

ANALYSIS OF UTOPIAN REPRESENTATION IN THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE

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Abstract

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe is a well-known novel, that tells the story of four children who found a magical world of Narnia through a wardrobe. It is also known that this novel is an allegory to the story of Jesus Christ. However, this study aims to apply Stuart Hall's representation theory to examine how an allegory of a utopian world is portrayed in C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. To demonstrate the contrast between utopia and dystopia, symbols from the narrative are analyzed, including Aslan, the White Witch, the wardrobe, the Pevensie siblings, and the transition from winter to spring. Lewis uses these symbols to create his conceptual universe based on morality, justice, and the possibility of redemption in the face of tyranny. In contrast to the White Witch's oppressive control over the dystopian Narnia she governs, Aslan embodies selfless love and leadership. By providing a bridge between the actual world and the Narnia imagination, the wardrobe highlights the ideas of bravery and transformation for the viewer. These issues make it possible to comprehend how The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe both perform a Christian allegory and provide a broad representation of an ideal society that can be established via selflessness, solidarity, and moral self-control.

Keywords: *utopia, dystopia, symbols, allegory, Narnia*

INTRODUCTION

Humanity has long dreamed of a perfect society without injustice, inequality, and suffering. A better life can be described as one where all people have equal access to necessities, such as food, healthcare, and education, making sure that everyone has their fundamental needs regardless of their background or circumstances. This objective is perfectly illustrated in Thomas More's *Utopia*, where he imagines societies in which harmony, justice, and happiness are the rule. More's concept of the ideal society provides a foundational framework for understanding the challenges and difficulties involved in achieving the goal. *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis gives an interesting and unique analysis of this utopian ideal against a depressive reality.

The 1950 book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* introduces readers to the magical world of Narnia and tells the story of four siblings, Lucy, Edmund, Peter, and Susan, who were sent away to a professor's house in a town far from their city. Lucy was the first to discover the magical land called Narnia when she accidentally entered a wardrobe in the house. She was then followed by Edmund, who was seduced by the White Witch. Eventually, Susan and Peter joined them in Narnia, where they learned about the prophecy of the return of the Great Lion, Aslan, who was destined to defeat the White Witch and restore peace to Narnia. Aslan arrived and sacrificed himself to save Edmund from the White Witch. However, Aslan was resurrected, defeating the Witch and her army. In the end, the children were crowned as Kings and Queens of Narnia, ruling wisely and justly.

Lewis explores themes of courage, selflessness, and redemption through the journey of the four children. This story emphasizes deep moral lessons while representing the longing for an equal and peaceful life, in contrast to the reality where injustice often occurs. This raises important questions such as: How do the symbols in the book illustrate the difference between utopia and dystopia? How does the novel use allegory to convey the idea of a perfect world,

particularly through its characters and setting? It is hypothesized that the symbols in the story help show the differences between the ideal world of Narnia and the evil rule of the White Witch, highlighting themes of fairness and redemption.

The description of victory in Narnia, the welfare of the creatures in Narnia, and the kingdom's security led to an allegory referring to a good place. This study is aimed to find out the symbols proposed by C. S. Lewis, analyze their meaning, and interpret the allegory based on the symbols. Therefore, this study used the theory of representation by Stuart Hall.

Stuart Hall explained representation theory as meaning something depicted through media, language, and symbols. "*Languages can use signs to symbolize, stand for or reference objects, people and events in the so-called 'real' world.*" (Stuart, Hall, 1997). Hall explains that meaning comes not only from the real world but also from the way people see and understand things. Hall emphasizes that each person may interpret representation in different ways, depending on their background, culture, and experiences. So, the meaning of an image, word, or symbol can change depending on how people see and understand it in a particular object. "*The meaning is constructed by the system of representation. It is constructed and fixed by the code, which sets up the correlation between our conceptual system and our language system in such*" (Stuart, Hall, 1997). This concept is relevant to analyzing the symbols of utopia in the novel *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. The symbols of utopia in this novel include Aslan and the White Witch, the wardrobe, the Pevensie children, spring and winter, and the symbol of victory. Through the perspective of representation theory, each symbol in this novel is open to various interpretations from different readers, depending on their culture, beliefs, and experiences. Therefore, the symbols of utopia in *The Chronicles of Narnia* not only create an allegorical world of sacrifice and salvation in a Christian context but also open up opportunities for new interpretations of what utopia is, according to the reader's way of understanding and seeing the world.

