Where Reality and Fantasy Collide
A Critical Analysis of The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

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In many films of the fantasy genre, it is often difficult to find one whose characters and themes are real enough to resonate with an audience. The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is one such rare film. In his cinematic adaptation of Clive Staples Lewis’s beloved novel, film director Andrew Adamson expertly blends mythic and allegorical elements with reality, creating a story that grips both the heart and mind.

I. Plot and Mythic Structure Analysis

The film’s sequence follows Christopher Vogler’s Twelve Stages of the Hero’s Journey, an adaptation of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth. To better understand the progression of the story, it is important to examine how each of these stages contributes to both the hero’s growth and the audience’s satisfaction.

Prologue

The film opens with a scene from the London Blitz era of World War II. The second youngest of four children, a young boy named Edmund, is staring out the window when his mother brings him back to reality. As she is ushering the children into the bomb shelter, Edmund cries out that he has left his father’s photograph behind and scrambles back into the house. The oldest boy, seventeen-year-old Peter, runs after him and screams, “why can’t you just do what you’re told!” The two return safely to their mother and two sisters, Susan and Lucy, in the shelter. The

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scene then cuts to Grand Central Station, where the mother is sending the children off on a train so they can be safely out of the war zone. Edmund looks longingly at the soldiers, but boards the train anyway.

**ANALYSIS**
As Christopher Vogler describes, one essential function of the prologue is to “cue the audience” (86) into what kind of story they are about to witness. The prologue above both provides an explanation for the setting that will follow it and sets up potential conflict among the siblings. Tension between Edmund and Peter, a theme that will come into play later in the story, is introduced in their fighting over the photograph. Peter's self-imposed feelings of responsibility for his younger siblings are also apparent in the scene, as he feels the need to run after Edmund and ensure he returns safely to the shelter. Edmund's own inner conflict, his search for “belonging,” is introduced as well, represented by his longing glances towards the soldiers. The scene also serves the purpose of drawing the audience into the lives of the children, as they sympathize with their separation from their mother. As the children wave goodbye, the audience asks the same questions as the children themselves. Where are we headed? What is in store on the other end of the track? With these questions posed, the audience is eager to enter the Ordinary World and begin the story.

**Ordinary World**

**PLOT**
The children are dropped off on a platform far into the rural countryside. A cranky woman with glasses and grey hair, who claims to be the Professor’s assistant, picks them up. She tours them through the Professor’s house, a large, exquisite country home surrounded by extensive gardens. She warns them that the Professor doesn't like children, and that they had better avoid touching anything of value in the home. The scene then cuts to the following day, when the children are reading inside due to rainy weather. There is a lot of fighting among the four, particularly between Edmund and Peter.
ANALYSIS

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell describes the Ordinary World as the “world of common day” (Vogler, 83). For the four children of the film, the Professor’s house is an accurate representation of this. The stern warnings of the old woman keep them in their subordinate roles as children, as they are forbidden to touch anything in the house and are clearly not valued in their environment. The gloomy weather and grey skies are also indicative of their situation, paralleling the tension between siblings and their boredom. The story has slowed, in need of a new plot addition to move it along. With the audience eager and wanting more, the Call to Adventure can now arrive.

*Call to Adventure*

**PLOT**

Lucy, as the youngest sibling, suggests a game of hide and seek, trying to lighten the spirit. The others are reluctant at first, but agree to play. Driven out of obvious hiding places by her siblings, she comes upon a hidden room at the end of a long hallway. Inside there is only a large, ornate wardrobe covered in dust. She walks inside, expecting to find the back of the wardrobe, but instead steps out into a snow-covered world. As she walks over to examine a lit lamppost in the middle of the glade, she runs into a faun. The faun introduces himself as Mr. Tumnus, and, upon recognizing that Lucy is a “daughter of Eve” (human), invites her into his home for tea. He entertains her with stories of Narnia, and explains how the White Witch cursed the land and made it winter eternally. He plays some windpipes for her and enchants the fireplace until she falls asleep. Suddenly the lights go off and the room goes cold. Lucy wakes up and finds him shaking in the corner. He explains that he is kidnapping her, but is very sorry. “I thought you were my friend,” says Lucy. He seems to have a change in heart, and quickly takes her back to the wardrobe. Before leaving, she gives him her handkerchief to dry his tears. She goes to tell her siblings, none of whom believe her except for Edmund. Later that night, Edmund secretly follows Lucy back into the wardrobe. Alone, he searches for Lucy when the White Witch pulls up in her sleigh. The Witch asks him about his family, and
he tells her all about his three other siblings and Lucy meeting Mr. Tumnus. She invites him into her sleigh and gives him a hot drink and Turkish delight, explaining to him that he could one day become Prince of Narnia. The Witch then leaves and Lucy comes back to find him, overjoyed he has found Narnia, too. They return back into the wardrobe to tell Peter and Susan.

