
SEVEN SAVAGE SINS SNATCH SMOOTHLY TO SEIZE NARNIAN SOULS: REFLECTIONS ON C. S. LEWIS' THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

S. MELWIN, DR. SURESH FREDERICK

Abstract: Narnia is a fantasy world created by the Anglo-Irish author Clive Staples Lewis as a location for his *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a series of seven fantasy novels. They portray Aslan, the great lion, and present the adventures of children who play significant roles in the unfolding history of the realm of Narnia. Lewis in his *Chronicles* has portrayed professionally a greater version of colonial grip than the obvious hunt for land. This paper looks on how the Cardinal sins colonize the heart of Narnian characters in Lewis' collection of seven novels, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Having the base on Lewis' novels, this paper reflects how the Narnian characters fall a prey to the colonizing seven lethal sins such as Pride, Greed, Lust, Wrath, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth. These seven sins are deadly when they gain an important hold in one's heart, as they have the capability to burrow and burrow and burrow deeper until all that was once beautiful in one's self is torn away like so much sandstone. C. S. Lewis has taken the energetic force of the seven noxious sins into the seven novels and shown their harsh influence of colonizing hearts and shows before us patterns to avoid.

Keywords: C. S. Lewis, Narnia, colonization, sin

Introduction: C. S. Lewis in his *The Chronicles of Narnia* has portrayed professionally a greater version of colonial grip than the obvious hunts for land. He depicts on how the Cardinal Sins colonize the heart of characters in the series and how the virtuous characters wrestle in order to scatter and throw this ill-behaved foreign elements. Accordingly it is not just the land which gets colonized, but the mind and heart of characters. The paper replicates as a tool to reflect on the existence of an interesting relationship between the classic seven deadly sins and the seven novels of C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* we find a personified ramp presented by all the seven fatal sins: Pride, Greed, Lust, Wrath, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth. The fathom of their origin and the reason for their existence splits open the roles a few characters play in Narnia.

Dr. Don W. King, Professor in the department of English of Mon treat College in his fascinating article "Narnia and the Seven Deadly Sins" has suggested that Lewis has used the seven deadly sins as a framework for the classic *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Optimizing that Lewis might have dealt with multiple sins in Narnia; this paper explores the nature of the relationship enhanced between the seven deadly sins and C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* in a profound arrangement and tracks the traces of reflection in them.

Satan, the originator of sins, is desperate to colonize the hearts and souls of human beings in order to establish and enlarge a titanic colony in his territory called hell. To achieve this end, he promotes and plants deceiving plans that pleases the flesh and mind that feeds on. Sadly people who fall a prey consider themselves to be in a very comfortable stance. They

differ to accept the fact that they are being colonized by the master of sins. The real need for colonizing the souls is clearly pictured in Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. When Uncle Screwtape addresses the young devils at the annual dinner of tempter's training College in Hell, he asks them to "consider, first, the mere quality. The quality may be wretched; but we never had souls of our sort in more abundance" (155). Gluttony is about the caricature of carnal desires. Eating is a fine and essential thing, but in excess it becomes injurious. Gluttony occurs where any good thing is made deplorable by wanton excess. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the character, Edmund Pevensie is colonized by gluttony. Jadis, the White Witch, takes advantage of Edmund's weakness when she meets him in snowy woods, offering him a warm drink and Turkish Delight, his favorite chocolate. When she propels him for information regarding his brother and sisters, he readily replies, driven by an insatiable hunger for more and more Turkish Delight: "At first Edmund tried to remember that it is rude to speak with one's mouth full, but soon he forgot about this and thought only of trying to shovel down as much Turkish Delight as he could, and the more he ate, the more he wanted to eat, and he never asked himself why the Queen should be so inquisitive" (43). Resembling Eve's gluttonous indulgence in Milton's *Paradise Lost* where she first eats the apple, Edmund's gluttonous desire has deadly consequences as well. He betrays his brother and sisters in order to obtain more Turkish Delight to satisfy his desire, however ironically he does not receive delight from the evil Witch but tastes the unpleasant grasp of prison devoid of ordinary food and water.

Later in the novel, this is exactly where Edmund regrets of his conduct and he feels sorry to have allowed the foreign element to colonize his heart. This is where his heart endures to shake of the fetters of gluttony in which he was convincingly bonded and yearns to be free. Like the young Caspian who exclaims in *Prince Caspian*, "I wish- I wish- I wish I could have lived in the Old Days" (51), Edmund's heart desires to liberate his own self- but he couldn't assist himself to be free.

