Marius Conkan

From Fantasy Fiction to Film: *The Chronicles of Narnia* as Religious Spaces

ABSTRACT

What is the nature of fantasy worlds created in literature and in cinema? If these worlds are not impossible in accordance to reality, what is their structure beyond the ontological rupture they generate? I will attempt an answer by discussing C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) and *Prince Caspian* (1951) and their cinematic adaptations. In my endeavor I will define the structure of the secondary worlds that showcase a mix of eutopian and dystopian spaces infused by a teratological imaginary, one of the main features of such spaces. In the attempt to establish a theoretical framework for the analysis of fantasy novels and films, my own definition of fantasy worlds can become useful in this particular context: fictional worlds in fantasy literature are artifacts created through aesthetic activities that merge cosmological narratives of religion with the alternative designs of reality/the universe (mostly speculated by science).

MARIUS CONKAN

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
mariusconkan@yahoo.com.sg

The complexity of fantasy worlds has become visible once famous novels have been turned into movies for the big screen: *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, the *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling or *A song of Ice and Fire* series by George R. R. Martin. Fantasy literature is highly visual, a trait that arises as it creates fairy-like landscapes and a spectacular iconography that has as the major effect the sense of wonder. C. S. Lewis, for instance, confessed that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* started with an obsessive image he had, in which a faun walked around with an umbrella in a snowy forest. This miraculous image was the little "Big Bang" of Narnia, the mystical world that, along with Wonderland, Neverland and Middle-Earth, represents today alternative or even complementary universes to what we perceive as being real. Their heterotopian features increase as they transcend the boundaries of literature and enter the big screen. Katherine A. Fowkes and other researchers found the roots of fantasy and science-fiction films at the dawn of the cinema age:

> The French filmmaker Georges Méliès (1861–1938) is rightly credited with

being the father of science-fiction and fantasy film. His famous short film *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) is regarded as the first sci-fi film, and other one-reel shorts such as *Cinderella* (1899) established the fairy-tale tradition that would come to inform so many fantasy films.[1]

Fantasy literature emerged as a reaction against the 19th-century realism, but also against the values of rationality, the consequences of the rise of science and technology (due to the Industrial Revolution). This type of literature reflected the visions of romantic poets, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, in evoking the essential creative function of imagination that builds miraculous spaces, combined with a specific mysticism (George MacDonald wrote a type of religious fantasy that would later influence J. R. R. Tolkien's and C. S. Lewis' writings). Fantasy worlds in cinema are being displayed and staged by using sophisticated technologies, proving that such movies can harmoniously combine the imagination of fantasts and film directors with the instruments of science and technology. These entanglements recreate a third space, in which the miraculous and the means of its production come to life. A high quality fantasy movie uses special effects in order to depict the imaginary world and make the viewer perceive it as reality. A brilliant fantasy movie director must therefore have a fantast's talent, if we were to follow George MacDonald's and J. R. R. Tolkien's line of arguments. Such a fantast-director has the mission to recreate autonomous worlds, coherent and in accordance with the inner laws they uphold. Hence, the viewer must never sense that he or she is part of an illusion. That is why the internal laws of fantasy movies have to be mathematically orchestrated, both on the level of the imaginary and in the technical production

stage. Such an effort confers consistency to the secondary worlds and avoids mistakes that could cause the demise and dismissal of the created alternative reality.

