

NARNIA AT THE MOVIES:
A Review of Walden Media's Production of
C. S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* and
Some Suggestions for Future Films

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Walden Media's recent production with Twentieth Century Fox of C. S. Lewis's wonderful children's story, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, is a visually impressive film. Unfortunately the film alters Lewis's original story to such a degree that the moral and spiritual qualities of his writing are lost in Walden's very different concern with the concept of "positive family values."¹ *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (DT)* is third in Walden's series of productions based on Lewis's seven original *Chronicles of Narnia*.² With each production, Walden has moved farther away from Lewis's original vision.³ If Walden hopes to complete the series without eclipsing Lewis completely, they will need to make some basic course corrections.⁴

On the positive side, Walden's *DT* deserves credit for its visually stunning special effects. The writhing monstrosity of the sea serpent and the sorrowful dragon into which the boy Eustace is turned, not to mention the ship itself and the island of the dufflepuds, are all revealed in fascinating detail, and in many ways fulfill the promise of Lewis's prose. This is surely why Douglas Gresham, co-producer with Walden of the Narnia series, and Lewis's stepson from his marriage to Joy Gresham, has praised the productions.⁵ Older television and stage versions simply couldn't create convincing images of the creatures and surroundings of Narnia: fauns, centaurs, minotaurs, talking mice, and natural wonders such as a sea of white lilies or a painting of the ocean that comes to life with crashing waves. For all of these digital wonders, Walden is to be congratulated; even though special effects by themselves can never substitute for the depths of Lewis's stories.

¹ On its Website Walden says that its members come from many different religious backgrounds, so "religious orientation does not factor into" their film-making philosophy. They do, however, all believe in a "family values approach to positive messages." These notions of "positive messages" and "family values" are evident in the plot changes mentioned in what follows.

² *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* appeared in 2005, while *Prince Caspian* was released in 2008, both with Walt Disney as the production company. Twentieth Century Fox took over from Disney with the production of the *DT*.

³ Rick Groen of *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto) writes, "Alas, in the third installment of the C. S. Lewis odyssey, the devolution continues with the inexorability of a fairy tale thrust in reverse—the sublime first film morphed into the routine second and now this wispy banality."

⁴ Walden and Fox have as yet no release date for the next film in the Narnia series, *The Magician's Nephew*. They also plan to produce Lewis's *Screwtape Letters* and to release it in 2012.

⁵ Douglas Gresham, *Jack's Life: The Story of C. S. Lewis* (Broadman & Holman: Nashville, TN, 2005). Mr. Gresham gives these remarks on the DVD that is included inside the back cover with this publication.

Problems with Walden's *DT* begin with several major alterations to the plot of Lewis's story. In the book, the Pevensie children (Edmund and Lucy) and their sniveling cousin, Eustace Scrubb, find themselves drawn by magic into Narnia, where they sail with King Caspian and his crew aboard a ship called the Dawn Treader on a series of adventures to find seven lost Lords. These adventures test and change the children and Caspian for the better; but only as each one learns to trust and follow the great Lion, Aslan. In Walden's screenplay, by contrast, though a choppy selection of the original adventures is still portrayed, the *unifying* theme of the story has shifted. Lewis's focus on Aslan's sanctification of Caspian and the children is cut and pasted into a very different tale concerning the deliverance of a little girl's family from an evil island of darkness and green smoke. This deliverance, moreover, can only be accomplished by the magical crossing of seven swords that belong to the seven lost Lords, not by Aslan. The little girl and her family, the green smoke, the crossing of the swords, and the family's reunion are all pure invention on Walden's part.⁶ In this way, Lewis's Christian and biblical fairy tale is replaced by a superficial story about the value of family, in which the new and faintly drawn characters are saved by magic.