The origin for Anger is fear and hatred. Hatred is the compensation by which a frightened man reimburses himself for the miseries of fear. The more one gets fear, the more will he hate. The more he hates, the more he promotes wrath. For unlike other vices, cowardice is not the one to boast about; it is a shame and therefore couldn't be proud about. In *The Magician's Nephew*, the grounds of wrath take a finite shape and colonize the minds in the characters of Narnia. Wrath demands that all others must agree and consent to 'my way'. This is how Anger colonizes the heart of people - Uncle Andrew never wanted to listen to other's ideas. And when things contradict to his plans, he couldn't convince his self to stay calm. Out of fear he tries experiment with guinea-pigs and later he tries to use Digory and Polly to explore his trick. Andrew is very angry man now when Digory confronts with ferocious rage and investigates his coward action of tricking a girl to a place where Andrew himself is afraid to visit. Digory in *The Magician's Nephew* fights back and shares his thoughts about Andrew, "And you're simply a wicked, cruel magician like the ones in the stories. Well, I've never read a story in which people of that sort weren't paid out in the end, and I bet you will be. And serve you right" (35). And sadly this colonizing anger has a strong contagious facility- it shares and enlarges its territory.

To add productive example we have the evil queen Jadis herself. She can be detected as the Personification of Anger. Jadis' "devilish temper" is emphasized time and time again in the story, as she at one point even mimics Milton's Satan in the temptation scene of *Paradise Lost*. In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lewis pictures clearly how anger works in the minds of Narnians. Lucy, when reading the *Magician's Book*, was curious to know what her friends think of her. So she opts for a magic and listens to Marjorie Preston and Anne Featherstone: "Shall I see anything of you this term?" said Anne. "Or are you still going to be all taken up with Lucy Pevensie?"... "No I wasn't," said Marjorie. "I've got more sense than that. Not a bad little kid in her way. But I was getting pretty tired of her before the end of the term" (174). Lucy's heart now experienced a bitter anger and she scolded Marjorie as a "two-faced little

beast" (174). Lucy's flame of rage robbed her peace. Later Aslan reveals the fact that she has misjudged her friend and explains the reality and true nature of her friend. Lucy's anger rolls away from her as she draws strengths from Aslan's words.

Pride is traditionally regarded as the original and more serious of the seven deadly tools to encroach upon the hearts of Narnians. Proverbs 16:18 without a doubt reminds us that "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall". Satan measured himself highly and his pride made him to choose equality with God. John Milton's classic *Paradise Lost* begins from Satan falling from the presence of God into a dark world. Looking around, he affirms himself by saying, "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n" (I 263). Some move toward the void of hell - not because reality is too ugly or painful, but because the kingdom of heaven is about others and not one's self. Lewis with appropriateness captures the proud spirit of Satan through the words of two writers. Lewis fixes these two quotes right after the preface of *The Screwtape Letters* to picture the heart of Lucifer: Thomas More feels that "the devil . . . the prowde spirit . . . cannot endure to be mocked" and Martin Luther believe that "the best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to the texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn."

When colonized with this sin called pride, it is so likely to believe that you are in the right path, as this Pride never strikes our hearts as sin. Convincingly it intrudes into characters and it seldom leaves the colonized hearts. Pride plays prominent role in Lewis' *Chronicles* as well. To quote a few, in *The Magician's Nephew*, one finds Jadis to be the personification of pride and she continues to be so in the entire seven *Chronicles*. Her extreme selfness is well expressed in his in-ability to understand anything that doesn't directly relate to her own needs. Uncle Andrew, Digory, Polly and few other characters were completely subdued by Jadis and she liked to be the center of focus. Her proud heart pounds hard when Aslan creates Narnia and most interestingly when he gives animals the ability of speech. When the center of focus turns from her to Aslan, she couldn't endure it. This is similar when Lucifer understands that God is creating human being to freely possess earth, and his wrath comes too hot as his proud heart suffered insult. Similar kind of pride experiments its supremacy in *Prince Rabadash* in *The Horse and His Boy*. Rabadash is a tall, dark, and handsome young man, wearing a feathered and jeweled turban on his head and an ivory-sheathed scimitar at his side. When he gets caught by the Narnians, his stubborn pride refuses to accept even the Lion's mercy.