Maylida Auliffia Aztari (2024) in her study entitled "Representasi Budaya Sumba dalam Novel Melangkah Karya J. S. Khairen" (Representation of Sumbanese Culture in the Novel *Melangkah* by J. S. Khairen) explains three categories of representation defined by Stuart Hall: reflective, intentional, and constructionist representation. Reflective representation uses language or symbols to reflect meaning. Intentional representations use language, or symbols to express personal goals. Finally, constructionist representation is a way of reassembling meaning "in" and "through" language. Hall also developed two approaches to studying constructionist representation, namely the semiotic and discursive approaches, similar to the concepts of encoding and decoding that he had previously developed in media studies for literary works, representation in literary works is the depiction of social phenomena in a literary work. Wirda Adelia (2024) also wrote that "representation is a form of words, sequences, stories, images, and so on that represent facts, emotions, ideas, and so on. Representation is closely related to images and signs that exist and are understood culturally." So it can be understood that language or symbols can describe broader things through the meaning of the language or symbols. This is what is used to analyze the symbols of utopia in the novel to explore the allegory of a better world in this novel.

Harshini and Nagalakshmi (2022) in their study, "Utopia Transformation in C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Magician's Nephew*," examines the symbolic relationship between the biblical concept of Heaven and the fictional world of C. S. Lewis's Narnia. They argue that Narnia is a metaphorical depiction of Heaven, highlighting the fact that unless the world fully understands and accepts God's eternal love for humanity, it will never be able to reach true Heaven. Harshini and Nagalakshmi (2022) argue that "the world will never become a utopia unless and until humanity realizes God's true love and how sincere and fervent He is towards them" (pp. 5-6). According to their findings, Lewis purposefully created Narnia as a model of utopia, giving readers—especially young readers—a sneak peek at what Heaven might look like. According to Christian theology, the 'Garden of Eden,' which is the ideal, sinless environment that God first created for humanity on Earth, is symbolic of the fantasy realm of Narnia and its characters. Lewis aimed to teach moral and spiritual truths through this allegorical framework, which is why his depiction of Narnia is not just a gripping work of fiction but also a theological investigation of paradise and divine love.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. A qualitative research method is designed to provide a complete and detailed explanation of the observations of the researcher (Macdonald et al., 2008). This method is applied to identify utopian symbols by using Stuart Hall's understanding of representation theory in the novel *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis. By using a descriptive qualitative method of this research, this research is outlined according to the following stages:

- a. The data collection stage
- b. The data analysis stage
- c. The data presentation stage

The researcher made extensive and detailed observations of the subjects in this study. The researcher collected data by thoroughly reading the story and identifying utopian symbols in the novel. The findings were then explained in detail, supported with quotations, and the collected data was systematically analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Utopian symbols of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe presents utopian symbols that reflect the creation of an ideal world where an ideal world can be formed through struggle, sacrifice, and moral integrity. Symbols such as Aslan, the Pevensie children, the seasonal transformation from winter to spring, the magic wardrobe, as well as the victory over the white witch, each play an important role in the depiction of a utopia where justice, harmony, and renewal prevail over tyranny and despair. These symbols not only reflect Christian allegory but also present a broader interpretation of an ideal society achieved through perseverance and the triumph of good over evil.

Utopianism in The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe is viewed from the symbol of Aslan and the White Witch

In the well-known fantasy book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, Aslan represents utopianism as a symbol of bravery, kindness, and knowledge. The magnificent lion Aslan, who is considered to be Narnia's rightful ruler, stands for a world of peace, justice, and harmony. The people of Narnia experience emotions of hope, unity, and spiritual enlightenment when he is around. "*Oh, yes! Tell us about Aslan!*" said several voices at once; for once again that strange feeling — like the first signs of spring, like good news, had come over them (p. 58). Narnia under Aslan's rule is filled with peace, freedom, and fair justice. Aslan is also described as the ideal leader of Narnia. He shows others what a good leader should be. Through his love and wisdom, he voluntarily sacrifices himself to save Edmund, even though he is not the one who should've given his life to death, to obey the Deep Magic (the law in Narnia). "*And now, who has won? Fool, did you think that by all this you would save the human traitor? Now I will kill you instead of him as our pact was and so the Deep Magic will be appeased*" (p. 113). A good leader should be brave enough to sacrifice himself and always obey the applicable law.