Let me say right away that the problem in all of this is not the presence of magic *per se*. In this day of quasi-religious tirades against the Harry Potter stories, it's simply no good trying to cast C. S. Lewis as the kind of Christian who fears all extra-biblical allusions to the world of magic, myths, or fairy tales. Narnia is full of magic and magical creatures. Narnia is itself a fairy tale, and it incorporates as well the creatures and characters of ancient mythology (centaurs and minotaurs, dryads and nymphs, not to mention Bacchus and Silenus). Like his friend and collaborator, J. R. R. Tolkien, Lewis believed that ancient myths and modern fairy tales can be a pathway into the deeper truths of the Christian story.⁷ This was in part why he wrote the Narnia tales.⁸ But neither Lewis nor Tolkien believed that all fairy tales (nor all allusions to magic) are created equal. It is not magic *per se* but Walden's particular *use* of it that runs amok both of Lewis's stories and of Tolkien's conception of

⁶ These inventions repeat a pattern begun in the previous film, *Prince Caspian*, where Walden invented a long sequence about the storming of Miraz's castle. Such inventions not only displace or, worse, remove major parts of Lewis's story, they also introduce elements inimical to his ethos. One reviewer wondered if, seeing the *DT*, Lewis would recognize his own story.

⁷ Far from rejecting the world of ancient mythology, Lewis felt it was nearer to the world of biblical faith than is the world of modern science and determinism. The absence in his youth of Christians who could appreciate the old myths was one reason he gave for why it took so long for him to become a Christian. Further, as he wrote in his autobiography, *Surprised By Joy*, it was Tolkien's understanding of the gospel as a "true myth" which opened the way for Lewis to believe in Christ. See also Tolkien's essay "On Faerie-Stories" in J. R. R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf*, (Harper: London, 2001).

⁸ At the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Aslan says to the children, "This was the very reason you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there" (i.e., in their own world of England).

fairy tales at their best. More later on the use of magic, but first some examples of Walden's plot changes.

In chapters nine, ten, and eleven of Lewis's story, Lucy and several other members of the ship's company come ashore on an island of invisible creatures (the dufflepuds) who threaten to kill everyone unless Lucy is willing to brave the upper story of a magician's mansion in order to find a magic spell that will make them visible again. Lucy must find the magician's book and say the proper spell. But while searching through the book, she finds other spells that tempt her to acts of meanness and disloyalty. One spell promises to "*make beautiful her that uttereth it beyond the lot of mortals.*" Lucy has always felt plain in comparison to her older sister, Susan. As she stares at the magical page, she sees an image of Susan looking ever more plain, even as an image of Lucy becomes more and more beautiful. Lucy's conscience warns her of danger; but she wants to say the spell anyway. Then the face of Aslan appears on the page, where it had not been before, and he is growling. In fear of Aslan's displeasure, Lucy quickly turns the page without saying the spell.

Another spell further on in the magician's book promises to let Lucy discover what her friends think of her. Once again her conscience draws back; but Lucy quickly says the spell "to make up for" not saying the other one. As a result, she overhears her friend, in a moment of weakness, speaking rudely of Lucy to a popular girl at school. After hearing this, Lucy determines to abandon the friendship. Later, when Aslan intervenes again, Lucy realizes that she has been rash. Her friend still loves her; but Lucy may never be able to forget what she has heard.

"Oh dear," said Lucy, "Have I spoiled everything? Do you mean we would have gone on being friends if it hadn't been for this—and been really great friends—all our lives perhaps—and now we never shall."

Aslan's response reveals the *moral gravity* of Lucy's choices and actions. "Child, . . . no one is ever told *what would have happened.*" In another episode, Aslan gives the corollary: "But anyone can find out what *will* happen . . . ," that is, when they trust him, and practice self-denial and moral courage by doing the right thing, no matter how hard.⁹

⁹ C.S. Lewis, *Prince Caspian, The Chronicles of Narnia*, Book Four, (Harper Trophy, 1979 p. 149). In this scene from the previous book, Lucy must be willing to follow Aslan at night as he leads her away from the company and safety of camp, even though no one else can see him, and some think her crazy. Thus, moral courage is a repeating theme for Lewis.

