



## **FANTASY IN SPECULATIVE WORLD WITH REFERENCE TO C.S.LEWIS'S THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Science fiction is unique in literature not only because of its content but also by virtue of its imagination which it expresses since pro -science fiction. Simply Science Fiction is fantasy fiction written under the strict, new rules of science. Although Science fiction is fantasy fiction the inverse is not true. Both deals with the unusual, both are the most imaginative and inventive of man's speculative literature. Science fiction consists of man's imaginary invention or discovery set in the near future involving imaginative speculation in physical science, space, time and life sciences. This paper explains the fantasy in speculative world with reference to C.S.Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

**Keywords:** Science fiction, fantasy, magic, imagination, etc. . . .

Speculative fiction contains fiction that pushes the boundaries of the known and the experienced and incorporates elements of the numinous, the magical, and the inexplicable, and a range of medieval texts is readable as Science fiction or fantasy. Fantasy seems predominantly designed to satisfy those who enjoy lengthy historical

novels set in mythical lands, perhaps with a touch of magic. The true magic is not in the physical world at all, but in the readers' mind. The recent surge in the number of new Fantasy titles has shown no evolution of that field, and the vast majority of authors seem content to rewrite stories that have proved to be popular in the past. Science

fiction readers are so much interested in the history of the field, and the direction in which it is moving. Fantasy world is based on well-known stories, historical locations or imagined universe have one thing in common with all other forms of illusion. The sense of wonder is the marvelous heart of every great Science fiction or Fantasy story. It comes from the surprise of discovery and the recognition of the magic within. Most of all, it comes from the realization of something new in the universe. Fantasy works will have full of surprises. Science fiction has a foundation rooted in the scientific knowledge of the real world; fantasy seems to have no such grounding at all. Fantasy looks like the abandonment of the laws of science. But it is not the abandonment of logic. It is the reinvention of it. A believable fantasy is the creation of an alternate structure of logic. Fantasy requires an underlying structure to unify the ideas. Like science, fantasy represents a consistent pattern of knowledge; the difference is that the fantasy map is not designed accurately to map the real world.

Fantasy comes from a Greek word meaning “making visible.” Perhaps more than any other form of literature, fantasy refuses to accept the world as it is, so

readers can see what could have been, rather than merely what was or must be. Fantasy authors explore themes by creating their own worlds, where dragons battle in the skies; alien diplomats try to maintain peace between planets and strange creatures’ cohabit Earth with humans. The projection of new heavens and new hells has been a common place in Science fiction. This projection interweaves fantasy and reality. Fantasy presents an unusual; especially a happier kind of life as simply existing somewhere. Science fiction makes possible a life in paradise that has been achieved by human efforts dependent on scientific and technological or scientific development. The earthly paradise is created in which a new kind of life has been discovered by the earthlings.

Fantastical elements have always been a part of storytelling which is characterized by the presence of Gods, monstrous beasts, and magic found in ancient mythologies, folklore, and religious texts around the globe. Fantasy as a literary genre is much more recent and differs from its predecessors because its authors are known and both they and their readers understand the works to be fictitious. Running the gamut from epic to dark fantasy and magical realism, all of

which have been adapted into popular movies and television series are prime examples of well-written fantasy: Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937), *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955), C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), William Goldman's *The Princess Bride* (1973), Stephen King's *The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger* (1982), Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* (1995), George R. R. Martin's *A Game of Thrones* (1996), J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), Charlaine Harris's *Dead Until Dark* (2001), Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* (2001).

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was published in 1950 as the first of C.S. Lewis's seven-book fantasy series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. As the most renowned title in the collection, Lewis's series' debut has been adapted for film, television, the stage, and even radio. While it's possible to see *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* as a cipher for the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, to its author, the book was more speculative fiction than allegory. Lewis considered the novel to be a "supposal": what the story of

Christ might look like in a different world. Despite its undeniable religious overtones, the book is more than a simple retelling of the Christ story, and explores themes such as childhood, the relationship between humans and the natural world, and the nature of reality.

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* represents the second adventure of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The land of Narnia is a parallel world where one can only arrive with the help of magic. After portraying the creation of the land in the first book, C.S.Lewis portrays the arrival of four brothers and sisters in Narnia. According to an old prophecy, the children are to rid Narnia of the evil curse of the White Witch. The story begins when the four siblings are sent to spend the summer with an eccentric professor. They discover a magical wardrobe in his house that links the World to Narnia. The first one to cross the border is the youngest one, Lucy.