On the other hand, Aslan is present because Narnia is under the curse of the White Witch. She claims herself to be the queen of Narnia. She rules Narnia with oppression, fear, and injustice. She mostly used her magic to control Narnia and all its creatures. Different from Aslan, the White Witch is the definition of the dystopia of Narnia, whatever she does is only to benefit herself and to reach her goal to be the queen of Narnia. Even though the White Witch already has control of Narnia, she still needs to get rid of the children of Adam and Eve who are said to be the kings and queens of Narnia. Her desire to become the only queen of Narnia makes her do anything to achieve it, including killing anyone who tries to get in her way. This shows how she doesn't care about anyone including the creatures in Narnia, and how obsessed her with power. White Witch is describing what dictatorial leadership looks like. Thirst for power makes a person a cunning and evil leader.

Ultimately, the novel illustrates the opposing ideas of a peaceful and repressive society by examining themes of utopia and dystopia through the symbolism of Aslan and the White Witch. The story offers a positive outlook on the ability of goodness to win over evil by presenting an idealized world where morality and justice rule via Aslan's embodiment of wisdom and compassion.

Utopianism in The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe is viewed from the symbol of the Wardrobe

The wardrobe in this novel has an important role in not only being the entrance to the world of Narnia, but being the portal that takes Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy into an extraordinary adventure. Through this wardrobe, the Pevensie children discover a different world that is full of magic but also has its conflicts. *All four of them bundled inside it and sat there, panting, in the dark. Peter held the door closed but did not shut it; for, of course, he remembered, as every sensible person does, that you should never shut yourself up in a wardrobe* (p. 39). This wardrobe is a gateway to extraordinary change. As a gateway, this wardrobe has started an adventure and struggle experienced by the Pevensie children. However, more than that, this wardrobe is a gateway to the character transformation of the Pevensie children and prepares them to face their destiny of becoming kings and queens in Narnia. It is in Narnia that they find their identity as heroes who fight and save Narnia.

However, behind the wardrobe which is the entrance to the magical world, Narnia, there is a life for the Pevensie children which is very different in the real world from in Narnia. *... and before they had gone twenty more they noticed that they were making their way not through branches but through coats. And next moment they all came tumbling out of a wardrobe door into the empty room* (p. 137). In real life Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy have a life that is not so interesting, they are children who were evacuated far away to a small town in the house of a stranger, Professor Kirke. The house is quite big but foreign to them, full of rules and the atmosphere is tense. Although it is their reality, this world feels like a dystopian existence—one where the innocence and freedom of childhood are restricted by fear, uncertainty, and separation. Outside the wardrobe, they are still children yearning for the simplicity and happiness that the war has taken from them.

Utopianism in The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe is viewed from the symbol of the Pevensie children

The Pevensie children, Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy are a group of siblings which plays an important role as the four main characters in Narnia. All four of them are the daughters of Eve and sons of Adam that is said as the heroes that will save Narnia from the White Witch. This reality they face is a utopian world for them because this is where they can be heroes and become the future kings and queens of Narnia. *At the name of Aslan, each one of the children felt something jump in its inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer* (p. 51). Each of them has their characteristics, Peter is the oldest, fearless, responsible, and protective. He also assumes the position of a natural leader as they negotiate the difficulties of the magical world. The second oldest, Susan, is cautious and realistic. She frequently speaks with reason but also plays the role of a source of comfort and support because of her gentle and nurturing. Edmund is the symbol of redemption. Throughout the series, he goes from being a self-centered and foolish youngster to a brave and modest man after discovering the painful truths about betrayal. The youngest, Lucy, is the most creative and outgoing of the group. She believes in the impossible and inspires her siblings to follow her to step into Narnia and then save Narnia from the White Witch. The Pevensies mature as siblings and as rulers who contribute to bringing justice and peace back to Narnia because they complement each other's strengths and flaws.