By means of these stories of ordinary temptation and moral struggle, Lewis connects the world of Narnia with the great tradition of classical Christian spirituality. The focus is on the “passions” of *fallen* humanity (envy, vanity, pride, etc.), which cloud judgment, and everything depends on whether an individual like Lucy will follow her conscience and trust in Aslan’s (Christ’s) help. This echoes Lewis’s understanding of the nature of moral good and evil in all of his works.¹⁰ Also, it corresponds to what Tolkien proposes as an essential trait of fairy tales at their best: a heightened sense of moral gravity and moral consequence.¹¹

But what becomes of these stories in Walden’s screenplay for the *DT*? The eavesdropping episode is left out altogether, including Aslan’s rebuff about knowing the future; and the beauty-temptation concludes with Lucy choosing not to say the spell—not because she fears Aslan’s displeasure, but because (as she comes to see) saying it would be a denial of her own life and value. In Walden’s version, Lucy rips the spell from the magician’s book and takes it with her when she leaves the mansion. Later, back aboard ship at night, she has a dream in which she says the spell and *is* shown the future that will result (contrary to Aslan’s rebuff). It is a future in which she not only looks like Susan; she has become Susan. Lucy herself no longer exists, along with everything she once had to offer. She recoils from this realization, and then Aslan is in the ship’s cabin with her, and he speaks to her about the dream:

“You wished yourself away and with it much more. Your brothers and sister wouldn’t know Narnia without you, Lucy. You discovered it first, remember? You doubt your value. Don’t run from who you are.”

In this way, Lewis’s focus on the importance for Lucy of learning to trust Aslan and follow her conscience—even *when she doesn’t want to, or when it is not yet clear what the outcome will be*—is recast as Lucy’s decision to do the right thing because she sees how this will strengthen her sense of self-confidence. We should probably hear at this point an echo of Walden’s conception of “positive messages,” but the result is an almost complete turning-inside-out of Lewis’s primary moral insight.¹²

¹⁰ In *The Screwtape Letters*, for example, Lewis shows how these basic daily temptations of fallen human fears and desires are the very stuff of demonic temptation. This is the classical tradition of the seven deadly sins and the eight evil passions.

¹¹ In *Tree and Leaf*, p. 44, Tolkien argues that it is a mistake when adults try to soften the moral edge of a fairytale in order to make it more palatable for children. Children generally prefer stories with stronger moral fiber, not weaker or softer.

¹² Lewis rejected the Socratic notion that we never choose to do evil if only we know that something is evil. This notion, says Lewis, overestimates the power of *reason* to control *desire* and *appetite*. Sometimes we do the wrong thing, knowing it is wrong, simply because we want what we want (such as eating too much of the wrong kind of food). Further, if Socrates

On the one hand, doing the right thing in faithful relationship with Aslan requires self-denial and courage in the midst of moral struggle; on the other, it requires only self-clarification in the midst of self-affirmation. Thus does Walden's version blur the edges of moral struggle and moral courage that so clearly resonate through all the Narnia tales.¹³

In addition to blurring the focus of Lucy's moral struggle and altering its motives, Walden inserts its own set of corny visual signals to suggest the presence of evil. This consists primarily in the swirl of green smoke (already mentioned) that moves about the room when Lucy is tempted. The same smoke appears throughout the film whenever something evil is afoot. The problem with the smoke is not strictly that it is ambiguous. We know iconographically, and by the expression on the character's faces, that it is evil. (How could green smoke be good?) But as a purely visual sign, it doesn't reveal anything about the mental, verbal, or emotional *character* of those actions which make human choices truly good or evil. Thus, the green smoke also dulls the moral edge of the story.¹⁴

We might hope that these examples are isolated instances, more or less required by the editorial task of turning a book of over 250 pages into an hour-and-a-half-long movie. Some things must inevitably be cut, and others spliced together or rewritten to accommodate the shortened story line. But Walden's version grossly exceeds such editorial niceties. Both by cutting away major parts of Lewis's story, and by *inventing* strange (non-Lewisian) pieces to fill the gaps, Walden exhibits a consistent tendency to dull the moral gravity and to dim other spiritual qualities which are integral to Lewis's vision. The result is a reduction, not only of Lewis's work, but also of those features which, according to Tolkien, characterize the genre of fairy tale at its best. Another example.

view were true, "What are called *sins* would not be sins at all but only mistakes, and would require not repentance but merely correction." See C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Vol. III*, ed. Walter Hooper (Harper: San Francisco, 2007. p. 330). Walden's script, by contrast, seems to adopt the Socratic view when their Lucy says to Aslan, "I didn't mean to choose all of that. I only wanted to be beautiful." For Lewis, however, the children (including Lucy in this case) always have enough conscience to know when they are suppressing their own. This is why Aslan (in the book) refuses to accept such excuses, and always praises straight forward acknowledgment. See Aslan's response to Digory in *The Magician's Nephew* (Harper Trophy: New York, 1983, p. 161), and to Polly in *The Silver Chair* (Harper Trophy: New York, 1983, p. 22).