'This must be a simply enormous wardrobe!' thought Lucy, going still further in and pushing the soft folds of the coats aside to make room for her. Then she noticed that there was something crunching under her feet. 'I wonder is that more moth balls?' she thought, stooping down to feel it

with her hands. But instead of feeling the hard, smooth wood of the floor of the wardrobe, she felt something soft and powdery and extremely cold. 'This is very queer,' she said, and went on a step or two further. (Lewis 113)

None of her siblings believe her at first but eventually they are all drawn to the wardrobe. In Narnia, they discover a world governed by magic where animals speak. They set on a journey to meet Aslan, the most powerful creature in Narnia who would tell them how to defeat the Queen. Edmund, the younger of the two boys, who was previously seduced by the Witch rushes to warn her of the upcoming danger. However instead of rewarding him, she takes him as her prisoner, planning to kill him as well as his brother and sisters.

While Edmund is held as a prisoner, Peter, Lucy and Susan rush towards the Stone Table in order to seek Aslan's help. As *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is a story filled with magic, during their journey the children encounter Father Christmas who gives them three special gifts. Susan receives a bow and arrows; Peter receives a sword and Lucy a magic poison. Father Christmas also tells them that

the Witch's winter curse is fading away and spring is coming. Eventually the three children are faced with the mighty Aslan. Fear takes over them as they discover that he is actually a great lion. Soon enough however his warm breath and soothing voice calms them down. They realize that, unlike the other talking animals, Aslan is a sort of divinity. Trusting in his power, they rush to help their brother. Eventually they manage to save Edmund but fail to capture the Queen. The following day Aslan meets with the Witch and she demands Edmund's life. According to the rules of Narnia, Edmund was a traitor and his life belonged to her. However Aslan proposes to trade his own life for Edmund. The Queen is more happy to take this deal and the next night she murders him on the Stone Table when Lucy and Susan watch at from a hiding place. The Queen then takes off, leaving Aslan's dead body on the table. The next day however the Stone Table breaks as Aslan comes back to life. Apart from magic, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* also features friendship, justice and courage. The children with the support of Aslan's force engage a war in order to rid Narnia of the White Witch once and for all. They win the war and they are crowned kings and queens of Narnia. They rule the magical land for many years until

they eventually get back to the real world. They discover that while many years passed in Narnia, no time had passed in the real world. The eccentric professors tell them not to worry as they are to return to Narnia once again.

Magic and miracles are two sides in this novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and it can often be difficult to tell where a spiritual miracle ends and a magical happening begins. In order to convey spiritual ideas to a children audience, fantastic and supernatural tropes are used. The primary setting is a country which is both magical and medieval. The countryside is generally unsettled and what might be described as uncivilized, in that it is inhabited almost entirely by animals and mythical creatures like dryads -spirits of trees, naiads- spirits of water, and other fairy tale/fantasy creatures like dwarfs, fauns, centaurs, and giants. The novels/book's resemblances to the Biblical story of Christ and his passion, the country of Narnia can be seen as an external representation of what might be described as an internal state of being specifically, the essential goodness, freedom, and naturalness of the human spirit. This manifests in several ways in Narnia's unspoiled natural beauty, in the sense that virtually anything is possible and,

perhaps most importantly, in the sense that is the battleground for what is, arguably, the eternal struggle between good and evil.

The fantastical world of Narnia is filled with magic, witches, talking animals, and mythical figures of fantasy and folklore, even Father Christmas makes an appearance. In spite of the fantastical atmosphere, though, Narnia is not free from problems—in fact, when Lucy and her siblings arrive in Narnia, they find that it is a world in at least as bad as their own. By denying the escapist possibilities of a utopian dream-world, Lewis makes Narnia a place where the children who venture there must actually face their problems. Lewis argues that true, pure fantasy does not exist at all, and suggests that no attempt at escaping one's problems or circumstances will ever prove fruitful at least not for long.

