

C.S. LEWIS AND THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: A STUDY OF HEROES

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All of C.S. Lewis' heroes in the Chronicles of Narnia illustrate various elements of the archetypal pattern of the hero. The first chapter of this thesis explicates the major hero studies of Rank, Raglan, and Campbell. Examples from the Chronicles illustrate that Lewis was very familiar with this heroic pattern in literature and used it readily in his fiction. The second chapter focuses on Campbell's interpretation of the meaning behind the heroic pattern and illustrates how this pattern clearly relates to, as well as enhances, the themes in the Chronicles. The third chapter explores the heroic stature which Lewis himself has achieved among many of his readers and illustrates how his own life reflects the heroic pattern. This thesis concludes with a summary chapter relating the significance of the heroic pattern in Lewis' life and in his Chronicles.

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Chapter I

Introduction

"Imagination exists for the sake of wisdom or spiritual health--the rightness and richness of a man's total response to the world."

(Lewis Preface 54)

For more than a century, several major studies in folklore and mythology have revealed a universal, archetypal pattern of folk heroes and heroes of tradition. Many of the studies emphasize the significance of the rites of passage (separation, initiation, and return) as a means of explaining the common pattern detected in the journey and transformation of the hero. In his book *A Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell analyzes the underlying meaning of the stages of the hero's progressive development. Campbell concludes that heroes return from their adventures equipped with vision, wisdom, and supernatural power to bring about physical and often spiritual revival in their disintegrating communities.

All of C.S. Lewis' heroes in the Chronicles of Narnia, especially those in *The Horse and His Boy*, *The Silver Chair*, and *Prince Caspian*, illustrate various elements of the universal pattern of the folk hero. Lewis utilized numerous elements of the heroic pattern throughout the Chronicles of Narnia as a means of enhancing his moral and spiritual themes. Interestingly, Lewis himself has

become a hero to many of his devoted readers. And his own life, like those of other men and women of great achievement, exemplifies several aspects of the heroic pattern. Lewis, for instance, successfully conveys the value and significance of the supernatural in his *Chronicles of Narnia* for readers reared in an empirical, materialistic society.

This thesis commences with a chapter on the important hero studies of Otto Rank, Lord Raglan, and Joseph Campbell and includes specific ways in which the pattern of the classic hero is evident in Lewis' *Chronicles*. The second chapter focuses on Campbell's interpretation of the heroic pattern and shows how it clearly relates to and enhances the moral and spiritual themes in the *Chronicles*. The third chapter explores the heroic stature which Lewis himself has achieved among many of his readers and discusses how his own life reflects the heroic pattern. This thesis concludes with a summary chapter relating the significance of the heroic pattern in Lewis' life and in his *Chronicles*.

Northrop Frye's studies of archetypal patterns in literature provide a foundation for understanding the hero studies of Rank, Raglan, and Campbell. In *The Educated Imagination*, Frye describes the nature and origin of these archetypal patterns in literature and

folklore. In constructing any work of art, Frye explains, the principle of repetition or recurrence is fundamental; rhythm in music and patterns in painting demonstrate this principle of repetition. Discovering the pattern of repetition in literature and folklore involves identifying analogies between the human world and the natural world. The most obvious repeating feature in nature, for instance, is the cycle; the seasons of nature progress from spring to summer, summer to fall, and fall to winter with the predictable arrival of spring once again. Human beings experience, in a cyclical pattern, birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, death, and new birth. Many stories in literature reflect this cycle, this pattern, which “stretches like a backbone through the middle of both human and natural life” (Frye, *Imagination* 49-50).

From a revealing letter to his friend, it is apparent that Lewis understands and believes in the pattern to which Frye refers. In a letter that Glover quotes in his book *C.S. Lewis: The Art of Enchantment*, Lewis discusses his attitude toward originality in English literature:

‘All poetry is one, and I love to see the great notes repeated. . . . A plague on these moderns scrambling for what they call originality--like men trying to lift themselves off the earth by pulling at their own braces:

as if by shutting their eyes to the work of the masters
they were likely to create new things themselves.’ (11)

Lewis was well aware of the patterns, the “great notes repeated” in literature; and he embraces them. Donald Glover writes in his book *C.S. Lewis: The Art of Enchantment* that there are sources for everything Lewis wrote (135). Frye expresses agreement with Lewis’ statement about originality in literature, for he asserts that “there is nothing new in literature that isn’t the old reshaped” (*Imagination* 55). Frye goes on to say that the framework of all literature is the loss and regaining of identity, and within this story is the hero with a thousand faces (*Imagination* 55).

Numerous scholars have studied this framework, this heroic pattern in literature. One of the earliest studies can be traced to J.G. von Hahn. Hahn, an Austrian who collected Greek and Albanian tales, summarized the biographies of fourteen heroes in his *Sagwissenschaftliche Studien* from 1871-1876 (Taylor 114-15).

In 1909 Otto Rank discovered the same type of pattern and published *The Myth of the Birth of a Hero*. In studying this phenomenon in literature, Rank outlines specific characteristics of the hero:

The hero is the child of most distinguished parents,

usually the son of a king. His origin is preceded by difficulties . . . During or before the pregnancy, there is a prophecy, in the form of a dream or oracle, cautioning against his birth, and usually threatening danger to the father (or his representative). As a rule, he is surrendered to the water, in a box. He is then saved by animals or by lowly people (shepherds), and is suckled by a female animal or by an humble woman. After he has grown up, he finds his distinguished parents, in a highly versatile fashion. He takes revenge, on the one hand, and is acknowledged, on the other. Finally he achieves rank and honors. (65)

Rank's findings are particularly relevant to Lewis' Chronicles. Rank's defined characteristics of a hero apply to several of the heroes in the Chronicles, especially Cor (Shasta) in *The Horse and His Boy*. Cor is the first born son of King Lune of Archenland. After his birth, a wise centaur predicts that Cor will save Archenland from "the deadliest danger in which ever she lay" (197). The King's evil Lord Chancellor overhears the prophecy and kidnaps Cor to prevent the child from becoming a powerful leader. When the king goes to battle to save Cor, the enemy surrenders the child to the water in a small boat. A lowly, selfish fisherman finds Cor, names

him Shasta, and rears the boy as his own son. The fisherman uses Shasta as a slave to perform his chores. After many years, Shasta discovers that he is not really the son of the fisherman and flees Tashbaan. While fleeing, Shasta discovers a plot to destroy Archenland. He successfully warns the King, saving Archenland from a dangerous attack. King Lune recognizes Cor and embraces him as his beloved, lost child. Cor eventually becomes an honorable and accomplished king of Archenland.

Cor's life falls into seven of the eight categories which Rank identifies in his classification. First, Cor is the son of a king. Second, there is a prophecy about Cor's future which threatens the Lord Chancellor. The evil Chancellor kidnaps the boy. Third, Cor "is surrendered to the water, in a box" (Rank 65). Fourth, a lowly fisherman finds Cor and rears him as a son. Fifth, Cor flees Tashbaan and saves Archenland from a deadly attack. Sixth, King Lune discovers Cor and acknowledges him as his beloved son. Seventh, Cor becomes an honorable king. Through the example of Cor in *The Horse and His Boy*, Lewis reveals his familiarity with the archetypal, heroic pattern which Rank identifies in his classification.

Twenty-seven years after Rank published *The Myth of the Birth of a Hero*, Lord Raglan compiled another version of the heroic

pattern in *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama*. The difference between Lord Raglan's study and the previous studies is that Raglan's findings include gods and heroes with historical or pseudo-historical associations in an effort to show the worldwide, universality of the pattern (Taylor 118). In his book *The Hero*, Raglan classified twenty-two different items relating to the hero of tradition. These twenty-two characteristics mirror the rites of passage--the hero's birth, his ascension to the throne, and his death (Raglan 190). The items Lord Raglan classified which relate to the hero's birth are as follows:

The hero's mother is a royal virgin; his father is a king, and often a near relative of his mother, but the circumstances of his conception are unusual, and he is also reputed to be the son of a god. At birth an attempt is made, usually by his father or his maternal grandfather, to kill him, but he is spirited away, and reared by foster-parents in a far country. We are told nothing of his childhood (Raglan 190)

The heroes in Lewis' Chronicles exemplify numerous elements of Lord Raglan's findings. Caspian, for instance, in *Prince Caspian*, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, and *The Silver Chair*, illustrates

several of Raglan's defined characteristics of a hero. There are four items in Raglan's list describing the birth and childhood of the hero which relate to Caspian. Prince Caspian is the first and only son of King Caspian IX. After his father's murder, Caspian is reared by his foster-parents, King Miraz the usurper and Queen Prunaprisma. We learn little of Caspian's childhood except for the background of his escape from his foster father who plots his murder. Thus, Caspian's heritage, being the son of a king, the murder attempt by his foster father, the fact that he was reared by a foster father, and the lack of information about his childhood, are clear examples of the pattern of a hero which Raglan defined.

The six characteristics of the hero which Raglan relates to the hero's ascension to the throne are as follows:

On reaching manhood, he [the hero] returns or goes to his future kingdom. After a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast, he marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and becomes king. For a time he reigns uneventfully, and prescribes laws

(Raglan 190)

These characteristics of the hero's ascension to the throne can also be seen in the life of Prince Caspian. When Prince Caspian reaches manhood, he discovers the plot to assassinate him and flees to his

future kingdom. High King Peter engages in a personal combat with King Miraz and wins the victory for Prince Caspian who is injured. "Another remarkable fact," Raglan clarifies, "is that the hero of tradition never wins a battle. All his victories, when they are actual fights . . . are single combats against other kings, or against giants, dragons, or celebrated animals" (193-94). Prince Caspian becomes King Caspian with the victory over Miraz. He reigns uneventfully for three years and sets out on his quest to find the Seven Noble Lords. At the island of the World's End, Caspian meets the daughter of a star and later marries her.

Prince Caspian's life follows five of the characteristics defined by Raglan which relate to the hero's ascension to the throne. The first characteristic which Caspian exemplifies is that he flees to his future kingdom upon reaching manhood. The second item which Caspian fulfills is that he wins a victory over King Miraz, and the third fulfillment occurs when he marries a princess. The fourth and fifth items in Raglan's list which relate to Caspian are that Caspian becomes king and for a time reigns uneventfully. Thus, Caspian's life exemplifies five of the six items which Raglan describes of the hero's ascension to the throne.

Raglan defined seven characteristics which relate to the

hero's latter reign and death:

Later he [the hero] loses favour with the gods and/or his subjects, and is driven from the throne and city, after which he meets with a mysterious death, often at the top of a hill. His children, if any, do not succeed him. His body is not buried, but nevertheless he has one or more holy sepulchres. (Raglan 190)

As in the other sections of Raglan's study, Prince Caspian illustrates several of the items relating to the hero's latter reign and death. After Caspian has reigned many years in Narnia, his famed queen is mysteriously killed by a serpent, the Queen of the Underland, who also kidnaps his beloved son Rilian. King Caspian is left lonely and distraught. He sets off on a journey hoping to discover the whereabouts of his son or to reach Aslan's Country. Aslan calls Caspian back to Narnia to show him that his son is found. When Caspian arrives in Narnia, he blesses his son:

And everyone cheered, but it was a half-hearted cheer, for they all felt that something was going wrong. Then suddenly the King's head fell back upon his pillows, the Musicians stopped and there was a dead silence. The Prince, kneeling by the King's bed, laid down his head upon it and wept. (Lewis, *Silver Chair* 209).