To bring justice and peace back to Narnia, the Pevensie children need to face the dystopian realm in Narnia first, as the villain in the story, White Witch. Meanwhile, they haven't face to face with the White Witch herself except for Edmund, they already face the troubles that come from her. The White Witch followers always chase them everywhere they go. Since the beginning, Edmund has been on her side, so it is easy for the White Witch to know where the other siblings are. Many of Narnia's creatures feel obligated to serve her because of her curse, and they assist in the search for the

Pevensies, who are meant to overthrow her. *"There are the trees," said the Beaver. "They're always listening. Most of them are on our side, but there are trees that would betray us to her; you know who I mean," and it nodded its head several times* (p 50). Even the formerly obedient trees in Narnia have turned into spies and betrayed their homeland by informing the Witch about the siblings' presence. The White Witch's corruption of these Narnian traitors intensifies the dystopian nightmare the children must escape while they fight to destroy her government and liberate Narnia from its oppressive frozen state.

The Pevensie kids represent the utopian promise ingrained in Narnia, making them more than just the story's main characters. Their unique experiences reflect the larger conflict between dystopia and utopia, where even the most hopeless situations can be changed by faith in justice, redemption, and strong leadership. In this context, the story illustrates how utopian ideas are lived realities influenced by bravery, conviction, and a determination to fight for a better future rather than abstract concepts.

Utopianism in The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe is viewed from the symbol of Spring and Winter

In Narnia, spring heralds the coming of a better life and the end of the White Witch's oppressive authority. Spring's flowering sends light into shadowy areas long ruled by evil, while the perpetual winter caused by her oppression fades away. Spring symbolizes the return of justice and freedom with bright sunshine and fresh air bringing Narnia back to life. The Pevensie children become increasingly aware of their destiny to free Narnia from its frozen misery, and Aslan's presence becomes increasingly apparent. It symbolizes hope and the return of natural order. Spring, which brings warmth, symbolizes the victory of good over evil. *"Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight, At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more; When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death; And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again"* (p. 58).

In Narnia, winter represents a dystopian world, in contrast to the rebirth of spring. Narnia suffers from perpetual winter, which represents oppression and darkness, under the rule of the White Witch. This unending cold is an illustration of a place where life is repressed and hope is lost, both physically and spiritually. *"Why, it is she that has got all Narnia under her thumb. It's she that makes it always winter. Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!"* (p. 16). The creatures of Narnia are left helpless by the endless winter, stuck in a condition of hopelessness with no trace of warmth or growth. It seems as though time has stopped altogether and life has come to a standstill. The absence of movement or change depicts a world in which it appears impossible to escape the Witch's oppression and the future is grim. The lack of spring in this freezing dystopia emphasizes how oppressive the Witch's power is and how much people hunger for escape.

The conflict between dystopia and utopia is symbolized strongly through the difference between winter and spring in the novel. Winter symbolizes the White Witch's harsh reign filled with fear and despair. In contrast, spring, brought about by Aslan's homecoming, symbolizes hope, rebirth, and the triumph of good over evil. The changing seasons play an important role in this book, showing how Narnia's utopian ideals triumph and natural justice and order are restored.

Utopianism in The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe is viewed from the symbol of Victory

Aslan's victory represents a new beginning for the utopian society of Narnia. This victory was not only physical, but also a significant moral and spiritual victory. After Aslan defeats the White Witch, justice, peace, and freedom are once again enjoyed throughout the world. This victory begins a better world and life than the life under pressure and fear before. Narnia undergoes a profound transformation as a result of Aslan's victory which also provides the foundation for a just and peaceful society. With these changes, Narnia's potential as a paradise of unity, optimism, and rebirth is once again realized. With this victory, the four Pevensie children gain their rightful seats as King and Queen, rebuilding the kingdom of Narnia. After being anointed king and queen, Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy rule Narnia with compassion, justice, and wisdom. The utopian society of Narnia was then formed during their reign, where social life and leadership were filled with peace and justice. These two Kings and two Queens ruled Narnia well, and their reigns were long and

happy (p. 134). Aslan's victory creates a new and satisfying government where two Kings and two Queens rule with justice and make Narnia prosperous and full of prosperity. These Kings and Queens built a society that lived in peace and compassion and made it the hallmark of the region, embodying hopes for a better and more promising future for their people.