Lucy first finds Narnia while exploring the Professor's house with her siblings. Lucy's escape into Narnia is doubly meaningful, as she and her siblings have already escaped their city, London to avoid the violence and chaos of the air-raids during World War II. In depicting Lucy's entry into Narnia as an escape from an escape, Lewis demonstrates how tempting and yet impossible it is to try to leave one's problems behind. Once in Narnia, Lucy

believes that she has entered a fairytale. She meets a kind Faun, Mr. Tumnus, who invites her to his cave for tea and a delicious meal, and tells her exciting stories about his life in the forest with Nymphs and Dryads. Lucy feels comforted, happy, and transported, but eventually decides that she needs to return home, as her siblings must be worried for her. When she tells Mr. Tumnus that she needs to leave, however, he becomes upset and starts sobbing. He reveals to Lucy that the White Witch, the ruler of Narnia, has commanded all Narnians to enslave any “Sons of Adam” or “Daughters of Eve” that is humans whoever come to Narnia and need to be brought to her. Lucy realizes that the world she has found herself is not perfect, and is actually dangerous. Later, her escape into a fairy-world becomes less of a fantasy and more of a nightmare.

Having been berated all week by her siblings for supposedly making up lies and fantasies, Lucy decides to use the wardrobe as a hiding place during a game of hide-and-seek and thus check, once and for all, whether the wardrobe really is a portal to another world. Lucy’s escape from her siblings during a game of hide-and-seek—already situated within their escape from London—is set up to portend yet another confrontation with the inability to ever truly

leave one’s problems behind. Lewis complicates this new journey into Narnia by having Edmund follow Lucy into the wardrobe. Soon, Edmund finds himself in Narnia, but cannot find Lucy—instead, he comes face to face with the evil White Witch herself, who plies the greedy, suggestible Edmund with sweets and gets him to agree to lure the rest of his siblings to Narnia and bring them to the Witch. She promises Edmund that if he heeds her, he will one day be a King; his desire to show up his siblings combined with the Witch’s enchanted candies result in Edmund’s capitulation to the queen. Edmund, as the second-youngest, is often picked on by his older siblings, and in Narnia he believes he has found a way to escape their taunts and finally prove himself as the most special and powerful of all four of them. Edmund will soon come to realize, though, that Narnia is not a place where the struggles of the real world melt away; rather, in Narnia the problems of life are magnified and battled out against an even more heightened backdrop.

The first part of the novel consists of Lewis’s attempt to establish the impossibility of escapism in a world fraught with war, corruption, and pain. To leave one’s problems behind is an unrealistic

wish, and as the children, one by one, find themselves pulled into the world of Narnia and forced to reckon with the evil and danger that exist there as well, they begin to realize that even fantasy worlds are not free from suffering and strife.

Modern Fantasy is a genre that originated from traditional fantasy. Modern fantasy novels are distinguished by story elements that contradict the natural physical laws of known World. However, modern fantasy does have elements that differentiate it from traditional fantasy. Modern fantasy novels are always associated with an author; settings are detailed and important to the change and the development of plot and characters throughout the story. There are also many commonly used themes, motifs and story occurrences in modern fantasy compositions. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis uses many of these. It is an example of a modern fantasy novel, as the characters, setting and storyline match the criteria for the modern fantasy genre perfectly.

The fantastical setting of Narnia, a magical world, demonstrates again that the *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is a modern fantasy novel. Very detailed and believable settings are regularly used in modern fantasies, as they are often a very

important element of the story. Narnia is a key to the plot of the novel, as it is the setting for the major part of the novel, and nearly all important events and character developments occur there. The land of Narnia is found through a magical wardrobe by four children showing a fantasy element. This novel includes talking animals, such as beavers and wolves. There are also make-believe creatures including centaurs, unicorns, fauns, dwarfs and other fantasy beasts that definitely don't look like they could be in reality. Some trees in Narnia are on the witch's side and fight for her reveals a fantasy element. The Witch in this novel is magical, showing a major element of fantasy. She has control over others and can turn them into stone, just by the wipe of her wand. The magical and talking lion, Aslan, is an element of fantasy. He is extremely powerful and knows all about the deep magic and laws of Narnia, showing fantasy. Father Christmas was a real character exposing a fantasy element. Thus it is very clear that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* displays a number of fantasy elements and is a fantasy novel by the use of a magical setting and makes believe characters.

To sum up, Science fiction is a genre of possibility, imagination, and innovation

whose popularity rises in relation to advances in science and technology. The writers of Science fiction use real science to create fictional stories that explore the possible future of mankind and the universe in a way that is both imaginative and realistic.

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