ANALYSIS
Vogler defines the Call to Adventure as “some event [that] is necessary to get a story rolling” (99). In the film, Lucy’s finding of Narnia is such an event. She is introduced to both the wonders and cruelties of this strange world by Mr. Tumnus. He enchants the fire for her, showing her the magic of Narnia at work. His attempted kidnapping, counter to his benevolence, alerts the audience and Lucy that there is a dark side to Narnia, too. Edmund encounters this evil in the form of the White Witch. He gives her information in exchange for dessert, a common fairy tale theme, which Bruno Bettelheim’s *Hansel and Gretel* commentary calls “gluttony” (Tatar, 275). The Call delivered at this stage is two-fold: it invites all the children back into Narnia to explore further, but also invites Edmund back in for the wrong reasons. His encounter with the Witch expands upon a theme introduced in the prologue, his search for “belonging.” The Witch’s offer of making him Prince is attractive because it sets him apart from his siblings, making him “special.” As discussed in Bettelheim’s commentary, this plays on the psychology of children and their quest for self-autonomy. It is also at this point in the film that Lucy is set up as the “main hero” of the story. She is the one who receives the Call first, and also draws upon her innocence to see the good in Mr. Tumnus. She has the same magical, childlike quality as the rest of Narnia. For this reason, the Herald, or deliverer of the Call, is Lucy herself. It is her own intrigue and complete belief in Narnia’s magic, not a request by an external force, that leads her to want to return.

*Refusal of the Call*

*Plot*
Upon returning to the house, Lucy eagerly tells her siblings that Edmund knows about Narnia, too. When asked about it however, Ed-
mund denies it, saying he was just “playing along.” All three siblings turn against Lucy, telling her to stop acting like a child. She walks away crying, and accidentally runs right into the Professor. Taken aback, the Professor asks what is wrong. She tells him all about the wardrobe, and how nobody will believe her story.

**ANALYSIS**
The children cannot accept the Call until they believe in the world in which it is issued. It is their “rationality” that acts as a sort of Threshold Guardian. Lucy, still a young girl, doesn’t have the same sense of rationality that her older siblings have. In her mind, a magical place like Narnia is perfectly plausible. The others, however, need more persuasion because they are older. Why should they believe their imaginative little sister? Edmund is unique in that he already believes in Narnia, but is experiencing what Vogler describes as “conflicting calls” (109). For him, the Threshold Guardian is his pride. He knows that by siding against Lucy, Peter will think more highly of him. He also knows, however, that great things lie ahead for him if he chooses to reenter Narnia and seek the Witch.

**Meeting with the Mentor**

**PLOT**
The Professor sends Lucy off to bed and invites Susan and Peter into his office. As they try to explain themselves, he seems uninterested until they mention Lucy’s tale. “What was it like?” he asks, suddenly curious. “You’re not saying you believe her?” the children reply. He asks them why they don’t believe in it themselves, and Susan replies that it would be completely “illogical.” He laughs at them, telling them to believe Lucy. “You’re a family,” he says, “you might just start acting like one.”

**ANALYSIS**
Vogler defines this stage as the time in which the hero “gains the supplies, knowledge and confidence needed” (117) to begin their journey. The Professor is the Mentor, acting as a “gift giver” and planter of information. In this case, the children are given the knowledge and confidence to give Lucy a chance. More importantly, however, they are in-
troduced to a central theme in the story: not everything is always going to be “logical.” This sentiment, planted by the Professor, will be put to use later in their journey.

**Crossing the First Threshold**

**PLOT**
The children are playing cricket outside when Peter hits the ball through a window. Knowing they will be in trouble, they search for a place to hide. When no place seems big enough, they finally resort to the wardrobe. “You’ve got to be kidding me,” Susan says. As they walk deeper into it, they step from the wooden floor onto the snowy ground, crossing over into Narnia. “Impossible,” Susan says. They look around in wonder and apologize to Lucy. Edmund apologizes as well for lying.