The above mentioned characters are projected as the antagonists of Narnians, so it is natural for Lewis to depict them with the sin of Pride. But the real focus now is to understand how Narnian characters are sharing this pride, and how they recognize and fight back the colonized effect. In *The Horse and His Boy*, one notices Bree, a strong and talking Narnian war horse, is been captured and taken by the Calormen at an early age. In order to survive, he is forced to hide his true nature of speech and qualities of Narnian horse. But when he escapes from the bond of Calormen, readers find him to be a different stallion. Bree believes that he is running away from bondage, but ironically, unaware of his new fetters which lay ahead, he bites the bait of the gravity of colonizer called Pride. He is tremendously mindful of his looks and superior strength. When Bree and Shasta in *The Horse and His Boy* plan their escape, Bree comments on the legs of Shasta, “you can’t get very far on those two silly legs of yours (what absurd legs humans have!) without being overtaken. But on me you can outdistance any other horse in this country” (21).

It was under a human that Bree lived a long bonded life, and now he wanted to pay it back to another human. He becomes the boss and his pride gives him sufficient path to perform his vanities. When Shasta hears the Voice of someone powerful, he asks Bree to stop and listen to the Voice from somewhere his back. Bree by no means likes to take order from Shasta and he pretends to hear a word at all. He moves on, only to be encountered by the great Aslan himself and later in the Hermit, Bree was a very remorseful soul, as his pride has failed him from helping Aravis and Hwin.

Readers recognize that Edmund has really turned from his evil spells in the latter part of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and is in the side of Aslan and in the side of Narnia. But Edmund is not a whole free man, though he has transformed from being a bad apple in the barrel to be a fine one, Pride unsuspectingly entertains his heart and tries to lead and colonize him from the front. Pride is the natural love for one’s self magnified and perverted into disdain for others. To Lewis’s way of thinking, Pride, the desire to be loved beyond the limit God sets, is the crack in a person’s armor that allows evil to enter in. To quote another example, we have Susan, the second of the four Pevensies, to fall for Vanity. Even when she became a queen in Narnia, she displays pride in her beauty.

Greed is the combination of pride, avarice and gluttony. Jesus in Luke 12: 15 instructs with an insightful certainty about how greed lays in a human’s path, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions”.

The gravity towards greed tempts and pulls few of the Narnian characters in its grip. Self-indulging greed colonizes the minds and marks the major motive for the character’s collapse. In *The Magician’s Nephew*, one finds Andrew Ketterley to be a pale shadow of his Narnian counterpart Jadis. Greed breeds more greed and promotes corruption in the occupied hearts. Andrew’s plot to accumulate power through magical experiments clearly in itself is a staggering experience to the readers, for his greed seldom had any boundary. Like Faustus in Marlowe’s play, Andrew wished for gluttonous power. Ironically his greed has rewarded him with a misplaced life.

The temptations faced by the Narnian good characters towards this greed as acquaintances mark the entry of colonizing strategy. Edmund in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is greedier for more Turkish Delight and he even lets his brother and sisters down. Greed works in ways far more rooted than our understanding - Andrew’s greed betrays a girl of his neighborhood, but Edmund his own family. The contagious greed heart of Jadis, to reign over Narnia forever by defeating Aslan, colonizes Edmund’s heart, to reign over his brother and sisters and have more Turkish Delight. When Jadis tells Edmund that she has a room full of Turkish Delight in his house, the greed completely grips the heart of Edmund. And once again, similar to Andrew, Edmund learns the lesson that he gets simply nothing out of his greed and he repents in the latter part. Even after transforming into a desirably good person, he falls a prey to his colonizer called Greed. In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, one finds that his greed is blooming to become the richest by possessing the pool in the Goldwater Island, for it has a supernatural power to turn everything into gold when touched upon.

Another Narnian character who transformed to become a slave of Greed is Eustace Clarence Scrubb. Eustace, as he is introduced in the formal chapter of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, is a self-centered and egoist person. When the voyagers go ashore to the Dragon Island, Eustace sneaks away to avoid work and he gets completely lost in the mountains. He falls into a valley and tries to crawl out of it, but the slippery sides never lets him up. Suddenly he notices a dragon emerging from a cave. With cold gripping heart he witnesses the death of that dragon. When he tries to shelter himself from the rain, he finds the cave of the dragon and he rushes in. The heart which froze with horror now turns bright with amazement, for the dragon’s cave treasured a wealth beyond imagination. Greed tempts his heart and he takes the bait. He pockets the treasures as far as he could and slips a large gold ring up to his left forearm. Eustace finally falls asleep on the gold of

dragon itself, for his imagination rooted so deep. The greedy Eustace has his lesson right-away, for he sees a dragon's claw moving close to him. He realizes that his greed has treated a fair deal and has transformed him into a dragon.