The internal laws of fantasy worlds encountered in cinema depend on how the fantastic/the miraculous imagination, the fairy-tale structure and the technological mechanisms (special effects, editing scenes and images, manners of filming) merge together, as they reinterpret the narrative for the big screen. This is the main difference between fantasy and science-fiction movies, as "science fiction uses technology to tell stories about technology and science, we might say that fantasy harnesses cinema's ability to create illusions in order to tell stories about illusions themselves."[2] These so-called illusions (magical, supernatural) will be perceived as real, as long as viewers interact with and react to them. Cinema goers and passionate fantasy literature readers become a "constellated community,"[3] in which reality is interpreted by applying magical and miraculous principles. For such communities, fantasy films are not a mere source of pleasure and entertainment, but they can actually turn into personal and collective religions, catalyzing the ideas of joy and festival "where humanity actively affirms and celebrates life and community."[4] The concept of festival inherently belongs to fantasy fictions, as found in *Peter Pan and Wendy*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* or *The Lord of the Rings*. In this respect, Tolkien states that the term *joy* defines all fairy-stories and it can be viewed in close relationship with the notion of "eucatastrophe," meaning good catastrophe.

Fantasy Films and the "Ontological Rupture"

Far from being a "box-office poison,"[5] as fantasy movies have been wrongfully labeled by critics, such films have become the object of studies that manage to define and depict their working mechanisms. The same reorientation can be found in the manner in which fantasy literature has become more than children's literature, due to numerous researchers that have attempted to define and legitimate the term. Fantasy is seen as a territory of the impossible and non-reason, contradicting all that readers understand and see as reality and possibility (C. N. Manlove, Brian Attebery, Kathryn Hume). Moreover, fantasy literature today has found various territories and angles of interpretation: from psychoanalysis, theories of fiction to theories of space and place. There are some critics that explore the alternative worlds of cinema and fantasy genre using literary theory and instruments of analysis found in film theories. James Walters identifies three categories of alternative worlds depicted by the Hollywood industry:

> The three categories that I suggest alternative world films fall into are (i) Imagined Worlds, where a character dreams or hallucinates a world away from the world they inhabit, (ii) Potential Worlds, where a character visits an alternative version – or – alternative versions – of the world they inhabit, and (iii) Other Worlds, where a character travels to a different world entirely from the world they inhabit.[6]

Portal-quest fantasy movies, in which one or several characters literally enter through a portal a miraculous territory, fit into the third category; nevertheless, it is not necessary that the Other Worlds display magical or supernatural traits. It is more relevant that "in these films, an access point is provided into a realm dramatically distinct from the ordinary (fictional) world of the film,"[7] a feature that actually differentiates Other Worlds from Imagined or Potential Worlds. Generally speaking, fantasy films can illustrate all three types of alternative worlds James Walters identifies. Moreover, this proves their structural diversity, but does not reveal the manner in which fantasy worlds are created. A more accurate approach to the nature and function of fantasy films and the alternative worlds they contain is offered by Katherine A. Fowkes:

> My own definition is that that the audience must at the very least perceive an "ontological rupture" – a break between what the audience agrees is "reality" and the fantastic phenomena that define the narrative world. The word "rupture" distinguishes the fantastic elements in fantasy from those in science fiction, where fantastic phenomena are ostensibly *extrapolations* or extensions of rational, scientific principles. [...] The term "ontological" denotes the fact that fantastic phenomena are understood to really exist within the storyworld – an existence as real as the reference world from which they break.[8]

Both fantasy fiction and movies cause an ontological rupture in the readers' and viewers' perception. This ontological rupture can be explained, in the terms of Russian formalism, by the effect of an acute defamiliarization of reality. Such a rupture is especially visible in portal-quest movies and fictions, as characters leave their primary (quasi realistic) world and enter, through a portal, a secondary (miraculous) world