**ANALYSIS**
As Vogler mentions, heroes don’t simply accept the “gifts of their Mentors and then charge into the adventure” (128). There often has to be a sort of “last straw” to force them into the Special World. The threat of getting in trouble is such an external force that compels them to enter the wardrobe. In doing so, they cross both a literal and metaphorical threshold. Literally, there is a divide between the wood of the wardrobe and ground of Narnia. In stepping over it, however, they also figuratively consent to believe in this new world, thereby answering the Call.

**Tests, Allies and Enemies**

**PLOT**
Once the group has found their bearings, Lucy decides to take them to see Mr. Tumnus, who has since been captured by the Witch. On the walk there, Edmund looks longingly towards the Witch’s castle, again an example of his conflicting calls. A beaver walks up to the group and hands Lucy the handkerchief she gave to Tumnus on her previous visit. He invites them back to his dam. The beaver is the first ally the children have met. According to Vogler, allies can be “relied upon for special services,” (137) such as showing the hero around the Special World. The beaver serves to acquaint the children with Narnia. He tells them
all about the Prophecy: when two sons of Adam and two daughters of Eve come together at the stone table, the Witch will be defeated and the curse lifted. Aslan, a great lion, is the leader of this revolution. As Susan says they best be getting home, they realize that Edmund has run away to the Witch. They try to run after him, but the beaver explains that it would be foolish to walk right into the Witch’s trap. This serves as the first “test,” both for Edmund and the other children. Edmund has failed his test by choosing “evil” over “good.” His alliances currently reside with the Witch, not with his family. For the children, the choice to abandon their search for Edmund is also a test. In leaving him, they “pass” by acknowledging their efforts are part of a greater cause.

Meanwhile, Edmund has reached the castle and the Witch is furious as to why he hasn’t brought the rest of his family. He is thrown in the dungeon, right next to Tumnus. The Witch explains that Tumnus is here only because Edmund traded him in “for sweeties.” Again, we see the theme of gluttony and temptation, which poses another “test” for Edmund. He has chosen to give into his power-hungry desires and side with the Witch, a decision that has compromised his morals and the safety of others. As the Witch is about to turn Edmund to stone, he tells her that his siblings are with the beavers and that they were discussing somebody named Aslan. She spares him, and sends her wolves to fetch the other children. Edmund has just failed yet another test: leaking secret information for his own sake at the expense of others.

The children and beavers manage to escape the Witch for a while, until one day they are walking in a snowy field and see her approaching sleigh. They hide in a cave, but are pleasantly surprised to find that the driver of the sleigh is Santa Claus, not the Witch. “I’ve put up with a lot of this,” Susan says, annoyed. “I told you he was real,” Lucy retorts. Susan’s belief in Narnia’s magic has just been tested. Though she is not yet fully convinced, her thoughts are beginning to change as she becomes accustomed to the “new rules” (139) of this Special World. Santa then gives Lucy a healing potion, Susan a bow with arrows and a horn, and Peter a sword and shield. Santa is an ally the children have gained. His gifts will come into use later in the story.
At this point in the story, the mere presence of the children is starting to dissolve the Witch's dark magic. Santa has returned, and the ice is beginning to melt. As they move onwards, they encounter a thawing river that they need to cross. When they are halfway across, the Witch's wolves start to descend. Peter takes out his sword to fight. “Just because you have a sword doesn't make you a hero!” screams Susan. The wolf gives them the option of leaving Narnia unharmed, but Edmund refuses and plunges the sword into the ice, breaking it and allowing them to escape. Edmund has just passed his first test. Throughout the story thus far, we have seen him struggle with the idea of being a leader and feeling responsible for his family. By saving his family despite comments from both the wolf and his own sister, he proves to himself that he is capable of making his own decisions. Safe once again on the riverbank, the children rejoice and hug. The river has been a test for the entire family, too. In the face of danger, they worked together to escape. They have set aside their bickering, and gained newfound trust in each other.

Meanwhile, back at the castle, Edmund reveals more information. In exchange for the Witch's sparing of a traitor wolf who tried to protect his siblings, he tells her about the stone table. She acknowledges Edmund, kills the wolf anyway, and slaps Edmund across the face. “Think about whose side you are on,” she says. Edmund passes and fails this test. He continues to leak information, but this time for the right reasons. He also begins to get a sense of the Witch's evil, and starts wondering if he made the right decision to come in the first place.

