but not before nightmarish experiences begin to show up on the boat and threaten to overtake them. They have crossed over the border into this strange land. They strain at the oars at first, until they realize they are

sailing in circles. In her fright, Lucy calls out to Aslan to save them. A beam of light opens up in the darkness above them and falls directly on the ship. In the light a shape appears: "it looked like a cross, then it looked like an aeroplane, then it looked like a kite" (200). The shape turns out to be an albatross. The albatross is a familiar omen to sailors of good weather and safe passage, though that this one for a moment "looked like a cross" is no accident in Lewis's story. Aslan comes to their aid in yet another hour of need, as he does at other critical times in this story. The albatross allusion to Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" brings gravity and import to the scene, making a brief appearance in Lewis's rich narrative. The allusions to Coleridge's monitory mariner works well here. The terrified figure that boards Caspian's ship and urges his party away from the place is the fourth lord of Narnia they have been seeking, Rhoop.

How does this scene relate to another of the deadly sins? The next up is envy, and while the unbounded, untethered desires conjured in this scene are not quite the *invidia* of envy, they are deeply related. Whereas several of the deadly sins spring from desire exceeding its proper bounds, it is in envy that desire exceeds those bounds in the direction of others. In envy, human desire desires to have for its own what is owned by others. *Invidia* is thus a shadow desire: it shadows the desires of others and what they have. *Invidia*, of course, is the Latin word that literally means 'looking upon,' and the emphasis in envy is clearly on the eyes. Desire begins in the eyes as they alight here and there and behold all they might possess as their own. While the Lord Rhoop first appears in tattered rags—consistent with the image of *Invidia* throughout the iconographical tradition—it is his near lidless eyes that most identify him with the figure of Envy.<sup>10</sup> As Lewis's narrator relates, "what one mainly noticed were his eyes, which were so widely opened that he seemed to have no eyelids at all [...]" (196). This is the impoverished character who cannot look away but is lost in desire for, or mastered by, all it sees. *Invidia* lacks all ocular discrimination: that is likely why in Dante's *Purgatorio* the eyes of the envious are laced shut until they be chastened and learn to see others aright and the good due them.<sup>11</sup> And while iron sutures binding eyes shut in Dante are one way to limit invidious desire, Lewis takes a decidedly different tack. His voyagers are lost in a dark where a nightmare of inner eyes, the image-maker within, cannot be cured by the dark itself but rather is perpetuated by it. The void of the dark only gives their inner sight an expanse to write large their fears and conjure yet more terrors. Lewis's cure is the light. After Lucy calls for

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<sup>10</sup> Besides the Dante, see also Geoffrey Whitney's "Invidiae Descriptio" in his *Choice of Emblems* for an example of the iconographical treatment.

<sup>11</sup> Again, see Schuknecht for an exploration the connections with the *Purgatorio*.

help in their desperate hour, Lewis's cure is the light of God shining in a dark place. Out of the light descends the cruciform albatross, and the *Dawn Treader* crew are saved.

Lewis's scene of divine light descending into the dark of nightmare ends the narrative arc that began with Lucy before the magician's book. What ends in nightmare began in dreams and before that in magic: because both magic and dreams have the power to make the desirable a reality, desire compounds without limit. It starts with the eyes. As our young heroine faces the astonishing book of magic, all manner of desirable possibilities rise up before her. There Lucy undergoes her test of *invidia*. Recall that the action from the book of magic to the island of dreams occurs between the discovery of the third lord, Restimar, and the fourth, Rhoop. Early in the scene, one particular spell appears on the page in "such a blaze of pictures that one hardly noticed the writing" (163). Lucy is tempted to cast this spell to make her beautiful, more beautiful than all other mortals, more beautiful especially than her sister Susan. She sees the very image of her desire pictured in the book, what would happen were she to cast the spell. There before her: "[...] all the kings of the world fought because of her beauty. After that it turned from tournaments to real wars, and all Narnia and Archenland [...] were laid waste with the fury of the kings and dukes and great lords who fought for her favour" (164). The spell promises Lucy to become the envy of the world. She would have all those around her desire what she alone can possess. Consequently, others vie with one another for her attention, and the land is cast into the chaos of war. As the image shifts from Narnia to England, it is now Susan who envies Lucy's beauty: "The Susan in the picture looked exactly like the real Susan only plainer and with a nasty expression. And Susan was jealous of the dazzling beauty of Lucy, but that didn't matter a bit because no one cared anything about Susan now" (164-65). Lucy's envy in that moment would make a world in which all others from Narnia to England would envy her, especially her sister. Lucy is on the brink of uttering the spell—until Aslan intervenes, and she decides to avert her gaze and turn the page in the book.