¹³ Walden's treatment of a similar scene in *Prince Caspian*, their previous film (compare note 9 above) also leaves off the critical moment when Lucy must actually confront the others and insist on going on alone if they will not follow. In other words, Walden has (so far) consistently softened or removed these scenes of conscience, self-denial, trust in Aslan, and moral courage.

¹⁴ In keeping with Tolkien's warning (see note 11) this gutting of the fairy tale's moral sense has provoked strong reactions among reviewers. Richard Corliss of *Time* says the Dawn Treader "should be rechristened the Yawn Treader. If this movie were a bedtime book, the wee ones would be asleep by page two." And Wesley Morris of the *Boston Globe* comments, "We're dealing with kids for whom everything comes too easily for us to care."

In chapters six and seven of the book, we read about the transformation of Eustace Clarence Scrubb who, Lewis says, “almost deserved the name.” Eustace appears in the story from the beginning, and we recognize him right away as a lying, self-centered, cowardly, and presumptuous prig. Once aboard ship, Eustace never helps with daily chores and always finds an excuse for selfish behavior, such as taking an extra ration of water at night while everyone else is asleep. (He doesn’t want to disturb them!) Then, in chapter six, things begin to change. Eustace comes ashore with a work party. He sneaks off to rest, but stumbles instead onto the treasure hoard of a dead dragon. Falling asleep on the treasure with greedy dragonish thoughts, he awakens to find that he has turned into a dragon. And now, for the first time, Eustace begins to long for human companionship. He wants to be of help to his former shipmates; but as a dragon he cannot. Then Aslan comes to him in the night and takes him to a pool where (Aslan says) if Eustace can remove his dragon skin and step into the water, he will be healed. But try as he might, Eustace cannot take off the skin. No sooner has he peeled away a thin outer layer than it grows back; and always before he can step into the water. Then Aslan speaks again, “You will have to let me undress you.” And Eustace, who later tells this story to Edmund, remembers:

I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly desperate now. So I just lay down on my back to let him do it. 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. The thing that made me able to bear it was the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off. . . . Well, he peeled the beastly stuff right off—just as I thought I’d done it myself the other three times, only they hadn’t hurt—and there it was lying on the grass: only ever so much thicker, and darker, and more knobbly-looking than the others had been. And there was I as smooth as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been. Then he caught hold of me . . . and threw me into the water. It smarted like anything but only for a moment. After that it became perfectly delicious . . . And then I saw why. I’d turned into a boy again.

In place of this deeply moving account of healing and conversion—where Eustace is acutely aware that he cannot save himself and that Aslan’s help is much deeper, truer, and, yes, more painful—Walden’s film gives us a picture of Eustace continuing on for some time as a dragon through several subsequent adventures, and all the while becoming ever more improved in character, though still a

dragon.¹⁵ When the healing scene with Aslan is finally inserted, it is a pared down, almost neo-platonic operation in which Eustace hovers briefly in the air above an open beach while Aslan scratches his claws into the sand, *not into Eustace*. Later, Eustace tells the other children that it “sort of hurt.”¹⁶

In this way, what is surely one of the most dramatic passages in the book—the transformation of Eustace Scrubb into the kind of boy who will become the young hero in the final two tales—becomes a rather confusing, disconnected, and forgettable set of special effects in the movie. And this confirms what we have already seen in Walden’s treatment of Lucy, only now the dulling and dimming have less to do with the child’s actions, and more with Aslan’s. What Eustace discovers, and what Lewis surely meant to convey, is that the genuine healing of the boy’s greedy condition cannot occur without the *transcendent* help of Aslan. None of the ship’s company, including Eustace, could save Eustace. Eustace needed the help of the emperor’s son from across the sea. He needed the help of his Creator.¹⁷ And so Walden’s *DT* casts off yet another tie with the great spiritual themes of Lewis’s book, themes that also mark the best fairy tales according to Tolkien.¹⁸