By this point the children have reached Aslan's army camp. They meet him for the first time, and tell him about Edmund's betrayal. Peter acknowledges that it is his fault, as he was too hard on Edmund. Aslan and Peter go up to a ridge to talk. Peter explains his fears about not being a hero. “I can't even protect my own family,” he says. Peter continues to struggle with his fear of being incompetent, which will now be put to the test. He hears the sound of Susan's horn. The wolves have surrounded Susan and Lucy while they are playing in the river. “You haven't got it in you,” says the wolf. Peter wounds him and the wolf runs off. Peter has just passed his own test, demonstrating to himself and to his family that he is capable of protecting them. Aslan knights Peter for his bravery.
Meanwhile, Aslan’s assistants have managed to capture Edmund from the Witch’s camp and bring him back. “What’s done is done,” Aslan tells Edmund. Peter and Edmund forgive each other for the years of fighting, showing growth in their relationship.

Peter tells the others that they must leave while he stays behind. It is too dangerous for them here. Edmund, previously silent, says he has seen what the Witch can do, and that he has helped her do it. He needs to stay and finish what he started. “Well, I suppose that’s it then,” Susan says. This scene presents tests for both Edmund and Susan. When given the option of leaving, Edmund feels an obligation to stay and correct his wrongs. He has learned from his bad decisions, and is finally choosing “good” over “evil.” Susan’s faith in Narnia is tested. Her decision to stay reflects her total commitment to Aslan’s cause, and by extension her gradual abandoning of her “logic” flaw.

**Approach to the Innermost Cave**

**PLOT**

Now that all the children are fully committed to battling the Witch, they must begin training. Lucy and Susan spend their days shooting arrows and throwing knives at targets; Peter and Edmund practice riding horses and sword fighting. One day, the Witch asks for a meeting with Aslan. According to Narnia’s founding magic, any traitor belongs to the Witch and must die on the stone table. Aslan won’t let Edmund fall back under the Witch’s control, and asks to speak with her privately. They emerge and announce that Edmund’s life has been spared. People rejoice, but Lucy notices Aslan seems sad. That night, she and Susan follow him out into the woods. Watching from afar, they see Aslan sacrificed on the stone table by the Witch. When the enemy has left, they run to Aslan and untie his ropes, crying. When the others get word of what has happened, they ask Peter if he’ll be the new leader. Peter consents.

**ANALYSIS**

The Approach, as Vogler states, is a time for heroes to “make plans, do reconnaissance on the enemy” and “arm themselves” (144). At a most basic level, it is direct preparation for the Ordeal. In the film, the children prepare for battle, the Ordeal, by training their weaponry and
fighting skills. The meeting between Aslan and the Witch is a form of reconnaissance, in which each side gathers information about the other. Aslan's sacrifice can be seen as a form of fortification for his army. If he were to let Edmund die at the hands of the Witch, the Prophecy could never be fulfilled and the reason for fighting in the first place would be lost. His sacrifice also provides Peter with the opportunity to assume the role of a leader. With his newfound confidence, Peter is able to go into battle with a renewed sense of determination. While all the children are emerging as heroes in different forms, Lucy still remains the “main hero.” Even as the youngest, she is still the cleverest: she is able to see past the other’s rejoicing into the real situation at hand.

The Ordeal/The Reward

PLOT
The two sides are lined up for battle on an open field. The Witch has wolves and other beasts on her side, while Aslan has the good creatures of nature. The battle begins. Meanwhile, back at the stone table, the table has broken in half and Aslan has been resurrected. “When a willing victim who has committed no treachery is killed in a traitor’s stand, the table will crack, and even death itself will turn backwards,” he says. They go to the Witch’s palace, where Aslan resurrects all the statues by breathing on them. Mr. Tumnus comes back to life, and Lucy is overjoyed. They hurry back to the battlefield, bringing all the resurrected creatures with them as new soldiers. Edmund has come face to face with the Witch. He manages to break her wand (that can turn people to stone), but not before she stabs him with her sword. Peter, now enraged, takes her on. As he is pinned against the ground, Aslan jumps over him and knocks the Witch over, finishing her off.