With no account of Caspian's burial, the reader suddenly encounters the King in Aslan's country "a range of incredibly high yet snow-free mountains" (Ford 57).

Caspian's life illustrates four of the seven characteristics of Raglan's study relating to the latter reign and death of a hero. First, Caspian is driven from the throne and the city to search for his beloved son. Second, Caspian mysteriously dies as he blesses his son; and third, Caspian is next seen on top of a very high mountain. Fourth, there is no account of Caspian's burial. Of the twenty-two items which Lord Raglan classified in his book *The Hero*, Prince Caspian's life illustrates twelve items, more than half. Through Caspian, Cor, and other heroes in the Chronicles, it becomes obvious that Lewis was very familiar with the archetypal, heroic pattern in literature. Rather than create a new story line in his fairy tales, Lewis utilizes this heroic pattern to tell his own story, with his own message.

In 1949 Joseph Campbell published yet another study of this heroic pattern in folklore and literature entitled *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell, like Raglan, sees the pattern as an expression of the rites of passage. He divides the pattern into three stages: the departure, the initiation, and the return. Yet Campbell

also sees archetypes in literature as an expression of religious ideas and suggests an origin in human psychology (Taylor 129). In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell outlines the following pattern:

The mythological hero, setting forth from his commonday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark . . . or be slain by the opponent and descend in death . . . Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father-creator (father-atonement), his own divinization . . . intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being . . . The final work is that of the

return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection . . . At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir). (245-46)

Prince Rilian, another hero in Lewis' Chronicles, exemplifies numerous aspects of the pattern of the hero described by Campbell. Rilian, in *The Silver Chair*, proceeds voluntarily to the threshold of adventure as he seeks to avenge the death of his mother by an evil serpent. Campbell refers to this action as the departure stage of the hero. Rilian, however, becomes enchanted by a beautiful queen, who is merely the evil serpent in disguise. She takes him captive to live in the Underland. This episode is an example of what Campbell refers to as the descent into death. Living under a spell of enchantment, Rilian obeys the Queen without question. For a short period every day, however, he is strapped to a silver chair and regains his sanity. During this time he struggles with every fiber of his being to be free from the wicked queen, but he cannot break his fetters.

During one of these episodes, Rilian receives help from Jill, Eustace, and Puddleglum, who unstrap and free him. These three are

sent by Aslan to help Rilian. According to Campbell's formula, Jill, Eustace, and Puddleglum are Rilian's helpers sent to provide him with magical aid. After Rilian gains his freedom, he slays the Queen, who is very close to completing her plan to overthrow Narnia with her enchanted prince and Underland slaves. Rilian then finds his way back to Narnia, at which time he is reunited with his anxious, aged father. After blessing Rilian, King Caspian dies; and Prince Rilian becomes King. Rilian's reunion with his father and subsequent blessing are what Campbell refers to as Rilian's "father atonement." Just after Rilian becomes king, the transcendental powers that Aslan sent (Jill and Eustace) leave to return to their world. Campbell suggests that these powers return since the hero emerges from his adventures with a kind of resurrected power.

Prince Rilian exemplifies all of the themes discussed by Campbell. Rilian proceeds voluntarily to the threshold of adventure when he seeks to avenge the death of his mother. He encounters the Queen of the Underland who guards the passage; she slays him with her enchanting powers. He descends in a type of death into the Underland. There he encounters tests and helpers. The test is his ability to regain his sanity in the silver chair while the helpers are Jill, Puddleglum, and Eustace, who give him the aid he needs to be

free of his enchantment. Rilian's triumph is represented by his atonement with his father. He is reunited with and blessed by his father just before his father's death. Upon Rilian's return, Eustace and Jill must return to their world. Rilian's helpers have fulfilled their quest in saving the prince from the power of the wicked queen. Renewed with blessing from his father, power from Aslan, and wisdom from his trials, Rilian is now able to reign as a true hero. The life of Rilian in *The Silver Chair* follows Campbell's heroic pattern with amazing consistency.

The biographical pattern discovered in the story of the hero can be approached in many different ways as is clear by the studies of Hahn, Rank, Raglan, and Campbell. Hahn, for instance, discovers a racial influence with nationalistic overtones whereas Lord Raglan relates the pattern to ritual and myth. Campbell and Rank emphasize the origin in human psychology while all of them insist that the pattern is fundamental in the origin and development of literature (Taylor 109).

Joseph Campbell's elaborate analysis of the heroic pattern in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is especially interesting when one is studying the heroes in Lewis' Chronicles. Going a step further after detecting the heroic pattern, Campbell studies the meaning behind the various stages of the hero's journey. As seen from the

previous illustrations of the Chronicles, Lewis was familiar with this heroic pattern in literature. Why he chose to use this pattern in his writing, however, needs to be explored. Before analysis can be done of Lewis' heroes in the Chronicles using Campbell's findings, it is important to understand Lewis' perspective in his writing, his motivation, and his purpose.

In his book *C.S. Lewis: A Biography*, Roger Green states, "Again and again one can find echoes from legend and literature [in the Chronicles] ancient and modern . . . But such echoes are of little importance, save to suggest what books Lewis had read or to make us marvel at his wide reading and retentive memory" (250). On the contrary, Lewis values these "echoes," as an integral part of his writing. Lewis believed in Jung's theory that fairy tales liberate archetypes which reside in the collective unconscious. "When we read a good fairy tale," Lewis suggests, "we are obeying the old precept 'Know thyself'" (Lewis, *On Stories* 36). He considered reading, like any other creative activity, a religious experience in which the reader, as a pilgrim, embarks on an adventure each time that he opens a book (Glover 61).

In his writing of the Chronicles, Lewis encourages growth in his readers by delighting, making the reader enchanted by an ideal.

Evoking emotions, he develops the imagination so that readers can envision a higher level of existence (Hannay, *Lewis* 59). Lewis believes that if the reader is receptive to an imaginative work, he comes away from his reading experience with a broader perspective, his senses tantalized to want more from his empirical, material existence; the reader comes away a changed person (Glover 56, 61).

In a similar vein, Campbell writes that the hero's passage serves as a pattern for men and women wherever they may be in their lives. As individuals discover their position with reference to this universal human formula, they can be assisted past their restricting walls (Campbell 121). Campbell, like Lewis, sees the need of modern society for the guidance of life-giving myths:

There can be no question: the psychological dangers through which earlier generations were guided by the symbols and spiritual exercises of their mythological and religious inheritance, we today . . . must face alone, or, at best, with only tentative, impromptu, and not often very effective guidance. This is our problem as modern, "enlightened" individuals, for whom all gods and devils have been rationalized out of existence. (104)

Ideas encountered in archetypal, heroic literature threaten the material, secure world of the modern reader. By destroying this

false security, myths challenge readers to new birth and growth (Campbell 8).

Through the Chronicles, Lewis seeks to encourage this new birth and growth in his readers by appealing to their imaginations. From his own experiences as a reader, Lewis learns that the best way to move readers is to draw them, using highly imaginative structures like fairy tales, out of their protective shells and lure them into a remarkable world. Once in this extraordinary world, Glover suggests, “highly charged experiences offered the author the opportunity of depositing a message” (Glover 206). By using fairy tales, Lewis “steals past those watchful dragons” [of dutiful, rote faith] to allow his readers to experience the potency of the Gospel. (Lewis, *Other Worlds* 36-37) In his book *C.S. Lewis: The Art of Enchantment*, Glover quotes from one of Lewis’ letters in which he describes his writing strategy in the Chronicles:

‘The fairy-tale version of the Passion in the *The Lion* etc. works in the way you describe because--tho’ this sounds odd--it by-passes one’s reverence and piety. We approach the real story in the Gospels with the knowledge that we ought to feel certain things about it. And this, by a familiar psychological law, can hinder us

from doing so. The dutiful effort prevents the spontaneous feeling; just as if you say to an old friend during a brief reunion “Now let’s have a good talk” both suddenly find themselves with nothing to say. Make it a fairy-tale and the reader is taken off his guard.’ (Glover 36)

What attracted Lewis to George MacDonald, for instance, was his ability to entice the reader beyond his preconceived ideas. Glover quotes from one of Lewis’ letters in which he speaks of George MacDonald’s *Phantastes*:

‘Isn’t *Phantastes* good! It did a lot for me years before I became a Christian, when I had no idea what was behind it. This has already made it easier for me to understand how the better elements in mythology can be real *praeparatio evangelica* for peoples who do not yet know whither they are being led.’ (Glover 28).

Lewis also believed that God used pagan myths as a prefiguring for Christianity (Schakel 139). Thus, he saw archetypes, the building blocks out of which myths are created, as implanted within us by God. Referring specifically to Jung’s theories about a universal subconscious, Lewis commented, “the mystery of primordial images is deeper, their origin more remote, their cave

more hid, their fountain less accessible than those suspect who have yet dug deepest” (Schakel, *Heart* 139). By using archetypes in the *Chronicles*, Lewis related them to the rest of literature and made them relevant to all people (Schakel, *Heart* 131). Schakel, however, like many other critics and Lewis himself, asserts that Lewis’ use of archetypes cannot be considered allegories. His archetypes represent the tradition they embody and the significance they have accumulated over hundreds of years; archetypes are the themes and events established long ago as central to the human experience (Schakel, *Heart* 10).

Lewis wanted his readers to approach the fairy tales of the *Chronicles* with the sensitivity and receptivity of the heart (Schakel, *Heart* 10). He sought to compel his readers’ participation, to travel beneath the surface and plumb the deeper waters of life. Discussing his use of giants, talking beasts, and dwarfs in his writing, Lewis referred to these as “an admirable hieroglyphic which conveys psychology, types of character, more briefly than novelistic presentation and to readers whom novelistic presentation could not yet reach” (Lewis, *On Stories* 36). Like Lewis, Campbell believes that the prime function of mythology and heroic literature is to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, fighting those other constant human inclinations that tend to keep it

back (Campbell 11).

Campbell's penetrating ideas about this heroic pattern in literature illustrate some of Lewis' objectives in writing the Chronicles:

We have not even to risk the adventure alone; for the heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero-path. And where we thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world. (Campbell 25)

The path of the hero can be a mirror for humanity in which the reader discovers himself through the adventures, trials, and successes of the journey.

Chapter II

Campbell's Analysis of the Heroic Pattern and How It Relates to the Themes and Events of the Chronicles

"Everything [in the Chronicles] began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion. At first there wasn't even anything Christian about them; that element pushed itself in of its own accord. It was part of the bubbling."
(Lewis On Stories 46)

In his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell breaks down the story of the hero into three distinct stages, the first of which is *separation* or *departure*. This stage has five subsections:

- (1) "The Call to Adventure," or the signs of the vocation of the hero;
- (2) "Refusal of the Call," or the folly of the flight from the god;
- (3) "Supernatural Aid," the unsuspected assistance that comes to one who has undertaken his proper adventure;
- (4) "The Crossing of the First Threshold";
- and (5) "The Belly of the Whale," or the passage into the realm of night. (36)

Campbell's elaboration of these subsections, as well as those in other stages, gives insight into the stories of many of the heroes in Lewis' Chronicles. Referring to "the call to adventure," for instance, Campbell explains that many adventures begin with

blunders of the merest chance (51). These blunders lead the hero into an unsuspected world with powers that are not fully understood and may mark the opening of a destiny, the beginning of religious illumination, or the awakening of the self. This “call to adventure” is a rite of spiritual passage which amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar world is outgrown, and the passing of a threshold is at hand (Campbell 51).