An earlier note of envy is perhaps hinted in the opening pages of the novel, where the narrator possibly prepares us for this scene. We learn that Susan has a unique opportunity to travel to America with their father who was lecturing there for four months: "Edmund and Lucy tried not to grudge Susan her luck [...]" (3). Of course, part of the siblings' reaction is due to relocating to the Scrubbs' home for the summer, but clearly Lucy's bad feelings run deeper. In this scene involving the book of magic that leads to the discovery of Lord Rhoop and the island of dreams, the story goes deep in the realm of *invidia*. While other deadly sins also reach into places where they should never go, envy casts an eye about that is unheeding of the good of others, would gladly



deprive them of that good, and seize upon that good for its own. Meanwhile, moral obligation would limit desire. And so we might ask, Does the soul desire what it ought to desire, and does it want the good it already has? We see Lucy's desire for beauty she apparently already possesses, though perhaps at a younger stage than her sister's. We see the one sailor's desire for love that perhaps he should not have had—"I'd find I was married to Nancy if we landed here." We see the other sailor's desire for a life that has been taken away—"And I'd find Tom alive again." Recall the first sailor's words that first set him to musing: "That's the island I've been looking for this long time" (197). How much do we see between these two sailors, on the one side, and Lord Rhoop, on the other, the lifespan of those desires played out before us? Notice how Rhoop's desires are rectified after he gets what he genuinely needs. That is, after his nightmarish experience, he renounces all else at the point he is rescued when his one good becomes his sole desire: "Sire [...] you are the man in all the world I most wished to see" (202). How much of these characters' lives might have been wasted—or in the case of the elder Rhoop was wasted—in indiscriminate and invidious desires that could have been better directed elsewhere.

After Caspian and his party find the fourth lord, Rhoop, they discover the remaining three lords all in one place, where we get a distinct account of each. As we move into this part of the story and this last grouping of three lords, we complete our search for patterns in the journey of the seven lords. The pattern of the deadly sins continues consistently through the remaining figures, through the moral tests that Caspian and his company undergo, and through the opposing virtues these new voyagers win. To find these remaining lords, Caspian's party lands on the last island they set foot on until they reach the easternmost edge of the world. After this, it is sea, sun, flowers, as things take an unexpected shape at the end. But before they venture there, they set about exploring this last island. As they do so, they notice gray pillars in the open air and in the middle one long table with crimson tablecloth lavishly set. The description of the feast prepared is clearly fit for a king or queen—or quite something more: "there was set out such a banquet as had never been seen" (208). The meats and dishes of the wondrous feast are extravagantly spread from one end to another, and yet the strangely obscured figures sitting at the table appear to be in some kind of prolonged sleep and unable to partake. Their hair and beards have grown terrifically long, as have the vines and other vegetation around them, marking the passage of time since the three figures apparently first fell into their protracted slumbers. Despite the years that have elapsed, the food is mysteriously preserved on the table, as are these perpetually sleeping diners.