ANALYSIS
As Vogler states, the Ordeal is the “crisis, not the climax” (156). It is the point in which two opposing forces are at their tensest state. This sentiment is quite clearly laid out in the case of the film: the two “forces,” or armies, are lined up face to face for battle. Each side is clearly distinguished from its enemy. Aslan’s army is adorned in gold and red,
symbolic of warmth and fire, and makes use of “good” creatures like deer, birds, and horses. The Witch’s army, on the other hand, is dressed in grey and white, symbolic of the Witch’s “iciness,” and makes use of beasts like bears and ogres. Everything the children have done thus far has led up to this point: finding the wardrobe, learning about Narnia and the prophecy, and watching Aslan die on the table. As the battle commences, the heroes come into direct conflict with their Shadow. For Edmund and Peter, their Shadow is both the Witch and their own personal insecurities. Edmund’s “hero moment” occurs when he breaks the wand of the Witch. Once one of her followers, his actions are symbolic of his total commitment to Aslan, his family and the “good” both in Narnia and in himself. Peter’s facing of the Witch is in response to Edmund’s wounding. He comes into conflict with his Shadow both in the form of the Witch and in his fears that he cannot protect his family and “be a hero.” While Aslan is ultimately the one to kill the Witch, Peter sets it up by drawing her attention away from Aslan’s approach, what can be characterized as his own “hero moment.” The Reward is listed under this stage because it is so short lived. In the few seconds that follow Aslan’s attack, Peter is struck with momentary elation that the Witch is finally dead. This is characteristic of the Reward stage, as both the audience and hero are given a chance to “celebrate.” (176) This stage is superseded almost immediately however, by the recollection of dying Edmund.

Resurrection

PLOT
As the commotion has ended, the children suddenly remember Edmund. Susan eyes one of the Witch’s soldiers aiming his axe at them, and with no hesitation shoots him straight in the face with one of her arrows. Lucy rushes over to Edmund and gives him some of the healing potion. He revitalizes, and the children hug and rejoice. Lucy then goes off to resurrect all the wounded.

ANALYSIS
Edmund’s “brush with death” is considered the “climax” (197) of the story, different from the Ordeal’s crisis point. As Vogler says, it brings
the hero out of a “plateau of comfort” (189), in this case the state of elation following the Witch’s death. The film is not ultimately about losing or winning Narnia’s great battle, it is about the children’s journey along the way. Throughout the story, relationships among the siblings have been consistently tested and fortified. Edmund, their own brother, is at this point worth far greater to them than any Witch, and his death threatens the very relationships they have been working to build all this time. In other words, this moment is considered the climax because if Edmund were to die, all would be lost and the journey would be for nothing. Both Susan and Lucy experience their “hero moments” in this stage. Susan confronts her Shadow of “logic” by shooting the enemy with no second thoughts. She acts from the heart and without much reason, showing clear growth from the beginning of the story. Lucy, however, following the trend of the story, is still depicted as the “main hero”: she is the one to ultimately save her brother from death. Following his resurrection, catharsis, or the emotional cleansing characteristic of this stage, occurs. The audience is left with a restored sense of balance, both in the outcome of the battle and in the renewed bond between the siblings.

Returning with the Elixir

PLOT
Lucy, Susan, Edmund and Peter are crowned kings and queens of Narnia. The beavers and Mr. Tumnus are present at the reception as assistants to the new kings and queens. Lucy notices that Aslan is leaving and begins to cry. Mr. Tumnus comes over and gives her back the same handkerchief she once gave him. He explains that Aslan will be back soon, and never likes to stay too long in one place. The scene then cuts to what looks like ten years later, in which the children are all grown up and are riding through the woods. They come upon the lamppost, getting a sense of déjà vu. Lucy remembers and tells the others to follow her. As they climb back into the wardrobe, the childish fighting resumes. They fall out the other end into the spare room, just as the Professor is walking in. He asks what they were doing in the wardrobe. Peter replies that he would never believe them if they told him. The Professor throws Peter the cricket ball. “Try me,” he says, with a sly smile.
ANALYSIS
A primary function of this stage, according to Vogler, is the dealing of “rewards and punishments” (220). While all punishment has been dealt with in the battle, reward is shown in the promotion of the beavers and Mr. Tumnus to royal assistants. While the children may have returned to the Ordinary World of the house and their constant bickering, they have clearly changed. While they all return with the elixir of renewed trust in each other, each hero retains their own personal elixir as well. Susan has returned knowing that not everything has to be “logical,” Edmund has returned with the conviction that he will always side with “good,” Peter has returned knowing he is capable of being a hero, and Lucy has returned with a renewed sense of childlike wonder and faith in her abilities. As is common with this stage, all loose ends of the story are tied up. The audience learns of Aslan’s plans, and experiences the changed relationship of Lucy and Mr. Tumnus. The mystery of the Professor is also revealed. He has clearly been to Narnia before, and never had any intention of getting the children in trouble.