Several characters in the Chronicles, particularly Lucy, Caspian, and Shasta, illustrate this “call to adventure” in Campbell’s *departure* stage of the hero. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, for instance, Lucy Pevensie begins her adventures with a seeming blunder. While exploring the professor’s house one rainy day, Lucy tries the door of an old wardrobe. She opens the door, steps back into the wardrobe and feels something crunching under her feet, something soft, powdery, and extremely cold (Lewis, *Lion* 6). Much to her surprise, Lucy steps into a snowy, Narnian forest. It is here that Lucy’s great adventures with Aslan and Narnia begin.

In a similar way, Prince Caspian’s “call to adventure” also begins with a blunder. When Caspian is a young man, his uncle King Miraz, calls him for one of their biweekly talks. Without realizing

his folly, Caspian openly tells his uncle how he longs for the way things used to be in Narnia when the animals could speak and there were fauns, centaurs, and Aslan. King Miraz discovers that Caspian has learned these forbidden stories from his nurse and fires her immediately. It just so happens that King Miraz unknowingly hires a tutor, Doctor Cornelius, who is part dwarf. Doctor Cornelius stealthily informs Caspian all about the old days of Narnia with an even greater understanding than his former nurse. Later, when Caspian's aunt has a son, Dr. Cornelius warns Caspian just in time to flee for his life. Dr. Cornelius then sends Caspian off on his adventures.

Shasta (Cor) also begins his adventures with a seeming blunder. In *The Horse and His Boy*, Shasta overhears his supposed father Arsheesh bargaining to sell him to a Tarkaan Lord. While musing over his future, Shasta pets the Tarkaan's horse. Wondering aloud about his fate, Shasta asks the horse about his master. To the boy's astonishment, the horse answers him. Bree, a talking horse from Narnia, was captured when he was young and brought to Tashbaan. Bree and Shasta flee together for the free land of Narnia. All three heroes, Lucy, Caspian, and Shasta, experience their initial "call to adventure" through a blunder.

In fairy tales, the herald of the "call to adventure" is often a

beast. To the hero, the beast or guide is irresistibly fascinating making the hero's familiar world dull and unmeaningful (Campbell 53). If the hero does return to his familiar occupations for a time, they are often unfruitful. The signs of his calling will become stronger and stronger until the adventure is upon him (Campbell 55-56). In Lucy's case, the guide is a faun who hosts her for tea. She then returns to her world, through the wardrobe, and life becomes miserable for her. Finally, the others are forced to deal with Lucy's "imaginary country" and are lured into the adventure with her. Prince Caspian's guide is Doctor Cornelius, who becomes his beloved teacher and confidant. Nothing matters to Caspian except hearing Doctor Cornelius tell him stories about Narnia. At last, circumstances make it imperative for Caspian to flee his familiar world into the fascinating but unknown world that he had come to love. Shasta's guide is, of course, Bree. Shasta adores Bree because he is a talking horse and a war horse who had been in great Tarkaan battles. Bree accompanies Shasta until Shasta's time of initiation. Just as Campbell's hero formula suggests, Lucy's guide is a faun, Caspian's guide is part dwarf, and Shasta's guide is a talking horse; and these heroes find themselves fascinated by their guides.

According to Campbell, the hero encounters certain typical circumstances in the "call to adventure" such as the dark forest,

great trees, and babbling springs (51-52). This element is clearly evidenced with Lucy in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, with Caspian in *Prince Caspian*, and with Shasta in *The Horse and His Boy*. When Lucy first enters Narnia, for instance, “she found that she was standing in the middle of a wood at night-time with snow under her feet and snowflakes falling through the air” (Lewis *Lion* 7). After Caspian flees from his castle, he “entered a dark and seemingly endless pine forest” (Lewis *Prince* 60). At a critical juncture in Shasta’s early journey, he and Bree find themselves “[at night] crossing a wide plain with a forest about half a mile away on their left. The sea, hidden by low sandhills, was about the same distance on their right” (Lewis *Horse* 23). It is at this critical point that they meet up with Aravis and Hwin. All three of the heroes encounter the typical circumstance of a dark forest during their “call to adventure.”

The second point under Campbell’s *separation* or *departure* stage of the hero is the “refusal of the call,” which is relevant to some but not all heroes. If the hero refuses his calling, Campbell explains, the adventure becomes negative; he becomes a victim needing to be saved. The hero’s fruitful world becomes a wasteland of dry stones (Campbell 59). Edmund in Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch,*

and the Wardrobe and Eustace in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* are relevant examples of the “refusal of the call.”

Edmund, for instance, mocks Lucy ruthlessly when she talks about being in Narnia. Yet he soon enters Narnia himself and becomes a servant of the wicked Witch. Being taken captive by the deceptions of the White Witch, he becomes a victim of her cruelty; he becomes her slave and discovers all the innocent animals she has turned to stone. Just as Campbell suggests, Edmund becomes a victim and his fruitful world becomes a wasteland of dry stones since he has refused the “call to adventure” (Campbell 59).

Eustace also refuses his “call to adventure” in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. When Eustace involuntarily enters Narnia, he makes life miserable for himself and everyone else involved. Troubled at his fate, he foolishly insists that he be put ashore at the next station. Unlike Lucy and Edmund, Eustace refers to the ship as a “ghastly boat . . . absolutely primitive indoors. . . . No proper saloon, no radio, no bathrooms, no deck-chairs” (Lewis, *Voyage* 24). As the adventure continues, Eustace’s greed and selfishness transform him into a dragon. It does not take him long to realize how awful he has been and how pleasant everyone else has treated him despite it all. Since Eustace refused the “call to adventure,” he is now a victim of his dragonish state needing to be saved.

Campbell shares some pertinent insights about the meaning behind the “refusal of the call”:

The myths and fairy tales of the world make clear that the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest. The future is regarded not in terms of an unremitting series of deaths and births but as though one's present system of ideals, virtues, goals, and advantages were to be fixed and made secure. . . . The divinity itself became his terror; for obviously, if one is oneself one's god, then God himself, the will of God, the power that would destroy one's egocentric system, becomes a monster. (59-60)

Both Edmund and Eustace, typical of heroes who refuse the call, are consumed with their own desires and goals. Edmund, for example, lusts after the Turkish delight candy that the Witch offers him; and he pursues his affiliation with her despite the dangerous consequences that it could have on his siblings. Just as Campbell asserts, the divinity becomes a terror to Edmund. He feels a mysterious horror when he hears Aslan's name (Ford 161). Similarly, Eustace concerns himself only with his own welfare and advantage. He ignores the crew's generosity and feels sorry for

himself. The world revolves around him. When Eustace first encounters Aslan, even after he has begun to see his selfishness and greed, he is terribly afraid and shuts his eyes tightly when Aslan looks at him. Aslan himself becomes Eustace's terror as the lion penetrates the depravity of his life.

This "refusal," Campbell continues, represents an impotence to put off the infantile self. "One is bound in by the walls of childhood" (Campbell 62). Edmund and Eustace refuse to face the difficulties inherent in becoming an adult, in living for someone besides themselves. In so doing, they make life extremely difficult for everyone involved. A significant part of the hero's journey involves a willingness to put off the childish nature and submit oneself to a higher ideal. Edmund and Eustace are excellent examples of heroes who refuse to die to their selfish desires and refuse to mature. As a result, they stagnate at the developmental level of a child.

Those who embrace the "call to adventure," on the other hand, receive "supernatural aid," according to Campbell's formula of the hero pattern. The hero encounters a protective figure, often an old man or a little old crone, who gives him amulets to protect himself from dangerous forces that he will encounter (Campbell 69). Peter, Susan, and Lucy in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* are

excellent examples of how the heroes receive “supernatural aid” from a protective figure. Hiding in a cave from the wicked Witch who was pursuing them, Peter, Susan, and Lucy receive a highly unexpected visit from Father Christmas, who gives “tools not toys” that he says they will need to use before too long (Lewis, *Lion* 104). Peter receives a shield and a sword while Susan receives a bow and arrows that do not easily miss. He also gives Susan a little ivory horn which will cause help to come whenever she blows it. This horn is the same one which Doctor Cornelius gives Caspian years later as he embarks on his adventures. Lucy receives a small bottle made of diamond and a small dagger. The bottle contains the “juice of one of the fire-flowers that grow in the mountains of the sun” (Lewis, *Lion* 105). A few drops of the liquid will restore her or anyone else who might get hurt. For Peter, Susan, and Lucy, Father Christmas is the protective figure who provides them with the supernatural help that they need to confront the forthcoming dangers of their journey.

As the hero continues to follow his calling courageously, he finds that mother nature herself supports his journey (Campbell 72). The Pevensie children, for example, find that the unending winter snow begins to thaw just at the time the Witch is pursuing them on sled. This dramatic change in weather prevents her from capturing

and harming them. Caspian encounters a sudden and terrible storm on his initial journey. He falls off his horse and is discovered by two dwarfs and a badger, who nurse him to health and lead him to the other talking animals. The dwarfs and badger, who find him only because of the storm, are critical in helping Caspian collect his army of talking animals.

The next stage that the hero must pass through is “the crossing of the first threshold.” The hero encounters a threshold guardian protecting the boundaries of the hero’s present life horizon or present sphere. Beyond the threshold guardian is darkness, the unknown, and danger. In the same way, beyond the watch of the parent is danger to the infant, and beyond society’s protection is danger to the members of the tribe. Campbell believes that these unknown places, represented by such things as deserts, jungles, and deep seas, cause unconscious thoughts to surface. Folk mythologies, for instance, describe deceitful and dangerous powers outside the well-established boundaries of the village. The hero finds, however, that despite the dangers of the unknown, he must pass beyond these established boundaries, whether alive or in death, in order to progress in his journey (Campbell 77-82).

“The belly of the whale” is the next subsection under the

separation or *departure* stage of the hero and is closely related to the previous subsection. “The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth,” Campbell clarifies, “is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale” (90). This passage is a form of self-annihilation in which the hero travels inward rather than outward to be reborn. Campbell compares this crossing and rebirth with one who enters the temple, sheds his secular character, and undergoes a metamorphosis or a rebirth. The passage into a temple and the hero’s experience in the belly of the whale are identical adventures allegorically. Both the worshipper and the hero die to their own selfish ambitions and limiting fears and are born again to a new life (Campbell 90-93). This life is not of their own conception but that of God to fulfill his purposes in the world.

Only through this death and rebirth can a hero truly be an instrument to bring new life into the world. The scriptural book of John pictures it this way: “. . . unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (12:24 NIV). The hero dies to his personal ambitions and fears and submits to the forces of God. In so doing, heroes receive power, anointing, and guidance greater than their own abilities. Shasta’s experiences in *The Horse and His Boy* illustrate

Campbell's description of "the crossing of the first threshold" and of "the belly of the whale."