But if they lose the fight, this utopian dream could end. Their fight sacrificed many things because if they lost, Narnia would forever be imprisoned under the rule of the White Witch and shrouded in fear, depression and also a winter that would never end. Narnian society will remain under the influence of cold power, without freedom, justice, and hope if Aslan does not intervene and the Pevensies do not win. A world where life, growth, and change are not symbolized by a never-ending winter, and under the rule of the terrible Witch, the future will be hopeless. In this possibility, Narnia would never experience a life of freedom but would remain in a state of fear and despair.

After they succeeded in bringing Narnia to independence and freedom. Narnia was successfully freed, and a fair and just monarchy was established, which marked the beginning of a prosperous and happy period for the country. Narnia had a time of peace, stability, and prosperity under the kind and astute rule of the royal family. After being subjected to oppression, the people were now free to live in abundance and harmony and to enjoy the blessings of their freedom.

Utopian Allegory of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*

An allegory conveys the deeper meaning of a narrative or story by using characters, objects, events, or other things where these things not only have a literal meaning but also symbolize certain deeper concepts or messages. In other words, characters, objects, or events act as symbols of certain things which will then create an allegory from that thing. Virani, Rosmaidar, and Wulandari (2024) stated that authors can use allegory to convey moral messages and political or historical situations.

The symbols of utopia in the novel create an allegory of a utopian world that is different from the Christian allegory about Jesus' sacrifice as clearly shown by Lewis. Dominique Wilson (2007) in his analysis entitled "*Christianity in Narnia*" explains how the allegory of Christianity is used by Lewis in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. The depiction of Aslan's sacrifice to save Edmund from the White Witch refers to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who wanted to save humans from the power of Satan. Wilson (2007) also explained the characters of the four Pevensie children who symbolize different types of Jesus's followers, Lucy who is very innocent but always believes what she has been told, Peter depicts a wise believer, Susan is a believer but the next version she becomes a person who lost her faith, then Edmund, who is also a picture of Judas, was initially a traitor, but then he became a believer.

However, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, not only creates an allegory of Christianity but more broadly, Lewis presents another allegory in this novel. Through utopian symbols, such as Aslan who is present as the ideal leader, the return of spring which brings back hope for a better life in Narnia, the four Pevensie children who are willing to fight with the Narnians to fight the forces of evil, and the victory that makes their hopes come true, and of course the wardrobe which is the starting point for the adventure of the four Pevensie children which leads them to become the leaders of Narnia. *These two Kings and two Queens governed Narnia well, and long and happy was their reign* (p. 134). Under the leadership of Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy, the Narnians live with freedom, and justice and are filled with happiness. *They made good laws and kept the peace and saved good trees from being unnecessarily cut down, and liberated young dwarfs and young satyrs from being sent to school, and generally stopped busybodies and interferers and encouraged ordinary people who wanted to live and let live... And they entered into friendships and alliances with countries beyond the sea and paid them visits of state and received visits of state from them* (p. 135). They make rules that maintain the peace in Narnia, free the Narnians to live as they want to live, they also save the trees from being cut down. As time went by, these kings and queens not only maintained peace in Narnia but also established friendly relations with regions beyond the sea. Their success as leaders of Narnia was due to struggle and sacrifice, and as leaders, they tried to defend what they and the Narnians had fought for. This shows that an ideal world requires struggle and sacrifice, as well as the will to change to become a better person.

CONCLUSION

In his writing, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, C.S Lewis makes use of symbolic tools to convey how a utopia can be perceived as an endpoint world resulting from moral endurance, offering for others self-sacrifice or even unity. Using related elements such as Aslan the Pevensie children, and the White Witch with other symbols like the wardrobe itself or metaphoric changes of the season from winter to spring throughout his series Lewis paints a picture of an intricate pathway toward Utopia. In various ways, Aslan symbolizes wisdom, justice, and selflessness while the White Witch represents oppression, selfishness, and fear. The Pevensie children become two noble and just rulers, showing us that we can learn our responsibilities and cooperate for the benefit of all. The wardrobe represents a portal to self-discovery and transformation, showing that the path to a better world begins from within. The disappearance of the curse of winter and the hopeful return of spring symbolizes the ultimate victory of hope and regeneration over despair.

Together, these symbols convey that Narnia's utopia is an endless process based on resilience and the triumph of good over adversity. Lewis's concept of utopia is more than just a Christian allegory; it implies a broader moral journey in which a perfect society is built by continuous moral growth and the struggle to build a world of justice, compassion, and freedom.

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