Epilogue

PLOT
There is a short scene that is shown after the credits have rolled for about a minute. Later that night, Lucy sneaks out of bed and attempts to reenter the wardrobe. “I don’t think you’ll get back in that way,” says a voice. It is the Professor, sitting in the far corner covered in shadows. He explains that he has already tried. Lucy asks him if they can ever go back, and he replies that of course they will, but it will probably happen when they “are not looking for it.” “Best to keep your eyes open,” he says, and the two shut the door and walk out together. When the room is deserted, the wardrobe door opens a sliver and light pours out from within. We hear what sounds like a lion’s roar, and then the door is shut again, and the scene fades to black.

ANALYSIS
According to Vogler, the epilogue “[completes] the story” by “projecting ahead to some future time to show how the characters turned out” (223). This short, yet very important, scene serves again to highlight
Lucy as the main hero. Of the four siblings, only she chooses to try to reenter the wardrobe. She is the youngest, and most able to believe in the magic of Narnia even when it is no longer in front of her. As a viewer, this scene creates a very satisfying ending as it extends Narnia beyond the realm of the children’s journey. It is an adventure the Professor, the children, and many after them will undertake. The Professor’s closing words reiterate the film’s moral: there is magic in everyday, if only you stop to notice it. In this way, the viewer gets a sense that Narnia isn’t only a place, it is a mindset. It will always exist, as indicated by the final image of the wardrobe opening, but can only be entered at specific times of need.

II. Archetypal Analysis

The film’s archetypes contribute significantly to its ability to resonate with an audience. While each character is unique, the archetypes provide a basic framework with which an audience can psychologically identify. Like most films, archetypes like Hero, Mentor, Shadow, Ally, Shapeshifter and Herald are all filled by physical characters. Unlike most other films, however, the Trickster and Threshold Guardian archetypes exist in figurative form.

**Hero**

According to Vogler, the hero has the basic function of “[giving] the audience a window into the story” (30). They are also the character who experiences the most “growth.” (31) In this way, the film has four heroes in the form of its four main characters: Lucy, Susan, Edmund and Peter. Each hero is also complete with their own flaw, which “[humanizes]” (33) them and makes them relatable to an audience. Susan’s tragic flaw is her need to have everything be “logical.” Her time spent in Narnia teaches her to think with her heart as well as her head, showing her own personal growth. Edmund’s flaw is his struggle to belong. The audience sees this both in the ordinary world, in his indecisiveness to side with Lucy, and in Narnia, as he struggles to commit either to the Witch or Aslan and his family. His growth is shown when he chooses good over evil and sides with Aslan, fully committing himself to defeating
the White Witch. Peter’s recurring flaw is his doubt that he can protect his family and be a hero. This is shown in the prologue when he follows Edmund back into the house to get the photograph, and also in Narnia in the various tests leading up to the battle. His growth is affirmed as he battles the White Witch, a psychological projection of his fears of inadequacy. As is discussed above, while all the children are heroes, Lucy is the main hero. “The Hero should perform the decisive action of the story,” (31) Vogler states. Lucy is ultimately the character to perform the pivotal actions in story, as she both discovers Narnia and resurrects Edmund. Also discussed above, she is the only sibling to retain what she has gained from Narnia, as shown in her attempt to reenter the wardrobe in the Epilogue. Lucy is an example of a “catalyst hero” (36): in addition to her own personal growth, she brings about change in her siblings by bringing them into Narnia, the place in which their transformative journeys take place.