Lewis relates Shasta's experience in *The Horse and His Boy* in the following manner:

He went straight ahead up a road that did not appear to be much used . . . In a few paces he was alone . . . There he stood and stared. It was like coming to the end of the world for the grass stopped quite suddenly a few feet before him and the sand began: endless level sand like on a sea shore . . . The mountains, which now looked further off than before, loomed ahead. . . . he saw, about five minutes' walk away on his left, what must certainly be the Tombs (79-80)

It is here amidst the Tombs that Shasta reaches the boundary of his life horizon. Before him lay the dangers of the desert, the mountains, and the Tombs; and he was all alone. As a hero, he must face his fears at the threshold and stand courageously determined to continue into the perils of the unknown. Shasta finds himself nervous, scared and edgy, unsure of what he will encounter. He cannot help but think of ghosts as darkness falls at the Tombs. Much to his relief, however, Shasta finds a cat, his threshold guardian

who is Aslan himself. The cat is “big and very solemn. It looked as if it might have lived for long, long years among the Tombs, alone. Its eyes made you think it knew secrets it would not tell” (Lewis, *Horse* 82). Even though Shasta is very fearful of the Tombs, he determines to wait there for his companions, willing to face his fears and the challenges that life presents him.

The cat leads Shasta just out from the Tombs and looks intently toward the desert to the north. Shasta falls asleep facing the Tombs with the cat at his back. Later, Shasta hears a “harsh, piercing cry from behind him out of the desert. . . . ‘There’s more than one of them, whatever they are,’ thought Shasta, ‘And they’re coming nearer’” (Lewis, *Horse* 83-84).

The picture Lewis paints of Shasta here is an important one. On one side of Shasta is the Tombs, a symbol of the death of Shasta’s unhappy, but secure life as the fisherman’s son. The Tombs, Lewis writes, “looked horribly like huge people, draped in grey robes that covered their heads and faces.” The complete death of Shasta’s former life is a very fearful event for a young man as he faces the dangers of the unknown before him. On the other side of Shasta, coming from the desert, from the land of his approaching journeys, are wild beasts coming closer and closer. All of the sudden, however, just as Shasta determines that he must flee for safety, a

huge animal bounds into view and lets out a roar which “seemed to shake the sand under Shasta’s feet.” The awesome power of the roar scares the other wild beasts away. This animal that protects Shasta transforms itself into the same cat that greeted him when he first arrived at the Tombs. Not fully understanding what has happened, Shasta greets the large cat with relief and gladness thinking that perhaps the experience was all just a nightmare.

In these incidents, Shasta squarely faces the death of his secure past as well as the dangers of the unknown path ahead. As he harkens to the adventures given him, he receives guidance and protection from his threshold guardian, Aslan. He submits himself to death and is born again for the adventures that await him. The next day, Shasta meets up with the others, and they start their journey into the desert. Shasta has stood firm, with the help of his threshold guardian, and is ready to move onto the next stage of his adventure--*the trials and victories of initiation*.

In the “belly of the whale” subsection, Campbell explains that the heroes who are called to slay the dragons and renew the world often enact upon their own bodies the great symbolic act of “scattering their flesh” (Campbell 93). Puddleglum, a marshwiggle from Narnia and one of Lewis’ most memorable characters in the

Chronicles, exemplifies this aspect of the hero. Puddleglum, along with Eustace and Jill, successfully locate Prince Rilian in the dark, mysterious Underland far from the reaches of the sun, and they set him free from his enchantment. When the Queen of the Underland discovers that the Prince is sane again and that her evil plot may be foiled, she attempts to cast a spell of enchantment over all of them. First she throws a handful of green powder on the fire which lets off a sweet, strong, drowsy smell. It fills the room and makes it difficult for them to think clearly. Then she plays a steady, monotonous tune on a mandolin-type instrument which also makes it hard for them to think (Lewis, *Silver* 151).

Once the magic has penetrated the room, the Witch speaks to them in a sweet, quiet voice. She questions them about Narnia. Because the magic is so strong, she begins to convince them that Narnia is only a dream: “‘There never was any world but mine,’ said the Witch. ‘There never was any world but yours,’ said they” (Lewis, *Silver* 154). Yet Puddleglum continues to fight hard against the Witch’s lies. He musters all his strength, walks over the fire, and bravely stamps it out with his bare foot. Although it hurt badly, the enchanting smell dissipated; and the smell that remained was primarily that of burnt Marsh-wiggle. The excruciating pain made Puddleglum’s thinking very clear. “There is nothing like a good

shock of pain for dissolving certain kinds of magic,” Lewis writes of the incident (*Silver* 158).

Puddleglum proceeds to make one of the most memorable speeches in all the Chronicles in which he argues that he will stand by Narnia and Aslan even if he never sees them again. After all, he argues, our supposed play-world “licks your real world hollow” (Lewis, *Silver* 159). Just after Puddleglum makes this speech, he and the Prince slay the Queen who had just transformed herself into a serpent. Puddleglum’s “belly of the whale” experience is symbolized by the dark Underland. He visibly dies to his fleshly nature by stamping out the fire with his bare foot. He is reborn a courageous hero willing to sacrifice all for the hope of finding Aslan and the Overland.

Campbell divides the next stage, *the trials and victories of initiation*, into six subsections:

- (1) “The Road of Trials,” or the dangerous aspect of the gods; (2) “The Meeting with the Goddess” . . . or the bliss of infancy regained; (3) “Woman as the Temptress,” the realization and agony of Oedipus; (4) “Atonement with the Father”; (5) “Apotheosis”; and (6) “The Ultimate Boon.” (36)

On “the road of trials,” the hero survives a series of tests in a

dream-type landscape of strangely fluid, ambiguous forms. In the midst of these trials, the hero is aided by the amulets, advice, and secret agents of the supernatural helper. It may be that here he discovers the benign power supporting him in this superhuman passage. Yet throughout "the road of trials," the hero must put to death his ego. Like the Hydra, one head is cut off and two more appear unless the appropriate caustic is applied. It is also here that dragons are slain and amazing barriers passed again and again. "The road of trials" is one in which the self is purified and the senses are cleansed; the hero learns to transcend himself and his material world. In the hero's dreams, Campbell adds, secret helpers and instructive figures are encountered; they expose relevant information about the heroes' present circumstances as well as clues they need to be saved. Through these graphic trials, the hero learns the lessons of purification and surrender (Campbell 97-109).

Jill Pole in *The Silver Chair* illustrates the themes that Campbell relates in "the road of trials." On Aslan's mountain, Jill receives her quest to find Prince Rilian. Aslan gives her four signs which will help her and Eustace in finding the Prince. He tells her to repeat them often to herself in order to remember them because they will be very different from what she would expect. Although

her quest is to find the lost Prince, she also embarks on her personal journey of maturity and faith (Ford 248).

Jill encounters many trials on her quest. First, she must be whisked away from Cair Paravel just when she is beginning to enjoy its comforts and luxuries. Second, she must travel north with Eustace and Puddleglum, neither of whom she particularly enjoys. Third, they have to sneak past some giants that terrify her. Fourth, they must endure the bitter cold of the North with few rations. Fifth, Jill is deceived by the Queen of the Underland to take refuge with the cannibalistic giants of Harfang. Jill's own weaknesses, being consumed with her own comfort as well as her fears, cause her to miss the first three signs and delay them from accomplishing their quest.

It is not until Jill has a dream, just as Campbell describes in his formula, that things begin to turn around for the adventurers. In her dream, Jill discovers her need to change as well as the clues she needs to save herself, her friends, and the Prince. She is in the process of learning to die to her selfishness and fears and to submit to Aslan's perfect way. Lewis describes Jill's dream this way:

And then came the deadest hour of the night and nothing stirred but mice in the house of the giants. At that hour there came to Jill a dream. It seemed to her that she

awoke in the same room and saw the fire, sunk low and red, and in the firelight the great wooden horse. And the horse came of its own will, rolling on its wheels across the carpet, and stood at her head. And now it was no longer a horse, but a lion as big as the horse. And then it was not a toy lion, but a real lion, The Real Lion, just as she had seen him on the mountain beyond the world's end. And the smell of all sweet-smelling things there are, filled the room. But there was some trouble in Jill's mind . . . and the tears streamed down her face and wet the pillow. The Lion told her to repeat the Signs, and she found that she had forgotten them all. (100)

In the same dream, Aslan gives Jill the clue that will help them to successfully continue their journey. And when Jill meets with Puddleglum and Eustace the next morning, she finally admits her errors and determines to obey Aslan.

Performing beautifully, Jill convinces all the giants that she, Eustace, and Puddleglum are very happy at Harfang and can be trusted. As a result, they are able to escape when the cook falls asleep but are spotted just as they are nearing the City Ruinous. Seeking cover, they discover a cave that eventually leads them to

the underworld and Prince Rilian. Eustace, Jill, and Puddleglum discover the Prince but do not recognize him because of his enchantment. At a critical point, they witness the Prince strapped in the silver chair raging with anger, pleading to be freed. “. . . by the great Lion, by Aslan himself, I charge you--” Prince Rilian pleads (Lewis, *Silver* 145). Realizing that Prince Rilian’s words are a fulfillment of the sign, Jill urges them to free him despite her terrifying fears of what might happen. Later when the Queen of the Underland tries to deceive Jill and the others, it is Jill who remembers Aslan thereby reviving strength in the others to fight against the enchantments. Jill has finally submitted herself to Aslan’s way. She has transcended her finite understanding and limiting fears. Jill embraces her adventure during the “road of trials” and reaps the fruit of maturity and the successful accomplishment of her quest.

“The meeting with the goddess” is the next subsection under the *initiation* stage of Campbell’s hero formula. Unlike the other sections of Campbell’s formula which can be applied to several of the heroes of the Chronicles, this particular section only applies to Prince Caspian and Shasta. “The meeting with the goddess” is the ultimate adventure after all the barriers and ogres have been overcome. It is often represented as a mystical marriage of the hero

with the Queen Goddess. This step occurs at the zenith or at the “uttermost edge of the earth” (Campbell 109). In the picture language of myth, woman represents the fullness of what can be known, and the goddess is the guardian of the inexhaustible well. To win her love, she requires that the hero be endowed with a heart of gentleness. “The meeting with the goddess,” incarnate in every woman, is the final test of the hero to win the boon of love (Campbell 109-18).

This “meeting with the goddess” very clearly describes Prince Caspian’s experience in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. After numerous adventures at the Lone Islands, the Dragon Island, the Island of Voices, and the Dark Island, Caspian and his crew arrive at the island of the World’s End or Ramandu’s Island. Ramandu, who used to be a star, lives there with his beautiful daughter. Located on the island is Aslan’s Table, a table laden with every imaginable delicacy as well as the knife of stone that the White Witch used to kill Aslan. It is kept there in honor of Aslan while the world lasts. Lewis describes Ramandu’s daughter as:

. . . a tall girl, dressed in a single long garment of clear blue which left her arms bare. She was bareheaded and her yellow hair hung down her back. And when they

looked at her they thought they had never known what beauty meant. . . . they all rose to their feet, because they felt that she was a great lady. (Lewis, *Voyage* 171-72)

Ramandu's Daughter is never referred to by her personal name as a means of portraying her special honor.

Just before meeting Ramandu's Daughter, Caspian and his crew discover three men at the table in an enchanted sleep who are the last of the missing Lords that Caspian seeks for his quest. Referring to a fairy tale which Lucy and Edmund told him, Caspian suggests to Ramandu's Daughter that in the story the enchantment could not be broken until the prince kissed the princess. Ramandu's daughter replies that at the World's End the prince must first dissolve the enchantment before he can kiss the princess. "Then," replied Caspian, 'in the name of Aslan, show me how to set about that work at once'" (Lewis, *Voyage* 174).