that defamiliarizes the affective and imaginary content of the primary world. Fowkes's definition (applied also to fantasy literature, as I pointed out) delivers premises for a new interpretation of the secondary worlds that were wrongfully seen in an impossible relationship with the real world, for the latter is understood as a system of reference. In accordance with the ontological rupture that takes place on the perception level of viewers and readers alike, magical and supernatural elements are possible inside the fantasy world, as they comply with the internal laws of these worlds; hence, they must not be interpreted and understood through the lenses of the laws governing reality. Such an approach gradually leads to theories of fiction and possible worlds. What is the nature of fantasy worlds created in literature and in cinema? If these worlds are not impossible in accordance to reality, what is their structure beyond the ontological rupture they generate? I will attempt an answer by discussing *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) and *Prince Caspian* (1951), the first two volumes from *The Chronicles of Narnia* series by C. S. Lewis and their cinematic adaptations, directed by Andrew Adamson and launched in 2005 and 2008, respectively. In my endeavor I will define the structure of the secondary worlds that showcase, on a first level, a mix of eutopian and dystopian spaces infused by a teratological imaginary, one of the main features of such spaces. How do fantasy worlds emerge, beyond their axiological features that confer them semantic value? For now, we can start by exploring some of the theories on fiction and possible worlds, seldom used by researchers of fantasy literature and film. These theories can offer a rather fruitful conceptual framework for understanding and describing fantasy, in all its appearances.

Fantasy and Possible Worlds

In the attempt to establish a theoretical framework for the analysis of fantasy novels and films, my own definition of fantasy worlds can become useful in this particular context: fictional worlds in fantasy literature are artifacts created through aesthetic activities that merge cosmological narratives of religion with the alternative designs of reality/ the universe (mostly speculated by science). This definition has as a starting point Lubomír Doležel's understanding of possible worlds found in religion and science.[9] The first are represented by cosmological narratives and the latter describe potential versions, more or less true, of the real world/ the universe. This is why it is important to look into the manner in which fantasy writers reinterpret and rewrite religious narrations, inside secondary worlds built as versions of reality (defined as an intertwining of possible words). On the other hand, in his analysis of the five fictional modes discussed by Northrop Frye[10] (myths, romance, the high mimetic mode, the low mimetic mode and the ironic mode), Thomas Pavel states that "even in our reputedly ironic century, romance can be recognized in fantastic literature, or in religious fictions"[11] as "we tend to exaggerate our period's involvement with low and ironic modes, and its alleged withdrawal from the sacred and from myth."[12] For sure that the romance, with its heroes placed above the world they live in, is fantasy literature (I think Thomas Pavel does not refer to term fantastic literature as defined by Tzvetan Todorov).[13]

The manner in which fantasy worlds are created can be explained and understood especially as a hybridization of possible worlds found in religion (as some fantasts do not discard the sacred and mythic material,

but they rather brilliantly orchestrate it) and the alternative design of reality/ the universe. The romance, reclaimed by fantasy, finds its correspondent in the modern myth,[14] defined by Doležel in connection with the classical myth, starting through the semantic restructuration of the delimitation between the natural and the supernatural order. In the first version of the modern myth this border has been erased and the classical dyadic systems turns into a hybrid world; in the second version of the modern myth we find that the border has been kept, but the strong opposition between the natural and the supernatural order has become semantic communication. Doležel does not explore fantasy literature while discussing the modern myth. One can, nevertheless, place the immersive fantasy fictions (describing a vast and complex secondary world, as found in *The Lord of the Rings*) in the first version of the modern myth. The second version of the myth comes close to what Farah Mendlesohn defines as intrusive fantasy fictions (where the miraculous invades the primary world), but also portal-quest fantasy fictions that are the main object of study in the current paper. The semantic communication between the natural and the supernatural order is being insured through different portals, shaped in the form of fluid borders, that play a key role in the configuration of the dyadic fantasy system. Being both current expressions of the romance and versions of the modern myth, fantasy fictions are created through the merger of possible worlds in religion and the alternative design of reality/ the universe. This is why such a definition can shed new light on the attempt to interpret secondary worlds.