**Mentor**

The Professor, Santa Claus and Aslan all serve as “multiple mentors” (Vogler, 45) in the film, each giving the children special advice or gifts. The Professor is the Mentor of the Ordinary World. He is the character who convinces the children to give Lucy a chance and believe her story about the wardrobe, “[motivating them] to take action and commit to the adventure” (42). His wisdom is apparent in both the Ordinary World and Epilogue, as he has clearly had experiences with Narnia and knows of the children’s’ adventures. He also serves the function of “[planting] information…that will become important later” (43). In response to the children’s doubts about Narnia, he replies that “not everything has to be logical,” bringing up a theme central to the adventure that follows. Santa Claus, though a minor character, is a Mentor in that he gives the children their “gifts” (40) of the arrows and horn, sword and shield, and resurrection potion. These gifts are of the utmost importance later in the story, in which each child uses them to save the lives of their siblings. Susan uses her horn to call Peter to where she and Lucy are under attack by the wolf, Peter uses his sword and shield to battle the Witch, and Lucy uses her potion to revitalize Edmund. Aslan is the Mentor of the Special World, but allegorically actually embodies
the role of a Christ figure. It is widely regarded in the literary world that *The Chronicles of Narnia* are a biblical commentary. “The things [you] [love] Aslan for doing or saying are simply the things Jesus really did,” said C.S. Lewis, the author of the series. While it is only one of many interpretations, Aslan’s actions to parallel those of Christ. His sacrifice on the stone table can be compared to Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross, and his seemingly omnipotent knowledge of all of Narnia and its founding magic can be compared to the role of God in the Christian religion. While he is physically present in the film, he is an unusual Mentor in that he actually falls under the archetype of the “inner mentor,” acting as the children’s consciences and “[living] within [them] as an inner code of behavior” (47). Aslan, as with Christ, represents all things good. Throughout the film, the children feel indebted to Aslan despite the fact they have never met him. The “good” that he stands for is what drives the children through the Tests, Allies and Enemies stage, giving them the determination to battle the White Witch.

**Shadow**

The Witch is as much a psychological Shadow as a physical one. Literally, she stands in the way of the sibling’s safety. Figuratively, however, she represents each character’s deepest insecurities. For Peter, the Witch represents a threat to his self-imposed sense of responsibility towards his family. He comes into direct conflict with this Shadow in the final battle, as he assists Aslan in slaying her. Lucy and Susan experience the Shadow of the Witch in a less direct way. While they do not come physically into battle with her, they are affected by the danger she poses to their brothers. Edmund is the hero most directly influenced. For him, the Witch represents the sin of temptation. This is physically manifested in the beginning of the film, when she offers him food and drink in exchange for information. Shadows are “all the dark secrets we can’t admit,” (65) Vogler says. The Witch, and all the evils she stands for, is a side of Edmund he himself refuses to admit. He chooses to give into this evil at the beginning of the story, siding with the Witch. By the end, however, he has chosen “good” and returned to his family and Aslan. The Witch, literally and figuratively the Shadow, poses threats to each
hero. Once overcome, however, each is able to return to the Ordinary World with a greater sense of self and faith in their abilities. Allegorically, she can be compared to Satan. She has an angelic appearance, characteristic of Lucifer the fallen angel, but is also representative of everything dark and evil.

Ally

The Ally, according to Vogler, has the job of “introducing [the audience] to an unfamiliar world” (72). The most obvious Ally in the film is the beaver the children encounter nearly as soon as they enter Narnia. The beaver gives them historical context, explaining the prophecy of Narnia, and leads them through the lands to Aslan’s camp. He also serves to keep the children, and by extension the plot, on the right path. When the siblings try to follow Edmund to the Witch’s castle, the beaver warns them that doing so will only result in capture. He leads them away from situations that might end the plot, and their lives, prematurely. At a basic level, he is a tour guide for the children through their Special World. Without his key background information and guidance, the children would most likely exit Narnia soon after they entered, having no idea of their place or purpose.

Shapeshifter

Mr. Tumnus is a Shapeshifter in that he actually transforms from an Ally to a Shadow, and then back to an Ally. When Lucy first meets him in the woods, he politely invites her in for tea and entertains her with music and stories. In this way, he is performing the essential Ally function of introducing Lucy to the Special World. When he reveals that his act is actually a trap to kidnap Lucy, however, his archetype immediately shifts to Shadow, a force of dark energy. This archetype is short-lived as he soon has a change of heart and returns Lucy to the wardrobe, apologizing profusely and crossing back into an Ally. Aside from bringing suspense to the plot, he serves to highlight a major theme in the story: things in Narnia aren’t as perfect as they appear.
Trickster

No trickster exists in this film. It can be argued, however, that the “mischief” (77) characteristic of this archetype exists more in the magic of Narnia than in character form. Lucy is often the one to notice such moments, such as the petals of flowers flying about to form pictures or a branch breaking only to regrow immediately. At times when tension levels become high, this magic appears to lighten the mood and remind the audience and children alike of Narnia’s beauty.