Caspian dissolves the enchantment of the last three lords and wins the boon of the honorable princess as his wife. Just as Campbell's formula suggests, Caspian finds the princess at the "uttermost edge of the earth" and must first prove that he is a man with a gentle heart before he can win her as his wife. In an article entitled, "The Necessity of Chivalry," Lewis describes the

importance of this balance of gentleness in a hero. “Heroism,” Lewis writes, “is most often found in the noisy, arrogant bully: and meekness usually found in the weak defenseless man. Though the two tendencies are difficult to bring together, it is nevertheless, important that a man embody both” (Hooper, *Dragons* 88). When Caspian finally marries Ramandu’s Daughter, he is at the end of his adventures and winning her love is a crowning prize. “The mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world,” Campbell writes, “represents the hero’s total mastery of life; for the woman is life, the hero its knower and master” (Campbell 120).

“Woman as temptress” is the next subsection under the *initiation* stage. Campbell writes that most of us refuse to admit to ourselves the depravity of our nature. Instead, we gloss it over and pretend that the faults we perceive are really someone else’s. When we finally cannot deny it any longer, when it is forced to our attention, our feeling is revulsion. “Life, the acts of life, the organs of life, woman in particular as the great symbol of life, become intolerable to the pure, the pure, pure soul” (Campbell 121-22).

More so than any other hero in the Chronicles, Prince Rilian’s experiences illustrate this subsection in Campbell’s formula entitled “woman as temptress.” After the death of his mother, Rilian determines to find the evil serpent, the Queen of the

Underland, and avenge his mother's death. Instead, he falls under the spell of her beauty and is taken under her power. When he is strapped to the silver chair, Jill, Eustace, and Puddleglum hear him groan:

‘Enchantments, enchantments . . . the heavy, tangled, cold, clammy web of evil magic. Buried alive. Dragged down under the earth, down into the sooty blackness . . . how many years is it? . . . Have I lived ten years, or a thousand years, in the pit?’ (Lewis, *Silver* 143)

Rilian suffers from the horrible realization of his debasement. When he is finally free from his enchantment, and the Queen has transformed herself into a serpent, Rilian and Puddleglum hack off her head and destroy her completely. Purified from the evil of the Queen and the deceptions of his heart to be captivated by her beauty, Rilian is now ready to continue his journey.

“Atonement with the father” is the next subsection under the *trials and victories of initiation* stage in Campbell's hero formula. During this phase, the hero reconciles the ogre aspect of the father with the merciful. In many mythologies, balance is maintained by rendering the images of mercy and grace as vividly as those of justice and wrath (Campbell 128). The Great Flood, for example, is

balanced by the rainbow of promise just as the justice and wrath of God in the Old Testament are balanced with the mercy and love of Christ in the New. For the hero who knows the character of the father (of God) in the fullest sense, the agonies of the journey are readily endured; “the world is no longer a vale of tears but a bliss-yielding, perpetual manifestation of the Presence” (Campbell 148). Lewis speaks of this “atonement” when he writes in *Surprised by Joy*, “The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation” (229).

Aravis in *The Horse and His Boy*, a Calormene noblewoman in her early teens, experiences this “atonement with the father” that Campbell describes. This atonement is a part of Aravis’ transformation from arrogance and selfishness into a humble and compassionate Queen of Archenland (Ford 12). While in Tashbaan, Aravis’ mother dies and her father remarries a woman who despises her. This stepmother convinces Aravis’ father to promise her in marriage to a vile but powerful man, Ahoshta, more than forty years her senior. Unable to trust even her beloved father now and terrified at the prospect of marrying Ahoshta, Aravis determines to kill herself. Aravis’ horse Hwin, however, discloses that she is a talking horse from Narnia and persuades her mistress not to take her life.

Aravis and Hwin flee to Narnia where they can both be free. To

ensure the success of their plan, Aravis drugs a servant so that she can get away without being noticed. Travelling at night, Aravis and Hwin are chased by a lion, an event which causes them to meet up with Shasta and Bree. The four of them agree that it would be safer to travel together. Near the end of their journey to Archenland, a lion pursues them and jabs Aravis with its paw. The lion tears Aravis' shoulders with its claws. They arrive at the Hermit's home, and he bandages her wounds and takes care of her. "It must have been a very strange lion," the Hermit tells her, "for instead of catching you out of the saddle and getting his teeth into you, he has only drawn his claws across your back. Ten scratches: sore, but not deep or dangerous" (Lewis, *Horse* 143).

After Shasta saves Archenland by warning the king of the attack, Aravis meets Aslan who says to her:

'Draw near, Aravis my daughter. See! My paws are velvety. You will not be torn this time.' . . . [contrast the deadly claw with the soft, velvety paw]

'It was I who wounded you . . . I am the only lion you met in all your journeyings. Do you know why I tore you?' . . .

'The scratches on your back, tear for tear, throb for

throb, blood for blood, were equal to the stripes laid on the back of your stepmother's slave because of the drugged sleep you cast upon her. You needed to know what it felt like.' (Lewis, *Horse* 193-94)

Soon after meeting Aslan, King Lune invites Aravis to live with his family. Prince Cor and Aravis eventually marry so that she later becomes Queen of Archenland. They have a son named Ram the Great, who becomes the most famous of all the kings of Archenland.

The hardships imposed upon Aravis by her father actually lead her to her glorious destiny. Being frightened by Aslan in her travels causes Aravis to meet up with Shasta and Bree. The justice of Aslan's attack also prepares Aravis to be a compassionate, humble ruler and to receive the boon of love in her marriage to Prince Cor. In order to receive the mercy and love of Aslan, Aravis has to experience "the road of trials." Through her trials with Aslan and his provision for her, she learns the fullness of the character of God. Aravis' experiences in *The Horse and His Boy* correspond to the "atonement with the father" pictured in the book of Hosea:

Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him. So let us

know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth. (6:1-3 NAS)

Through her “atonement with the father,” Aravis learns that Aslan (God) is no longer to be feared but known, loved, and revered.

“Apotheosis,” elevation to divine status or glorification, is the next subsection in Campbell’s formula of the hero. Clearly, Aslan is the only hero to whom this section can be applied unless one takes into account the heroes’ experiences after they die. Aslan is the Lion King of the land of Narnia, the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea, the highest king over all high kings. Just hearing his name fills his faithful subjects with awe, strength, and conviction and fills his enemies with horror. He is timeless and unchanging. There is no physical change in him during the hundreds of years spanned by the Chronicles. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, he redeems Edmund from the Witch by giving his own life. Resurrected in power, he rescues all who have been turned to stone by the Witch. And after crowning the children as kings and queens of Narnia, he disappears to attend to his other worlds. Not surprisingly, Aslan is the only hero in the Chronicles that Lewis elevates to divine status since he is a symbol of God himself.

“The ultimate boon,” eternal life, is the final subsection under *the trials and victories of initiation* stage in Campbell’s hero formula. Often this indestructible life is represented by images of the inexhaustible dish and the cornucopian banquet “symbolizing the perpetual life-giving, form-building powers of the universal source” (Campbell 173). Prince Caspian and his crew discover the “inexhaustible dish” and “cornucopian banquet” in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.

At the island of the World’s End, Caspian and his crew discover an amazing banquet:

. . . on the table itself there was set out such a banquet as had never been seen . . . There were turkeys and geese and peacocks, there were boar’s heads and sides of venison, there were pies shaped like ships under full sail or like dragons and elephants, there were ice puddings and bright lobsters and gleaming salmon, there were nuts and grapes, pineapples and peaches, pomegranates and melons and tomatoes. There were flagons of gold and silver . . . and the smell of the fruit and the wine blew towards them like a promise of all happiness. (166)

Lucy, Caspian, Eustace, and Reepicheep partake of the banquet after learning that it is Aslan’s Table and is replenished daily by his

bidding. Aslan's Table represents "the ultimate boon" of everlasting life for those heroes who embrace the journey, for those who obey and love Aslan. "The Ultimate Boon," everlasting life, is just as Lewis describes the smell of the fruit and the wine at the banquet table, "like a promise of all happiness" (Lewis, *Voyage* 166).

The final stage of Campbell's hero formula, *the return and reintegration with society*, has six subsections:

- (1) "Refusal of the Return," or the world denied; (2) "The Magic Flight," or the escape of Prometheus; (3) "Rescue from Without" (4) "The Crossing of the Return Threshold," or the return to the world of common day; (5) "Master of the Two Worlds"; and (6) "Freedom to Live," the nature and function of the ultimate boon.

Now that the hero has accomplished his adventure, he must begin the labor of returning to society with the rewards and wisdom of his journey. The responsibility of the hero is to bring these treasures back into his world for the renewing of the community, the nation, and even the planet. Lewis illustrates this idea through Lucy when Aslan says to her, "Now you are a lioness . . . And now all Narnia will be renewed" (Lewis, *Caspian* 138). Yet this responsibility of the return has often been refused; Campbell refers to this action as the "refusal of the return." Numerous heroes have been fabled to

take up residence forever in the blessed isle of immortality (Campbell 193).

Reepicheep, the only hero in the Chronicles allowed to stay in the land of immortality before his physical death, exemplifies this "Refusal." Reepicheep is a talking mouse who stands between one and two feet tall; he is the Chief Mouse in Narnia and accompanies Prince Caspian in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. The epitome of courage and honor, Reepicheep dreams of the ultimate adventure of sailing to the utter east. As an infant, a wood woman spoke this verse over him: "Where sky and water meet, Where the waves grow sweet, Doubt not, Reepicheep, To find all you seek, There is the utter East" (Lewis, *Voyage* 16). The spell of the verse stays with Reepicheep all his life and finds its fulfillment in his adventures with the *Dawn Treader*.

After a grievous parting from the crew of the *Dawn Treader*, Lucy, Edmund, Eustace, and Reepicheep board a small boat and row through the "endless carpet of lilies" near Aslan's country (Lewis *Voyage* 211). They glide eastward for three days on a steady current until they come upon a kind of greenish-grey, shimmering, trembling wall standing between them and the sky. The wall was really a long, tall wave endlessly fixed in one place. Through the

magnificent wall, and beyond the rising sun, is a range of incredibly high mountains. Despite the awesome height, the mountains appear warm, green and full of forests (Lewis, *Voyage* 211-12). They are seeing into Aslan's country. Suddenly, the boat runs aground; the water is too shallow. "This," said Reepicheep, "is where I go on alone."

They did not even try to stop him, for everything now felt as if it had been fated or had happened before. They helped him lower his little coracle. Then he took off his sword . . . and flung it far away across the lilled sea. . . . Then he bade them good-bye, trying to be sad for their sakes; but he was quivering with happiness. . . . Then hastily he got into his coracle and took his paddle, and the current caught it and away he went, very black against the lilies. . . . The coracle went more and more quickly, and beautifully it rushed up the wave's side. For one split second they saw its shape and Reepicheep's on the very top. Then it vanished, and since that moment no one can truly claim to have seen Reepicheep the Mouse. But my belief is that he arrived safely in Aslan's country and is alive even to this day.