Atone with the process of building and rebuilding possible words different in nature, the defamiliarization of the primary world (seen as a partial, fragmented mirror of reality) is the main structural procedure found at the core of secondary universes. Thomas Pavel states that despite being impossible versions of reality (as it is the case for fantasy worlds), fictional worlds are being perceived as possible due to the defamiliarization process: "whether fictional worlds represent credible accounts of our universes or give a version of universes contaminated by radical otherness, they tend to blur the distinction between laws in force in the actual world and small miracles specific to fiction."[15] I added to Thomas Pavel's arguments the term defamiliarization, a term he also tackles when discussing the concept of mythification. The same manner of understanding fantasy fictions can be found in the comments of J. R. R. Tolkien, who affirms that secondary worlds must be created as such, in order to be perceived as real[16] (the fantast has, therefore, the purpose to represent secondary worlds in a familiar manner, even if he or she defamiliarizes the reader's reality). If we were to take the line argumentation a little further, it would be right to say that fantasy fictions hybridize cosmological narratives of religion with the alternative design of the universe, using defamiliarization as a structural procedure in building secondary worlds that are being perceived as possible.

This is how C. S. Lewis conceived his fantasy project *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The axiological and epistemic quests of the characters entering Narnia take place inside an alternative universe, coming to life through the rewriting of some mythological and Christian narrations. Religious elements, reinterpreted by the author, are the core of these journeys of initiation; moreover, they confer the secondary world a semantic depth.[17] In other words, the characters' initiations are marked by religious symbols and motives that configure the imaginary of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The passage through a portal (the wardrobe, platform, painting, and gate) is continued by Christian, vegetal and

Dionysian rites that turn out to be decisive in the axiological and epistemic quest of the characters.[18] My endeavor begins with this particular argument, as I will analyze *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the manner in which C. S. Lewis rewrites several cultural narrations (found in numerous European spaces) and how, building on this, he creates an alternative cosmos with a hybrid cultural design. Moreover, I will interpret the main characters' initiation journey into the secondary realm by exposing the link between their identity versions,[19] the space and the religious imaginary found in the cinematic adaptation of the books.

The primary world of the Pevensie brothers and of the other travelers into Narnia contain several ontic and deontic conflicts. These will be elements transferred into Aslan's realm and defamiliarized. The portal showcases the structure of the secondary world by placing it under the mark of the miraculous. The latter is purified by dystopian images that emerge through the axiological and epistemic quests. Hence, next to the analysis of the cultural imaginary C. S. Lewis rewrites, my intent is to explore the connection between eutopian and dystopian fantasy that trigger the ontological transformations of the main characters and of the secondary space they inhabit. Dystopia in fantasy is of crucial importance, as it influences the fictional structure of the secondary world, due to the fact that the axiological and epistemic levels depend on the impact the negative imaginary has on the space and characters. Inside the secondary worlds, the general order is always flexible, as it oscillates between dystopian and eutopian structures, but solely eutopian fantasy has the capacity to regenerate itself. Characters from the primary world enter a dystopian land and through the structural metamorphosis of the miraculous realm, they manage to rebalance the primary world, as it emerges in symbiosis with the secondary world enabled by a semantic dialogue triggered by the portal. On the one hand, the mythological and Christian imaginary of C. S. Lewis[20] resembles a palimpsest that contains eutopian spaces. These spaces represent the inner quest of the characters and their rise into Aslan's realm. On the other hand, dystopian spaces contain images of excessive rationality, of the negative miraculous found in fairy-tales (evil witches, dragons) and of infernal landscapes encountered in mythology. Through the rite of passing through a portal the main characters reach other ontological (identity) levels. Hence, I will discuss the eutopian character of Narnia to showcase how the secondary world keeps the primary world, affected by (de)ontic and axiological conflicts (the Pevensie brothers as orphans), in balance. If in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* the journey of the protagonist is marked by dystopia, *The Chronicles of Narnia* displays both eutopian and dystopian landscapes. This classical entanglement between eutopia and dystopia can be found in most portal-quest fictions, from the story of *Peter Pan and Wendy* (where the Darlings battle captain Hook), to *The Neverending Story* (Atreyu's battle with the forces of Nothing) and the *Harry Potter* series (the clash between the protagonists and the devastating evil force of Voldemort).