Just discernable under tangled heaps of gray hair and beard are three men. Caspian and his party attempt to rouse them. One stirs from his strange sleep only long enough to mutter the words, "I'll go eastward no more. Out oars for Narnia," and then sinks back into his sleep. Another stirs only to say, "Weren't born to live like animals. Get to the east while you've a chance—lands behind the sun," and he too falls back to sleep. The last of them simply says, "Mustard, please," and he returns to sleep as well. When Caspian's party notice the rings these figures wear, they realize they have found the remaining three Narnian lords: Revilian, Argoz, and Mavramorn (211). Are there any patterns in these and other details of the scene worthy of notice? First, we can see a kind of division of intent as regards their proper place: one would go back, one would stay here, and one would go forward. There is also a division as regards their proper time: one would return to the past life in Narnia, one would remain in the present and make the best of it, and the other would continue on to see what the future holds.

Then the lovely lady of light appears from a door in the hillside who explains to Caspian and the others what transpired in this place. She is the aged star Ramandu's daughter. She explains how the three sleeping lords came to the island, with their ship's sails ragged from the long journey. At some point after they enter this pleasant place, a fight breaks out among them. One says, "No, let us re-embark and sail for Narnia and the west; it may be that Miraz is dead." Another says, "Here is the good place. Let us set sail and reef sail and row no longer but sit down and end our days in peace!" And the other, whom she describes as "a very masterful man," has more to say than the others. He "leaped up and said: 'No, by heaven. We are men and Telmarines, not brutes. What should we do but seek adventure after adventure? We have not long to live in any event. Let us spend what is left in seeking the unpeopled world behind the sunrise'" (216). Her description of the three lords' divided intentions conform to the divisions we have seen above in terms of place and time. In one division, it is: return home, stay here, and sail on. In the other, it is: past life, present life, and future life.

Ramandu's daughter narrates how the fight erupts over the divided lords. She explains how the last lord—the "very masterful man," the one who would go forward and "see[k] the unpeopled world behind the sunrise"—he is the one who "caught up the Knife of Stone which lies there on the table and would have fought with his comrades." In a violent rage and with blade in hand, he might have killed his countrymen. The lady continues, "But it is a thing not right for him to touch." Lucy had seen this "Knife of Stone" on the table: once she saw the "cruel-looking, ancient-looking thing," she knew at once it was the knife the White Witch used to kill Aslan (216). Apparently, there is more than the festal to this feast spread before them. After Edmund's

earlier comment that "The whole place smells of magic—and danger" (212), we learn there is something of the sacred here as well.

Thus, as soon as the "masterful" lord seizes the Knife of Stone, all three men fall into a deep sleep. With Ramandu's daughter completing all the information we know about these last three lords, we can now round out the pattern of the remaining deadly sins. *Ira* or wrath is obviously associated with this third lord who nearly kills his fellows in sudden rage upon their mere disagreement. The second lord who "only said, 'Mustard, please,' and slept hard" is *gula* or gluttony. Appropriate to his shortcoming of character, this second lord simply would settle down right there on the island, apparently in clear view of the sumptuous table, from which his fellow traveler had snatched the stone knife the moment before they were frozen. The third lord apparently would never have gone anywhere to begin with, never would have traveled with his companions, as he thinks better of it now. Indeed, he will only be happy if he can return home to "Narnia and the west." His character shows *acedia* or sloth, and as Aquinas says *acedia* always turns away from its good, so would this third lord turn back the farthest from his quest east. But most tellingly this third lord's sloth is unmistakable in his one and only movement: he "sank back almost at once into a yet deeper sleep than before: that is, his heavy head sagged a few inches lower toward the table and all efforts to rouse him again were useless" (211).