So what can Walden do to move future productions into the stronger currents of Lewis’s fairy tales? First, they can pay closer attention to the inward moral struggles of Lewis’s characters. More time spent revealing these inward battles, and less on vague special effects (green smoke and the like), could go a long way toward preserving the moral gravity that has made Lewis’s stories so beloved to both children and adults to begin with. But this sense of moral gravity must not, indeed it cannot be reduced to any simplistic notion of “positive” self-regard or “family values.” Thus, for example, Walden’s repeated resort in the current film to the notion of “believing in one’s self” must give back

¹⁵ It should be acknowledged that Lewis indicates in his story that Eustace, while still a dragon, begins to change, and even to desire to help the others; but Walden maximizes these pre-healing changes so much that the act of healing itself becomes almost an afterthought.

¹⁶ Did Walden’s script writers decide to avoid a more complete rendering of the conversion scene because they felt the details would be too graphic for young viewers? (Those young viewers and readers who have made the books so famous!) If so, they not only deface one of Lewis’s most memorable scenes, they also fall into the trap of talking down to children (Tolkien, see above, note 9).

¹⁷ It should be acknowledged that Eustace does *tell* the others, toward the end of Walden’s screenplay, that he could not heal himself though he tried several times. But these few words out of context fail to suggest even the rough outlines of the scene as described by Lewis. Indeed, they fail to do so precisely because, in keeping with Lewis’s typical advice to writers, they try to *tell* us what to feel, rather than *showing* the scene that makes us feel it. See C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Vol. III*, ed. Walter Hooper (Harper: San Francisco, 2007) p. 766.

¹⁸ In *Tree and Leaf*, pp. 46 ff., Tolkien discusses at length how the best fairy tales put us in touch with a “secondary world” of “secondary belief” through which we can recover (within the story) a truer and more hopeful awareness of our own primary world. Lesser attempts at fairy tale, according to Tolkien, are unable to sustain belief in this secondary world. Walden’s rewrite of Eustace’s healing fails at precisely this point. It dismantles the secondary world of Aslan’s initiative and power at the most crucial point in the story.

center stage to Lewis's very different portrayal of the children's inward battle to trust Aslan and resist their own evil desires.¹⁹ This will clearly be tested in *The Silver Chair* (should Walden succeed to that production) where a great part of the story concerns precisely this inward struggle of the children to follow Aslan's instructions rather than giving into their own fears and desires.

Something similar must be said concerning the concept of "family values." Nowhere in Lewis's book do we find anything like the sentimental family scenario of the film. Indeed, the primary reference to a specific family in the book concerns Eustace's parents who clearly represent what Lewis regarded as *negative* values. At the end of the book, for example, Eustace's mother is not at all happy with the changes she sees in her son after he has spent so much time "with those Pevensie children." All of this points to Lewis's very different conception of the role of family. For him, family love without a greater love to guide and refine it (like that of Aslan or Christ) all too easily becomes either a controlling or an indulging force.²⁰ This is why Lewis hazards the criticism of those who embrace family values when he insists that such well-meaning desires can never be enough to make us truly blessed.²¹ This principle, so easily muddled in the current film, will be tested again in Walden's next planned production, *The Magician's Nephew*, when Digory must risk letting his own mother die in order to trust Aslan and so, in the end, truly to love her.²²

A final course correction for Walden's future productions concerns their portrayal of Aslan's transcendence and supernatural power.²³ In the current screenplay, a great part of Aslan's power is replaced by the silly focus on the children's use of magic to defeat evil. The alternate climax, if it can

¹⁹ Walden's preference for the theme of "believing in one's self" seems to govern their resolution of various character's problems—Lucy, Eustace, the little girl. In each case (as we learn in the film) things will work out if only the character in question can believe in him or herself. But all of this is contrary to Lewis's ethos. For him, the children cannot find their true selves until they give up their false sense of self and begin to trust Aslan. This is why Aslan commands them again and again to trust him (not themselves) no matter how things look. This is also why Lewis warned of the dangers in modern culture of simplistic notions of self-help, self-affirmation, and self-esteem. See C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (William B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1973) pp. 40-41. But all of this is dimmed and dulled in Walden's version.