Lust is its refined sense can be translated as an instinct of sexual corruption or unrestricted physical excitement for power or wealth. I believe that Lewis had his targeted audience to be children and he did not exploit the sexually lustful characters in Narnia. Instead he has gone developing how the lack of control and lusty desire for money, fame and power in the Narnian characters bring hurt in them. Jadis in *The Magician's Nephew* and in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* personifies her lust for power over Narnia and Narnian characters. She plots evil ways to colonize the entire land and her magic starts to yield to her desire. As a culmination we notice that Narnia is under her spell for Hundred Years as winter sets the only backdrop for the entire hundred years of Jadis' rule. Similar to that we find the lusty nature of Uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew*, when he urges Polly to try his experiment. He asks Digory to congratulate him for his success without having any sense of guilt.

Gumpas, the Governor of the Lone Island in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, is another parallel character to have lost control over self and lusts for power and so is Miraz in *Prince Caspian*. Gumpas looks at the commercial part of slavery and pronounces it legal. This is where the inhabitants of Lone island pumps in the contagious effect of lust towards power and wealth. Moreover when the society finds rulers with obsessive intention for power and wealth, the society loses its trust not only towards its ruler but also towards the fellow neighbours.

Irony is when the Narnian characters fall a prey towards this un-synchronizing existence of this particular sin called lust. Readers find Prince Caspian in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* as a person who turns away from the heavenly magnificence because of the desire he had for Ramandu's daughter. She is portrayed by Lewis as a tall and beautiful young girl with long golden hair. Her stunning beauty makes everyone look in awe. The realization of missing the Country of Aslan knocks rather late in Caspian's life. In *The Silver Chair*, we identify him to be a very old king, who is quite a somber personality, longing for an opportunity to meet with Aslan.

The Silver Chair portrays the dangerous effects of Sloth, disgust with the spiritual because of the physical effort involved. Jill pole is confronted by Aslan early in the tale and commanded to set to

memory four important signs that will aid her and Eustace as they quest for a lost prince of Narnia. However, within a matter of hours after her arrival in Narnia "she had forgotten all about the Signs and the lost prince for the moment" (37). Consequently, they stumble along on their quest and as the going gets rougher, her diligence to remembering the signs fade: "They never talked about Aslan, or even about the lost prince now. And Jill gave up her habit of repeating the Signs over to herself every night and morning. She said to herself, at first, that she was too tired, but she soon forgot all about it" (79-80). Jill thus was carried away by a numb feeling of Sloth.

Envy displays devastating power of inordinate desire for someone else's possessions or position. In Narnian characters we find traces of envy's drive operating in their hearts. Like other colonizing desires, envy plays its vile part in Narnian characters as well. One finds Miraz in *Prince Caspian* envies his brother's kingdom and snatches it finally. The Lady of the Green Kirtle in *The Silver Chair* kidnaps Prince Rilian as a part of her plan to conquer Narnia from underground. Similarly one finds the ape Shift in *The Last Battle* who not only envies the Powerful attributes of Aslan but also envies the Human beings in Narnia, for he believes that they have a better personality than him. Lucy envies the beautiful physique of Susan. Lucy's envy doesn't create turbulence in any of the other characters in the Novel and it doesn't plot people into its trap. But the reality faced by Lucy is that, her heart gave a warm welcome to Envy and it embraced Lucy's mind and soul completely, which in turn gave a bitter opinion about her sister Susan too.

Conclusion: Colonialism thus is a means through which capitalism achieved global expansion. Control over natives is achieved either by force or by active persuasion. The colonized people always crave to achieve freedom from bondage. This is quite natural as no one in the world will love to live under slavery. But those who have secret ties with the colonizers always find it profitable to remain as minions of colonial rulers as they get undue profits. Other than these sycophants and stooges in all others there is the quest for freedom and independence. "Anti-colonial resistance has taken many forms, and they have drawn upon a wide variety of resources. They have inspired one another, but also debated with each other about the nature of colonial authority and how best it should be challenged" (Loomba 185). The anti-colonial expressions and depictions in all the seven novels of C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* project the writer to have a better understanding of freedom from both physical and mental kind of bondage.

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S. Melwin/ Ph. D Scholar/ Bishop Heber College/
Trichy/melwinsathya@gmail.com
Dr. Suresh Frederick/Associate Professor and UG Head/
Department of English/Bishop Heber College/ Trichy/
India/sfheber@gmail.com