That completes the three remaining of the Seven Deadly Sins. What about the three remaining names of these seven lords? Where Devin Brown sees in *Revilian* associations with *reveille*, or 'wake up!' in French, this lord's name is closer to the Old French *reviler*, which is 'to revile,' or 'assail with abusive language,' indeed from which we get our English word *revile*. The name fits this lord's irascible character well. It is *Revilian's* anger that serves as the flashpoint for the present trouble that halts their collective journey. In fact, the enchanted sleep that falls on the three lords is as much a mercy to them as it is a punishment since it likely prevents *Revilian's* killing the two others—or their killing him in self-defense. Our second lord, the gourmandizing Mavramorn, likely gets his name, if from anywhere, from the Russian as 'dark morn.' If this seems too much of a stretch, we might remind ourselves that Lewis played scrabble with his wife in all known human languages. This 'dark morn' might possibly fit a character who wants to "sit down and end our days in peace." But would that include settling down because he has lost his hope for his original voyage to discover what lies to the east? Or would that suggest that in focusing on such things as "Mustard, please," he has nothing to look forward to other than the narrowed horizons of appetite in this portentous place? Surely, this second lord's predilections and direct choices have landed him in a state of endless somnolence for which every morn is literally a 'dark

morn.' Notice in his few words that Mavramorn would "sit down," not "settle down." Again, his gourmandizing eye seems directed at that sumptuous table, where he is indeed now sitting, but because of his and his fellows' missteps he sleeps out the rest of his days. And, lastly, Argoz appears to have one of the more straightforward names of the group. *Argos* in Italian means 'ship,' and indeed it is this third lord, the indolent *Argoz*, who wants the least adventuring of all the group. He would flee any good he might have found or still might find in the east and ship back home as quickly as he can: "Out oars for Narnia," he exclaims, and "let us re-embark and sail for Narnia and the west" (211).

And this remarkable table? The table at which the remaining three lords sit bears similarities with the feasts of the Arthurian knights, note both Myers and Ford, as well as broadly with the feasts of all romance stories. But clearly, this extraordinary feast signifies more. It is covered with a "rich crimson cloth that came down nearly to the pavement" (208), and set upon it is the Knife of Stone "the White Witch used when she killed Aslan at the Stone Table long ago" (216). And besides the extravagant dishes, there are "flagons of gold and silver and curiously-wrought glass; and the smell of the fruit and the wine blew toward them like a promise of all happiness." Incongruously, the imagery of the table mixes the cruel death of Aslan with the sumptuous feast beyond imagining. In a lovely bit of criticism, Schakel speaks of the "numinous" appearance of the feast and its greater meaning, describing it as

the Narnian equivalent of the Eucharist of Christianity. It is a table of remembrance (the stone knife lying on it [...] has been "brought here to be kept in honour while the world lasts") and a table of nourishment, physically (for "all were very hungry") and spiritually (for only those who believe in its goodness are to eat at it). And it is a magic table [...] [that] appears at the end of the voyage: "It is set here by [Aslan's] bidding" as a reward for those who have come this far in their pilgrimage, but it is also a source of strength for those who desire to journey further, to—and beyond—the very end of the world. (67)

Of course, this is the table from which none of the seven lords will partake, these final three included though they be ever so close. Not until Caspian and his party passes every test that defeats the seven lords and journey to the eastern edge of the world to Aslan's Country will our voyagers be able to return. Only then can they break the spell that holds these barely surviving lords, Rhoop joining their number, captive.

Or, to be more precise, these remaining lords have been made captive by their own behavior. Each of the seven Narnian lords has only himself to blame for the predicament in which he finds himself. Their vices become

apparent as we retrace their steps and learn their stories. As we do so, we encounter not only their unique characters bound by those vices but also the kinds of problems they face and how they compound those problems for themselves. None of the seven lords over the seven years is quite up to the challenge of the moral test that awaits him, none passes the test, and none successfully navigates the terrain either moral or actual of their quest.