Which are, in fact, the religious (mythic and Christian) elements that forge the alternative world imagined by C. S. Lewis and interpreted by the film director Andrew Adamson? Despite the cinematic adaptation of novel *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, directed by Michael Apted, I chose to discuss *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian*, as they display a unitary cinematic vision. Both movies contain a similar imaginary that combines Christian elements with fairy-tale features and stories taken form Greek

mythology. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, on the other hand, builds on an aquatic and insular imaginary, as C. S. Lewis reinterprets symbolically old Celtic and Irish Sea journeys and quests for discovering terrestrial paradise. Katherine A. Fowkes took a closer look at the cinematic adaptation of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by linking it to other fantasy productions and underlining, with solid arguments, symbols and key scenes found in the movie.[21] Nevertheless, Fowkes just touches upon religious elements that mark the characters' initiation journey, elements that are of key relevance for the existence of Narnia as Aslan's realm.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe: Paradise Regained

Narnia in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* continues to be a negative realm, until Aslan appears. Jadis, becoming the White Witch, the daughter of Lilith, Adam's first wife, uses black magic to turn Narnia into an eternal winter without Christmas. Jadis' castle in Narnia resembles the post-apocalyptic kingdom she once ruled. This time her castle is filled with statues of satyrs, wolfs, foxes, centaurs and nymphs, Aslan's supernatural creatures now turned into stone. One of the first signals that the lion returned and that paradise is being reestablished is the Pevensies' encounter with Santa Clause and receiving their gifts. Banning Christmas suppresses the magical thinking in order to rebuild Narnia on an exclusively rational thinking, as the elements of the old Narnian (magical) paradise have been eradicated. Moreover, the White Witch, followed by her evil sidekick, the wolf Maugrim, as captain of the secret police, resembles the figure of the dictator. In this book C. S. Lewis depicts the characteristics of totalitarian regimes that came into power in the first half of the 20th century.

Through Aslan's return the paradisiac realm, found in *The Magician's Nephew*, will be recreated. Narnia's rebirth is narrated by C. S. Lewis in an ingenious manner by opposing Aslan's regenerating powers to the White Witch's dystopian powers. This rebirth is initiated while the Witch travels by sleigh to find Edmund's siblings, while Narnia's regeneration is represented through rituals resembling Aslan's orphic hymns that initially created this landscape. Such a narrative strategy implies an alternation between dystopian and eutopian elements through which Lewis captures the gradual dissipation of malefic powers and the rise of a paradisiac nature.

In *The Magician's Nephew* the lion emerges as a hybrid Demiurge (God, Dionysus and Pan), while in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* Aslan resembles the figure of Christ, sacrificing himself in order to free Edmund. The Christian archetype represented is the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, with the lion taking the role of the savior. Moreover, Lewis depicts Aslan as a creature containing the Trinity – the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit – but also marked by a Dionysian identity. In exchange for Edmund's freedom (for becoming king of Narnia, he will become the White Witch's follower) Jadis asks Aslan to sacrifice himself, a ritual she will perform herself. The lion is killed on the Stone Table (symbolizing the Cross) placed on a hill, which stands for Golgotha. Aslan's sacrifice is conducted on a Walpurgis Night, orchestrated by the White Witch. These scenes display the author's intentions to merge Christian and pagan myths in order to rebuild an alternative world to these myths, but also a scripture that contains reminiscent magical rituals. Before being stabbed, Aslan like Samson gets his mane cut by an ogre,

due to the fact that the mane symbolizes fertility and light. Susan and Lucy fulfill the roles of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene (although they could also stand for Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary) as they are the only ones to see Aslan after the resurrection. In this biblical scenario Edmund is Judas for being manipulated by the White Witch and betraying Aslan.