Herald

The Professor embodies the archetype of Herald in the film. He delivers the Call to Adventure when he tells the children to believe Lucy about the wardrobe and says that not everything has to be “logical.” From this encounter, the children are prompted to enter the wardrobe and thus emerge into the Special World of Narnia.

Threshold Guardian

As with the Trickster, the Threshold Guardian comes in figurative, not physical, form. Narnia can only be accessed if one believes it exists. Lucy is able to enter Narnia first because she is the youngest, and therefore most likely to believe in such magic. The other children, with the exception of Edmund, can only enter after the Professor has prompted them to believe in this magic. In this way, the true Threshold Guardian of the film is “logic,” or one’s preconceived ideas of reality. Once this is disregarded, all the children are able to cross the threshold, both literally in that they step out of the wardrobe and mentally in that they begin to believe in Narnia’s existence.
III. Symbols

The Wardrobe

At a most basic level, the wardrobe is an ordinary object with supernatural significance. Its very nature parallels one of the film’s morals: magic can be found every day if you only stop to notice it. Furthermore, the wardrobe’s design suggests it has allegorical meaning. The door is carved with what is presumably the Tree of Knowledge from the Garden of Eden. In this way, the wardrobe is an entrance to “knowledge” of sorts. Inside Narnia, the children learn lessons and grow in ways they do not in their Ordinary World.

Figure 1: The wardrobe (http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-fQ1VNZg7Di8/UITow-_OmII/AAAAAAAAAX4/HHpd2ty2v4o/s1600/Narnia+Wardrobe.jpg)
**Lamppost**

Directly outside the wardrobe and at the very entrance of Narnia is a lit lamppost, representative of the “transition” between worlds. Its ornateness doesn’t quite belong in the Ordinary World, but its clear man-made origins don’t belong in Narnia either. It is an object from both worlds, indicating that one has reached the end of one realm and is about to enter another.

![Figure 2: The lamppost](http://powerofrun.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/narnia-lamp-post.jpg)
IV. Use of Time and Sequence

The following is a timeline of the film with regard to Vogler’s 12 stages:

![Timeline of film](image)

**Figure 3: Timeline of film**

The crossing of the First Threshold comes uncharacteristically late in the film, beginning at 0:40:00 and ending at 0:52:00. The “real action” begins so far into the plot because adequate context needs to be established prior to the children’s entering of Narnia. As is mentioned above, Narnia can only be entered if one believes it exists. The audience needs to see the children struggle with this idea before they can enter the Special World, as it creates a more realistic story on the basis that a land inside a wardrobe cannot be accepted without initial doubt.

The longest stage of the film by far is Tests, Allies and Enemies, which begins at 0:52:00 and ends at 1:30:00. Because the significance of the story isn’t the children’s Narnia adventures but the lessons they bring back to the Ordinary World, this stage is actually the most important of them all. The real growth in the children did not occur when the Witch was slain or Aslan was resurrected, but rather along the way to those feats. Peter defends his family, realizing that he can be his own hero. Edmund returns to Aslan and his family, choosing good over evil and finding his sense of belonging. The length of this stage justifies its importance, speaking to the sentiment that the “journey” is often more valuable than the “destination.”
The placement of the Ordeal also speaks to the importance of the children’s journey. Beginning at 1:31:00 and ending at 2:03:00, its positioning is known, according to Vogler, as a “delayed crisis” (158) because it occurs around two-thirds of the way through the two-hour-and-thirteen-minute film. Placing this stage later allows for a generous amount of buildup, again emphasizing the growth of the children prior to the seemingly “big” event of the battle.

V. Narnia: Beyond the Magic

Andrew Adamson’s The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe expertly balances mythic and allegorical elements with realistic characters and themes, creating a story that engages both the hearts and minds of audiences. Colloquially, films are often described as “working” or “not working.” But what is it that, in my opinion, makes this film “work”? The uniqueness of this film lies in its ability to resonate with all ages. While it is advertised as a children’s film, teenagers and adults can find meaning in the biblical allusions and multiple levels of psychoanalysis, as well as identify with the relevant inner struggles of each sibling. Psychologically, we all have a need to see our heroes grow, and grow according to what we would consider “proper” form. The twelve stages are this form, and Narnia’s nearly perfect progression through each one creates a basic framework for the character development of all four children. We need to experience this character growth because, ultimately, we project ourselves onto these heroes. Through their eyes, we become the heroes of our own stories: flawed, ordinary humans capable of transcending the everyday. ●
Works Cited