The sole hero of the Chronicles allowed to stay in Aslan's

country before death, Reepicheep illustrates the “refusal of the return.” Reepicheep is on a pilgrimage in the Chronicles but not toward maturity since his faith in Aslan and determination to sail to the utter East are unshakable: “My own plans are made,” Reepicheep explains early in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*:

‘While I can, I sail east in the *Dawn Treader*. When she fails me, I paddle east in my coracle. When she sinks, I shall swim east with my four paws. And when I can swim no longer, if I have not reached Aslan’s country, or shot over the edge of the world in some vast cataract, I shall sink with my nose to the sunrise’ (184)

Reepicheep’s longing for the utter East is Lewis’ way of describing our longing for joy, for God. This longing also motivates Lewis: “I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity* 120).

“Magic flight” is the next subsection under the *return* stage in Campbell’s hero formula. In most adventures, the gods commission the hero to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society. This return, the final stage of his adventure, is supported by all the powers of his supernatural guardian

(Campbell 196-97). In *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory is commissioned by Aslan to bring back an Apple of Life to heal his dying mother. Aslan also gives him a command and a warning. He commands him to take the magic rings from his wicked uncle and bury them so that no one can use them again. He also warns Digory and Polly that in their world, wicked men and tyrants will rise up who do not care about joy, justice, or mercy just like the evil Empress Jadis.

Aslan first takes Polly and Digory to the Wood between the Worlds, yet unlike before, they do not need the magic rings because Aslan transports them. After preparing them for their return to England, Digory and Polly receive a special revelation of Aslan which they treasure for the rest of their lives. “. . . if ever they were sad or afraid or angry, the thought of all that golden goodness, and the feeling that it was still there, quite close . . . would come back and make them sure, deep down inside, that all was well” (178-79). Then they found themselves “tumbling into the noise, heat, and hot smell of London” (Lewis, *Magician's* 179). Unnoticed in the crowd, they find the front door of their house open and are able to sneak Uncle Andrew in easily. Digory feeds his mother the Apple of Life, which she manages to eat despite her very poor health. Within a short time, his mother is miraculously healed; and she manages to

make life at Digory's house much more enjoyable again. Polly retrieves the magic Rings from Uncle Andrew, and they bury them around the apple core which Digory had planted. Magically, the seeds from the core had already begun to grow and could be seen above ground. It was the wood from this very tree that eventually becomes the famous wardrobe which Lucy discovers in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. By his supernatural powers, Aslan insures Polly and Digory's success in this example of "magic flight."

"Rescue from without" is the next subsection under *the return and reintegration with society* stage of Campbell's hero formula. Some heroes, Campbell notes, are mesmerized by the supernatural world, the "bliss of the deep abode" which they encounter on their adventures. So mesmerized, in fact, that the heroes decide to stay. "Who having cast off the world," Campbell quotes, 'would desire to return again?' (207). In these cases, the world may have to come and get them. Despite the strong yearnings of many heroes to remain in the eternal bliss, society does not allow them to remain and provides the assistance they need to return (Campbell 207).

Such is the case with Prince Caspian in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. When it becomes apparent that the *Dawn Treader* can sail no farther east because of the shallow water, Caspian

gathers his crew about him. He announces that they have finally fulfilled the quest on which they embarked and gives instructions as to who will be in charge from this point on. "I am going with Reepicheep to see the World's End," Caspian proclaims (Lewis, *Voyage* 208).

Edmund and Reepicheep insist that he cannot abdicate his responsibilities as King of Narnia. Reepicheep explains to Caspian with a very low bow:

'You are the King of Narnia. You break faith with all your subjects, and especially with Trumpkin, if you do not return. You shall not please yourself with adventures as if you were a private person. And if your Majesty will not hear reason, it will be the truest loyalty of every man on board to follow me in disarming and binding you till you come to your senses.' (Lewis *Voyage* 209)

Caspian begrudgingly yields to their pressure and agrees to return to Narnia with the rest of the crew. Chided by Aslan, Caspian learns that Aslan wants Reepicheep to go on to the East and Edmund, Lucy, and Eustace to return to their world. Caspian is to go back alone. Just as Campbell explains, "At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind" (246). Aslan has a plan

for Caspian to return to Narnia with the wisdom and the princess that he has acquired for the renewing and restoring of his society and for the future provision of a suitable heir to the throne. Through Reepicheep and Edmund, Aslan provides Caspian's "rescue from without" to help him fulfill his calling.

One of the most difficult aspects of the hero's return is to communicate effectively the message he has received and his experiences encountered on his adventures. This aspect is what Campbell describes as the "crossing of the return threshold." The hero must face the difficulty of communicating with people who insist on the exclusive evidence of their senses. Just as a momentous dream by night may seem to be silly in the light of day, so the poet and the prophet may discover themselves playing the fool before a jury of unbelieving eyes (Campbell 218). Many heroes face the difficulty of the "crossing of the return threshold."

In *The Silver Chair* Eustace faces this difficulty when he tries to explain his experiences in Narnia to Polly. Finding Polly very upset by her cruel classmates, Eustace tries to separate himself from them and explains that he has changed from last term: "I was a different chap then. I was--gosh! what a little tick I was" (Lewis, *Silver* 3). Eustace warms up to Polly, thinking that he might be able to trust her with his greatest secret since she does not like the way

things are at their school either. Eustace approaches her with his secret this way:

‘I say, are you good at believing things? I mean things that everyone here would laugh at? . . . Could you believe me if I said that I’d been right out of the world--outside this world . . . Supposing I told you I’d been in a place where animals can talk and where there are--er--enchantments and dragons--and--well, all the sorts of things you have in fairy tales.’ Scrubb felt terribly awkward as he said this and got red in the face. (Lewis, *Silver* 5)

Eustace convinces Jill that he is telling her the truth. He overcomes the difficulty of the “crossing of the return threshold” and actually leads Jill to her own adventures and development in Narnia. Eustace succeeds in bringing back wisdom and revelations from his adventures by leading others to restoration and renewal.

According to Campbell, another aspect of the *return* stage of the hero is being “master of the two worlds.” Simply, the hero who is “master of the two worlds” is able to travel back and forth across the world divisions, to assimilate and know the one by his understanding of the other. The hero lets go of his personal

ambitions and willingly yields to whatever may happen in his life. He yields to the self-annihilation necessary for rebirth and realization of truth. Thus, the hero becomes one with God and the laws of the universe (Campbell 229-37).

In Lewis' *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory becomes a "master of the two worlds." Desperate to find a cure for his dying mother, he is sorely tempted by the Witch to steal an Apple of Life and bring it to his mother rather than fulfilling his quest from Aslan to retrieve the special apple for Narnia. The Witch says to Digory:

‘Do you not see, Fool, that one bite of that apple would heal her? You have it in your pocket. We are here by ourselves and the Lion is far away. Use your Magic and go back to your own world. A minute later you can be at your Mother’s bedside, giving her the fruit. . . . All will be well again. (Lewis, *Magician's* 161-62)

The witch tries to get Digory to doubt Aslan’s character (suggesting that Aslan does not have his best interest in mind) and to fail at his quest. Digory, however, realizes the importance of fulfilling his promise to Aslan and in living a life of integrity. Digory’s decision to obey Aslan is extremely difficult, for he loves his mother dearly and fears that she will die soon. “He was very sad and he wasn’t even sure all the time that he had done the right thing: but whenever

he remembered the shining tears in Aslan's eyes [about his mother's illness] he became sure" (Lewis, *Magician's* 164). Focusing on Aslan's compassion for his mother, represented by Aslan's tears, becomes Digory's strength. He learns that he can trust Aslan and leave the fate of his mother to Aslan's care.

In this vivid example, Digory abandons his hopes and fears, no longer resisting the self-annihilation necessary for rebirth, and so becomes one with Aslan; he has become a "master of the two worlds." The following passage in *The Magician's Nephew*, portrays Digory's surrender and acquired wisdom:

And Digory could say nothing, for tears choked him and he gave up all hopes of saving his Mother's life; but at the same time he knew that the Lion knew what would have happened [had he stolen the apple for his mother], and that there might be things more terrible even than losing someone you love by death. (175)

Digory transcends his humanity by realizing that death is not the enemy and that yielding to Aslan's way is the only means to true life and joy. Growing in strength and spirit, Digory achieves an inner harmony that enables him to resist the strongest temptations to evil (Schakel, *Heart* 108-09).

“Freedom to live” is the final section in the *return* stage of Campbell’s hero formula. The hero gains freedom from reconciling the passing of time with eternity, his needs and desires with God’s will and laws. “The hero is the champion of things becoming,” Campbell explains (238-43). The hero dies to his personal ego; he is reborn and at peace with God. He is free to use his gifts, talents, and abilities to renew and bless the world (Campbell 238).

Lewis describes this reconciliation with time and eternity, this “freedom to live” in *The Last Battle* when Peter, Lucy, and Edmund find themselves in Aslan’s country:

‘Listen, Peter. When Aslan said you could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of. But that was not the real Narnia. That had a beginning and an end. It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia, which has always been here and always will be here: just as our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in Aslan’s real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream.’ (Lewis, *Last* 169-70)

Those who follow Aslan can yield to his plans because they have come to know that this life is merely a shadow of the life to come. Fear of death is subordinated to trust in Aslan (God) whom they have grown to love and respect. Therein the hero experiences "freedom to live," freedom from the fear of death, freedom to embrace life and live it fully at one with God and his will.

Chapter III

Lewis as Hero

"The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation." (Lewis *Surprised* 229)

In an anthology published by Collier Books, C.S Lewis is referred to in the subtitle as "One of this Century's Most Renowned Theologians, Novelists, and Literary Critics." Over three dozen of his titles are available with more than forty million copies in print. His works are also available in many languages, and he is one of the best-selling authors of all time (Dorsett 3). In September of 1947, *Time* magazine focused national attention on Lewis as one of the most popular Christian authors in America and Great Britain. More than forty years have passed since that article was published, yet Lewis' popularity has only increased (Dorsett 3). To many of Lewis' readers, however, he represents much more than a best-selling author; he is a hero. In his biography on Lewis, Wilson makes reference to Lewis as a cult figure, as a hero, as a guru or spiritual master. He refers also to Lewis idolatry (xiii-xviii).

Trying to understand this "Lewis idolatry" phenomenon, Wilson suggests a possible explanation. He asserts that Lewis' popularity is not a typical success story. The life he led, in all probability,

would not lead one to great fame. For his entire adult life, Wilson explains, he was a scholar and a teacher at Oxford and Cambridge. His days were filled principally with writing, reading, and domestic chores rather than mixing with fashionable people. According to Wilson, Lewis' appeal can best be explained by the fact that he was deliberately at variance with the twentieth century yet very much in tune with the needs and concerns of the times (ix-x).

The world has changed more dramatically in the last one hundred years than ever before in history, Wilson continues. Religions have collapsed; old values and certainties have been destroyed. Thus, Lewis' attempts to justify Christian orthodoxy have made him an internationally celebrated and reassuring figure to many people who long for some kind of hope in these ever changing times. In the quarter century since he died, Lewis has become something like a saint to many conservative-minded believers. Yet it is not the professorial dimension of Lewis, expert on Medieval and Renaissance literature, that makes this enormous appeal (Wilson x). It is the imaginative Lewis, utilizing his fertile intellect to inspire, who speaks to present generations. In essence, Lewis has become a kind of hero to many of his readers by restoring hope in the reality of the supernatural with the sword of his pen:

We do not approach him [Lewis] as we would approach

other writers only through his books, but also through the intense experiences of his followers and devotees, who have found in his pages something much more potent than purely literary interest or delight. (Wilson 309)

The following personal reflections of Lewis' admirers highlight some of these "intense experiences" to which Wilson refers.