²⁰ So Lewis argues in his treatment of *storge* (family love) in *The Four Loves* (Harcourt: Orlando, Florida, 1988, p. 38). In this matter, of course, Lewis is only following the teachings of Christ—"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me . . . and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10: 37, 39)"—and the underlying reason is the same: Sometimes we can do the right thing by pleasing our families. Sometimes we cannot do the right thing except by displeasing them.

²¹ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966) p. 97. Lewis implores his readers to "try to believe, if only for a moment, that God, who made these deserving people, may really be right when he thinks their modest prosperity and the happiness of their children are not enough to make them blessed: that all this must fall from them in the end, and that if they have not learned to know Him they will be wretched. . . . The life to themselves and their families stands between them and the recognition of their need".

²² C. S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew, The Chronicles of Narnia*, Book 1 (Harper Trophy: New York, 1983) p. 209.

²³ Aslan's supernatural power and transcendence, as I am using the terms in this context, refer simply to what He alone is able to do for the children that they can never do for themselves. His power transcends theirs and is above their nature.

be called such, doesn't even require the action or presence of Aslan. Eustace completes the magic trick with the swords on his own; and Lucy, back aboard ship after the family's reunion, pronounces her confidence in the positive outcome, "We did it. I knew *we* would." As in the story of Eustace's healing, so here again, Aslan's supernatural role is hardly recognizable.

With these matters in view, we can now clarify the distinction (made earlier) between the magical qualities of Lewis's *Chronicles*, and the particular *use* of magic that Walden brings onboard with its alternate plot. In Lewis, to be sure, there are magical spells, and magical meals, and magical ways of getting into Narnia—all of which point to the secondary world of the fairy tale—but nowhere in Lewis do we find magic as a *technique* that the children use to defeat evil or save the world.²⁴ For these ends, only the intervention of the great Lion himself from across the sea will suffice. And Aslan's power is not like the trick of a magician. His power depends not on a technique that can be manipulated by one of the characters; but on the deeper magic of love and self-sacrifice by which he saves the children, even from themselves. Thus, Walden's particular use of magic actually breaks the spell of Lewis's writings, and makes about as much sense in Narnia as would the use of Tarot Cards and a Ouija Board in the resurrection accounts of the canonical gospels.²⁵

In the end, if Walden wants to be truer to the special magic of Lewis's fairy tales, they will have to become more faithful to *his* religious orientation.²⁶ Lewis's concerns with moral courage and Aslan's transcendence are, after all, grounded in a specifically biblical and Christian vision. This is the vision of the world as a fallen creation which is being restored through the gift of Christ's sacrificial love. In scripture we find this vision stated clearly by Jesus himself: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it (Matthew 16: 24-25)." And in Narnia the vision is portrayed perhaps nowhere more clearly than in book two, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, when Aslan gives his life to save Edmund, and then comes back to life—because this kind of sacrifice

²⁴ In *Tree and Leaf* p. 53, Tolkien also discusses this distinction between what is magical or enchanted in fairy tales, and the use of magic as a technique.

²⁵ This issue will also be tested if Walden continues with the production of *The Silver Chair* (the next story after the *DT*, Book 6 of the Narnia tales). In that story, Eustace Scrubb, now a very different boy, advises Jill Pole that they must not try to influence Aslan by drawing circles on the ground or reciting charms or spells, because that "would look as if we thought we could make him do things. But really, we can only ask him."

²⁶ Given their disavowal of any particular religious orientation (see note 1 above) this may not be possible. In that case, sadly, Walden may do no better than to leave future productions to someone else. At least then they will avoid further criticism like that of John Swansburg in *Slate*: "If only the makers of *DT* had learned the lesson Lucy does when she casts the forbidden spell: Don't try to be something you're not."

is grounded in the “deeper magic” of faith and love, and causes death to work in reverse.²⁷ With this vision as the primary reference point from which to take their bearings, Walden could get their future productions back on course.

²⁷ C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (Harper Trophy: New York, 1978, pp. 178-179).