But where the stories of the seven fail, Caspian, Edmund, Lucy, Eustace, Reepicheep, and the rest of their party prevail.<sup>12</sup> They pass all their tests, which were not easy by any stretch of the imagination, but difficult and

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<sup>12</sup> There are five tests Caspian and his party undergo in the five groupings of the Narnian lords. There are the five main characters of the tale I have consistently referred to as Caspian's party: Caspian, Edmund, Lucy, Eustace, and Reepicheep. These are the "five watchers," as they are described, at Aslan's table. The mind wanders in the direction of a possible connection to the medieval pentangle, originally a symbol of virtue though perhaps not familiar to modern readers as so. Is this a stretch, or does Lewis's narrative warrant it? Does he develop the pattern sufficiently in the weaving of his tale to create meaning from it and so enhance his story? I mention it only because the pentangle receives what is likely the height of its treatment in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, with the pentangle depicted on Gawain's shield as the emblem of his virtues: the five fives that organize the tale and that play out across the moral tests Gawain faces. Of note, too, is that Gawain's venerable pentangle appears on his shield in the shape of a *star*, surely significant if we consider Lewis's character Ramandu the aged star and his daughter with whom Caspian falls in love. These two play a key role at the end of this tale and into the future where she becomes "a great queen and the mother and grandmother of great kings" (241). The description of the star blazoned on Gawain's shield from the medieval poem:

Then they showed him the shining scarlet shield  
with its pentangle painted in pure gold.  
He seized it by its strap and slung it around his neck;  
He looked well in what he wore, and was worthy of it.  
And why the pentangle was appropriate to that prince  
I intend to say, though it will stall our story.  
It is a symbol that Solomon once set in place  
and is taken to this day as a token of fidelity,  
for the form of the figure is a five-pointed star  
and each line overlaps and links with the last  
so is ever eternal, and when spoken of in England  
is known by the name of the endless knot.  
So it suits this soldier in his spotless armor,  
fully faithful in five ways five times over. (ll. 619-32)

The five virtues in Gawain's star of friendship, generosity, chastity, courtesy, and piety mingle and merge with the Seven Cardinal virtues of chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, patience, kindness, and humility. I think it is hardly the point to divide any of them neatly from the others. But if there is a cardinal vice for critics, then that is not knowing when to stop.

even life-threatening. That they work together, unlike their counterparts the seven lords, is an important element in their success. Nor should we miss, as we draw to a close, that another important element includes Aslan's help. This is no small matter. Sometimes his aid comes after a great cry for help, as Lucy calls out once they sense the danger of the country where dreams come true: "[...] if ever you loved us at all, send us help now" (200). Other times, his aid comes unbidden, as when Aslan appears in Caspian's cabin warning him of his rash desire to abandon his post as king. In these cases and others, Aslan's aid brings clarity or assistance, but in no case does it override the choices the characters must make. As they choose aright and complete their journey—as recipients of this higher assistance as well as the boon of their fellowship—Caspian and his companions partake of Aslan's feast and at last reach Aslan's Country. How they get there and all that entails is, alas, beyond the scope of this essay.

Narrative patterns like these create meaning in works of literary art, and it is up to attentive readers to discern those patterns and make sense of them. Or, better, narrative patterns capture meanings. Of course, not all apparent patterns hold the meaning readers at first blush think they bear, but this is the way with language and art. As those readers negotiate the textual terrain, they know to be alert and discerning, for moral issues face them even as they read. Indeed, in this tale reading itself is closely tied to vices and virtues. Regarding vices and virtues, Lewis is hardly schematic in his presentation and may even change order and form to preserve the psychological realism and prevent the schematism to which the most overt allegory can lend itself. But who can say where one vice begins and the other one ends? Lewis's point is not that the deadly sins derive from an antique list that clever readers happen to know, but that the deadly sins are around us all the time. His narrative approach to capturing those important truths for a modern audience should be counted as a strength, not a weakness. Lewis is no mere arranger of *prosopopeiae* in his storytelling, but rather reminds us that an image can generate a story and create a symbol and that allegory can clarify thinking and connect with enduring truth. Lewis insists that we must not simply decode these stories, but leave them intact and from their wholeness find compelling mythopoeia and powerful evocations of higher realities. And with one such story here traced and distinct patterns of significance found, we can conclude, with Caspian at the end of this tale, "The seven lords are all accounted for [...]" (259).

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