In the *Companion to Narnia*, for instance, Ford refers to Lewis as a "spiritual pilgrim-companion." His reflections on the *Chronicles* reveal some of the reasons that so many of Lewis' readers revere him:

Those of us who return to the *Chronicles* year after year, sensing in them the "Grand Design" of the Scriptures themselves and deriving from them the courage to go on through the deserts and the underlands of life, the conviction to pass by the luxurious enticements of Tashbaan or Harfang, and contentment with the splendor hidden in the ordinary fare and fidelities of our existence, know Lewis to be our spiritual pilgrim-companion. (xxxvii)

Ford, like other readers, brings to the *Chronicles* his own story and comes away with renewed vision and expanded horizons (Ford xxiii).

Ford read the Chronicles for the first time when he was a college student and says, “. . . I knew I had crossed a frontier” (xxxvi). “At first,” he continues,

they made a strong appeal to my more apologetic side: they gave explanations of all that I held most dear. But as the years and the re-readings went on, I found myself returning to Narnia at times of crisis, and recommending them to everyone I cared about. (xxxvi)

In the same way that the heroes of the Chronicles use their talents to bring back a life-giving message from their adventures, Lewis, through his exceptional literary talents and his spiritual revelations, inspires his readers.

In his “Reminiscences,” Hooper says that he found Lewis to be a very formidable person. “When he asked me to be his secretary,” Hooper adds, “I was overwhelmed.” The one thing he hated to give up when he accepted the job was talking *about* Lewis. He was in the habit of saying quite often “as C.S. Lewis has said” (Hooper, “Reminiscences” 6). According to Wilson, Walter Hooper regards Lewis with such respect that he sees him as a kind of Catholic saint (xv).

Kathryn Lindskoog, author of *C.S. Lewis Mere Christian*, writes that she was, in a sense, mentally married to Lewis the day she first

read one of his books ("Reactions" 19). She discusses her first meeting with Lewis in this way:

As I approached it [the place she would meet Lewis] I became panicky. . . . I entered the hotel in a state of intense fear and hope, and there in the lobby Lewis arose from the sofa . . . and had me sit down next to him. The fact that I was sitting on the same sofa with C.S. Lewis made me afraid that I would fall off the sofa. I was absolutely giddy with awe.

I had discovered C.S. Lewis two years before this meeting, and he had dominated my intellectual life from that time until I met him. ("Reactions" 19)

Many people, including Ford, Hooper, and Lindscoog, revere Lewis. His writing dramatically affects their lives. Margaret Hannay, another biographer of Lewis, writes that Lewis was affectionately called "St. Clive" in her undergraduate days and cited as an authority on almost every aspect of Christian life and doctrine (Hannay, "Surprised by Joy" 15).

Another woman, the poet Kathleen Raine, had a different kind of experience with Lewis. She read *The Problem of Pain* and *The Screwtape Letters* but did not care for them. She happened to meet Lewis at a dinner party, however, and had this reaction: "To meet

him was to know that here was a man of great learning continuously kindled into life by imagination. He seemed to possess a kind of boyish greatness." She was able to spend more time with him later. Of these occasions she comments, "Every conversation was an exploration, or a game with a shining ball flying through the air." She later became a "devoted lover" of the Chronicles (Lindskoog, "Reactions" 20).

Part of Lewis' appeal is his ability to articulate Christianity intelligently, imaginatively, and convincingly. In an age when Christianity is often shunned by the intelligentsia, Lewis lures skeptics and believers alike with his thought provoking, imaginative tales. The Chronicles, for instance, enable readers to experience freshly the potency of the Gospel. Through the heroes in the Chronicles, readers see a reflection of their own journey in life and their need to grow and mature. Lewis also comforts and inspires his readers with a portrait of Aslan (God) who is greater, more powerful, more righteous, and more loving than they; readers learn they can rely on an awesome yet loving God. Just as the heroes of his works need the benevolent power's assistance in a world of unknown dangers and adventures, Lewis helps readers cling to the hope that they are not alone in this world and that there is a plan for

their lives. Because of his formidable literary and inspirational talents, Lewis has become a kind of hero to many.

Lewis' life reflects aspects of the heroic pattern. As noted earlier, Campbell asserts that the "call to adventure" often begins by a blunder "of the merest chance," which reveals an unsuspected world (Campbell 51). Here the hero develops a relationship with powerful forces not fully understood, and this occasion may lead to the opening of a destiny (Campbell 51). Lewis' initial "call to adventure" occurred in his childhood. This memory was Lewis' first glimpse of Paradise or longing for God. In his autobiography, Lewis remembers the experience in this way:

Once in those very early days [of childhood] my brother brought into the nursery the lid of a biscuit tin which he had covered with moss and garnished with twigs and flowers so as to make it a toy garden or toy forest. That was the first beauty I ever knew. What the real garden had failed to do, the toy garden did. It made me aware of nature . . . something cool, dewy, fresh, exuberant. . . . As long as I live my imagination of Paradise will retain something of my brother's toy garden. (*Surprised* 7).

Lewis' simple experience with the toy garden served to awaken in him a yearning for the eternal, for something grander than what he

could experience on this earth, something of another world. Just as significant, Lewis realized an important lesson which was later to serve as the cornerstone of his fiction. He learned that the toy garden allowed him to experience the enchantment of beauty when the actual garden did not. In the same way, his *Chronicles* allow readers to experience the reality of God when their familiar religious world does not.

Campbell also notes that after the hero experiences the initial "call to adventure," a series of signs occur with increasing force. Common day life then becomes routine and meaningless until the adventure is heeded (Campbell 55-56). This pattern is, indeed, what Lewis encountered after his next experience with longing:

As I stood beside a flowering currant bush on a summer day there suddenly arose in me without warning, and as if from a depth not of years but of centuries, the memory of that earlier morning at the Old House when my brother had brought his toy garden into the nursery. It is difficult to find words strong enough for the sensation which came over me; Milton's "enormous bliss" of Eden . . . comes somewhere near it. . . . and before I knew what I desired, the desire itself was gone, the whole glimpse

withdrawn, the world turned commonplace again . . . It had taken only a moment of time; and in a certain sense everything else that had ever happened to me was insignificant in comparison. (*Surprised* 16)

Through these experiences, Lewis learned to live in the excitement of his imagination. "I will be clear that at this time--at the age of six, seven and eight--I was living almost entirely in my imagination" (*Surprised* 15).

Later in life, however, Lewis experienced the "refusal of the call," or "the folly of the flight from the god" that Campbell discusses. As Lewis grew older, he became indoctrinated with the supremacy of logic which he learned, in part, from Mr. Kirkpatrick, his sixty-six year old tutor. To Lewis, Kirkpatrick was the "embodiment of pure logic, the man who sacrificed everything--social niceties, good manners, and even the pleasure of conversation--to a passionate desire to get things right" (Wilson 40). Lewis was already an atheist and pessimist before he went to study with Kirkpatrick, so his studies at Bookham merely fueled the defense of his position (Lewis, *Surprised* 138-40). "' . . . I believe in no religion,'" Lewis shared with Greeves in his late teens:

'There is absolutely no proof for any of them, and from a philosophical standpoint Christianity is not even the

best. All religions . . . are merely man's own invention . . . Primitive man found himself surrounded by all sorts of terrible things he didn't understand . . . Thus religion . . . grew up.' (Hooper, *Dragons* 8-9)

Lewis' powerful intellect became his god; he abandoned the "call" that he received early in life. Even though Lewis prospered in his studies, his life lacked meaning and significance. According to Campbell, this "refusal of the call" is essentially a refusal to give up what one considers one's own interest (Campbell 59-60). This stage applied to Lewis as he described himself during this period in his life as controlled by "my deep-seated hatred of authority, my monstrous individualism, and my lawlessness" (*Surprised* 172).

Despite his animosity toward Christianity and his disbelief, Lewis realized that most of his favorite authors were Christians, or at least religious, whereas the other authors that he read seemed shallow and even boring. Lewis also experienced a sharp contrast between the two hemispheres of his mind, the intellect and the imagination: "Nearly all that I loved I believed to be imaginary; nearly all that I believed to be real I thought grim and meaningless" (*Surprised* 170). Over time, Lewis progressed on his journey through these realizations.

Lewis experienced the “Crossing of the first threshold” when he finally made the decision to believe in God. First Lewis came face to face with his depravity: “For the first time I examined myself with a seriously practical purpose. And there I found what appalled me; a zoo of lusts, a bedlam of ambitions, a nursery of fears, a harem of fondled hatreds. My name was legion” (*Surprised* 226). Lewis realizes his need for a savior. At the time of his decision to believe in God, Lewis reported that he felt like a man of snow finally beginning to melt. “The melting was starting in my back--drip-drip and presently trickle-trickle. I rather disliked the feeling” (*Surprised* 225). ‘Lewis’ personal experiences are reminiscent of those of Eustace and Edmund the two characters in the *Chronicles* who also refuse the “call to adventure.”

Of particular interest in Lewis’ adventures in life were his experiences during the *trials and victories of initiation* stage of Campbell’s hero formula. Once Lewis had become a Christian, and embraced his call, he experienced the “road of trials” and learned to put his ego to death. As he learned to die to himself, he was able to unite himself with God’s perfect will and bring back from his adventures what would renew and revive his society.

After his conversion to Christianity, Lewis eventually wrote books of apologetics such as *Mere Christianity*, *The Problem of*

Pain, and *Miracles*. He became famous for his ability to defend the Christian faith intellectually. He even held meetings of the Socratic Club in which he debated people of opposing viewpoints on a variety of issues. During one of these meetings in 1948, Elizabeth Anscombe read a paper she had written as a reply to Lewis' argument in chapter three of his book *Miracles*. That night, for the first time in the history of the Socratic Club, Lewis was thoroughly trounced in argument (Wilson 213).

Lewis was devastated by the incident. He told his friend George Sayer that "his argument for the existence of God had been demolished." Dining with some friends a few days later, Lewis appeared very disturbed by the debate. Dyson commented, "Very well--now [he had] lost everything and come to the foot of the cross" (Wilson 213). Dyson's comment captured exactly what happened in Lewis' adventure. Lewis died to his intellect--the foundation of his person. Apparently, writing apologetics was not the only path for Lewis to travel in order to fulfill his quest in life. Wilson asserts that this single encounter with Anscombe had a profound impact on Lewis as a writer. More than any other factor, it drove him to write fiction, a genre in which he was not hemmed in by logic, intellectual debates, and empirical facts. What was a death to Lewis as an intellectual grounded in logic led to a rebirth

of imagination. Lewis came to believe that the methods he used in his Christian apologetics were spurious (Wilson 210-11).

During this period of his life, Lewis experienced the “road of trials” in a variety of ways. Besides his crushing defeat by Anscombe, Lewis’ surrogate mother, Minto, experienced a significant decline in health. His brother struggled with alcoholism; and at the same time, Lewis’ relationship with Tolkien began to wane. Nonetheless, Tolkien’s theory of myth made a profound impact on Lewis at this stage in his life. According to Tolkien, make-believe was really another way of talking about the reality of things; the cerebral way in which grown-ups come to conclusions about reality and the world, Tolkien suggests, is not the only way (Wilson 214). Wilson maintains that it is precisely these difficulties in Lewis’ life which drove him to plunge into imaginative composition, illustrating the death and rebirth principle (Wilson 214, 216).

Lewis also learned that argument is never enough to convert someone to Christianity. Through great suffering, Lewis discovered that the whole person must be consecrated on the “road of trials,” intellect as well as imagination and emotions; and his best art is born of it (Wilson 218). Wilson describes Lewis’ “road of trials” quite appropriately:

It is as though Lewis, in all his tiredness and despondency in the late 1940s has managed to get through the wardrobe door himself; to leave behind the world of squabbles and grown-ups and to re-enter the world which with the deepest part of himself he never left . . . [in the Chronicles] there is a rich concentration of all that he has most intensely felt and enjoyed as a reader (220)

Lewis came to the end of himself during these trials and discovered his benevolent guide, God himself, waiting to resurrect him in power. Although Lewis reached many with his apologetics, he touched many more with his Chronicles. Unsure of Lewis' future reputation as a theologian or literary critic, Wilson believes that Lewis is certain to be numbered among the classic authors of children's literature (220).

In the introduction of the *Companion to Narnia*, Madeleine L'Engle describes her experience with Lewis and the changes they both underwent. In her first reading of Lewis' *The Problem of Pain*, she felt outraged at his message. She set Lewis aside until someone gave her *Out of the Silent Planet*. Instead of feeling as if she were being preached at coldly and unlovingly, she felt that Lewis gave her a story in which she could identify with the characters. Her reading

friendship with Lewis strengthened slowly. “I was growing and changing,” L’Engle writes, “So was he. . . . His theology became more human as he grew through his surprises with joy and his battles with pain” (Ford xiv).

Lewis successfully crossed the “return threshold” and brought his life-giving message to the readers of the *Chronicles*. According to Campbell, the hero is one who is able to battle past his personal and societal limitations (Campbell 19-20). The hero then shares visions, ideas, and inspirations from the pristine springs of human life. Not limited by the present, disintegrating society, the hero is empowered from the unquenchable, fertile source of the eternal through which society is reborn (Campbell 19-20). In essence, this change is exactly what happened to Lewis when he died to his intellectual, logical self and submitted himself to God. Only when he was reborn could he overcome the dragon within him (like Eustace) and provide a heroic, life-giving message to his empirical culture.

Mentioned earlier in this paper is a profound speech made by Puddleglum in *The Silver Chair*. This speech captures Lewis’ own transformed perspective on the existence of God. The Witch, like modern society, tries to convince Puddleglum, the Prince, Eustace,

and Jill that Aslan and Narnia do not exist. Puddleglum's response to the Witch is Lewis' response to skeptics who likewise challenge his faith:

'One word, Ma'am,' he said, coming back from the fire limping because of the pain. . . . 'Suppose we have only dreamed, or made up, all those things--trees, grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself. Suppose we have. Then all I can say is that, in that case, the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones. Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one. And that's a funny thing, when you come to think of it. We're just babies making up a game, if you're right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow. That's why I'm going to stand by the play world. I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia. . . . we're leaving your court at once and setting out in the dark to spend our lives looking for Overland. Not that our lives will be very long, I should think; but that's small loss if the world's as dull a place as you say.' (Lewis, *Silver* 159)

Puddleglum makes his most profound speech after painfully stamping out the fire with his bare foot. Like Lewis, he realizes that even if he never proves that Narnia is real, he cannot help but risk his life searching for it. Having once tasted the joys of Narnia, he can never be satisfied with anything less. Puddleglum yearns for the trees, the sun, and Aslan just as Lewis longs for the joy and comfort that he finds in God. To Puddleglum and Lewis the shallowness and the despair of the present world cannot compare with the joys they have known of another.

Lewis' pain from his intellectual defeat with Anscombe, the waning of his friendship with Tolkien, the declining health of his surrogate mother, and the alcoholism of his brother led him to embrace faith through his imagination; the result, in part, is the *Chronicles of Narnia*. The art Lewis produced out of his suffering is largely responsible for his heroic reputation among many of his readers.

Chapter IV

Summary

"I think that all things, in their way, reflect heavenly truth, the imagination not least." (Lewis Surprised 167)

The story of the hero illustrates the challenges of the road less traveled. Through monsters, dragons, and talking animals, the intangible, supernatural world is personified. Visualizing the unseen powers daily encountered in the adventures of life, we as readers glean the wisdom needed to put off our infantile, greedy impulses which seek to keep us bound to this earth. Readers also discover the value of yielding to a higher power.

As demonstrated in Chapter I, several of Lewis' heroes fulfill the patterns of the hero set forth in the classification systems of Raglan, Rank, and Campbell. These patterns of the hero illustrate the themes and events established long ago as central to the human experience (Glover 56). To a large extent, these themes and events correspond with the rites of passage--birth, initiation, and death. Prince Caspian, Shasta (Cor), and Prince Rilian, all Narnian born characters, faithfully illustrate numerous aspects of the heroic patterns discovered by these scholars. These characters, more so than those born in England, are discussed in greater detail regarding

the origins of their birth and future history causing them to correspond with a greater number of the items listed in the patterns. Nonetheless, characters such as Lucy, Eustace, Edmund, Digory, Jill, and Peter also exemplify numerous aspects of the heroic pattern.

Eustace, for example, vividly illustrates Campbell's "refusal of the call," "belly of the whale," and "atonement with the father" themes. Lucy and Edmund are staying with Eustace and his "modern" family at the beginning of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. He overhears them talking about Narnia and pesters them unmercifully. One day while criticizing a picture of a Narnian ship in Lucy's room, Eustace finds himself plunged unwillingly into the adventure of the *Dawn Treader*. Literally plunged into the sea with Lucy and Edmund at the onset of the adventure, Eustace responds by "crying much harder than any boy of his age has a right to cry when nothing worse than a wetting has happened to him, and would only yell out, 'Let me go. Let me go back. I don't like it'" (Lewis, *Voyage* 9).

The image of being plunged into the water is a foreshadowing of the rebirth that occurs in Eustace's life; he is being cleansed of his unbridled selfishness. Meanwhile, Eustace succeeds in making the voyage miserable for everyone around him. He complains

constantly about the conditions of the ship and even insults the valourous Reepicheep. For a time he is enslaved on an island, an imprisonment which does not reform him at all. Again his outward experience is indicative of an inner reality; Eustace is clearly in bondage to the sin of his self-centeredness.

It is not until the *Dawn Treader* arrives at Dragon's Island that Eustace experiences his dramatic transformation that Campbell would call the "belly of the whale" or rebirth. Eustace wanders away from his crewmates after landing on the island in order to avoid the work of repairing the ship, and he gets lost in an unknown valley. "It was so narrow and deep, and the precipices which surrounded it so sheer, that it was like a huge pit or trench. The floor was grassy though strewn with rocks . . . " (Lewis, *Voyage* 67). The valley was like a huge pit, the "belly of the whale," and it was strewn with rocks symbolizing the barren state of Eustace's soul. Eustace realizes that there is no possible way of getting out; he must face the depravity of his nature.

Eustace discovers a cave in which he finds a dragon's lair. Thrilled with the prospect of becoming wealthy, he puts on a gold bracelet and fills his pockets with treasure. Waiting for the rain to subside, he falls asleep for quite a long time. He awakens because of a pain in his arm. "Sleeping on a dragon's hoard with greedy,

dragonish thoughts in his heart, he had become a dragon himself . . . He realized that he was a monster cut off from the whole human race” (Lewis, *Voyage* 75-76).

Eustace’s experience as a dragon has a positive effect on his character. In his separation from his crewmates, he feels lonely; and he realizes, for the first time, that everyone has been very kind to him. He used to think that all the problems he experienced were really the faults of others. Yet now Eustace finds that his only pleasure and comfort is the crew’s companionship; he begins to help out by finding food, exploring the rest of the island, lighting fires, giving rides, and even providing a tree for a new mast. Eustace’s dragonish condition transforms his character.

When Eustace was still a human, he could ignore his lazy, greedy, and selfish nature; but now he sees exactly what it is. “He shuddered whenever he caught sight of his own reflection as he flew over a mountain lake. He hated the huge bat-like wings, the saw-edge ridge on his back, and the cruel curved claws (Lewis, *Voyage* 84). As Eustace sees exactly who and what he is, externally and internally, he grieves.

One night when he is more miserable than ever, Eustace has a dreamlike experience. Campbell explains that heroes often receive revelations in dreams and discover clues they need to be saved; this

experience is exactly what happens to Eustace (Campbell 101). In the dream, he meets Aslan who leads him to a high mountain with a very large well, Aslan's country. Eustace longs to bathe in the pool of water to ease the pain in his leg, but Aslan tells him that he must undress first.

Eustace then peels off a layer of skin but finds that underneath is yet another layer of hard, rough, scaly skin. He tries to peel off his dragonish skin three more times to no avail. Like an onion, Eustace discovers that his sinful nature is so deep that each time he abandons one sin, he finds another. Finally Aslan tells Eustace that he will have to "undress" him which scares Eustace because he fears Aslan's claws. Eustace describes it this way:

'The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt. . . . he peeled the beastly stuff right off . . . And there was I as smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been. Then he caught hold of me--I didn't like that much for I was very tender underneath now that I'd no skin on--and threw me into the water. . . . it became perfectly delicious and as soon as I started swimming

and splashing I found that all the pain had gone from my arm. And then I saw why. I'd turned into a boy again.'

(Lewis, *Voyage* 90-91)

Eustace's experience here is an outer sign of an inner reality; he is undergoing the death of his ego, his sinful nature. This death is complete, right down to Eustace's heart. It is also here that Eustace experiences his "atonement with the father." Eustace must know the power and justice of Aslan as well as his mercy and love. In knowing both aspects of Aslan, Eustace learns the fullness of the character of God. As part of Eustace's rebirth experience, Aslan dresses him in new clothes and returns him to the camp site with the others. Eustace is a new person, ready and willing to progress in his adventure.

In the scriptural book of Ezekiel, God speaks of the process of cleansing, death, and rebirth, a pattern which applies to Eustace:

'I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.' (36:25-26 NAS)

Eustace is not perfect; he merely embarks on the trials and victories of initiation which lead him to become the heroic character that

Aslan intended.

In writing the Chronicles, Lewis became and remains a benevolent guide leading his readers onto greater heights in their adventures of life. Having experienced the “refusal of the call” himself as well other aspects of the arduous journey, he shares the insights and revelations that encouraged him along the narrow path. Through the Chronicles, readers learn that the adventure is never easy.

Lewis successfully fulfills his quest by passing on his life-giving message to others. Through the Chronicles he touches the lives of children, adults, men, and women of all ages with the power and delight of his animated tales. Just as Lewis anticipates, many of those who read the Chronicles come away changed, their shell a little bigger, a bit less confining (Glover 4). Through the Chronicles, Lewis entices his readers to join him in the ultimate adventure beyond this world:

. . . for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read: which goes on for ever: in

which every chapter is better than the one before.
(Lewis, *Last* 184).

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