Another act of creation is the bringing to life of the miraculous creatures turned into stone by the White Witch. In this scene, Aslan displays features of a resurrected Christ and the Holy Ghost. The battle of the Fords of Beruna, between Peter's army (having as coat of arms the lion – linking it to Richard the Lionheart crusades against the pagans) and the army of the White Witch represents a symbolic battle, as the one fought on the fields of Armageddon. The dystopian forces of the Witch are destroyed by creatures (giants, centaurs, dryads etc.) with magical powers, creatures resurrected by Aslan. Through this final clash, Paradise is reinstalled in Narnia.

Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy are crowned kings and queens of Narnia and are mythified in relation to their identity in the primary world, as, once they reach adulthood in Narnia, they forget their world of origin. Once they return to the world they escaped from through the wardrobe, the four children regain their initial identity. This time it is a hybrid identity, as it also contains the magical nature of Narnia. This hybrid identity is the result of the initiation journey the identity versions of the characters made into Narnia, identity versions that emerged inside the portal.

Prince Caspian – Seeing and Believing

In the *Magician's Nephew* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* the imaginary of the secondary world is a symbolic one, as it showcases cosmic conflicts and supernatural characters. *Prince Caspian* displays an imaginary built as a cross between magical elements and issues of socio-political nature. The role of the White Witch is taken by the Telmarine king Miraz, Caspian's uncle, who killed his own brother (King Caspian IX), thus taking the throne from the rightful heir, his nephew the future Caspian X. Narnia is now similar to the world the Pevensie brothers originate from, because it has been demythified by Miraz's tyranny. The return of Aslan and the kings of Narnia is necessary in order to reestablish the paradise in the realm conquered by the Telmarines.

Miraz attempts to suppress Caspian's magical thinking and his beliefs in the existence of a landscape where Dryads, Fauns, Centaurs and other creatures of Aslan still roam free. This landscape and its magical inhabitants have been completely erased from the collective memory of the Telmarines. The old Narnia has been forgotten or fictionalized and myths have become inaccessible in the secondary world. The Telmarines are frightened by nature's irrational forces (forests, waters) due to their pragmatic thinking and existence. Aslan will bring the sleeping spirits of the trees (Hamadryads) to life, spirits that will battle the usurper. In *Prince Caspian* we encounter a vegetal (panic-Dionysian) imaginary. This is reflected by Aslan's followers, Bacchus, Silesius and the maenads, but also through the recurrence of Dionysian rituals and dances that celebrate nature's fertility and the abolishment of the disenchanted order.

Aslan, considered by Trumpkin the dwarf, a mythical, hence an inexistent creature, appears to Lucy in a Christian manner, similar to how Jesus Christ, after the resurrection, came to Mary Magdalene. The resurrection motive is being reinterpreted throughout the novel. Hence, we find Nikabrik the dwarf, as doubting Thomas, who is skeptical about Aslan's resurrection after being sacrificed by the White Witch; Peter, Susan and Edmund are not able to see Aslan, as they are disbelievers. Once again, the three brothers do not listen to Lucy (who already saw Aslan) and will not sense the lion's presence. The same disbelief made their entrance to Narnia, through the wardrobe, impossible. This time it is the lack of faith in Aslan's reappearance that bars them from seeing him and not the absence of magical thinking, as it was the case in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Peter and Susan cannot see Aslan from the beginning, as they are about to become adults and be fully part of the primary world. Moreover, at the end of the novel, the lion tells both Susan and Peter that they will never return to Narnia.

The Dionysian followers of Aslan will reestablish the vegetal order in the realm overtaken by the Telmarines. Aslan, in his Christian role, will heal Caspian's nanny, cure Reepicheep's the mouse tail (as Christ healed the blind man) and will travel through Narnia in order to convert as many Telmarines as possible to his magical cult. The Dionysian ritual of reconstructing Narnia as a vegetal paradise is ended by a dance and feast of abundance, celebrating the triumph of magical thought and the imagination over the coercive, rational order.

Caspian's salvation is not a pretext used to narrate and initiate this mythical scenario. The Telmarines turned Narnia in a dystopia, quite different from the one created by the White Witch. This is now a world deprived of magic and blind to myth, hence a socio-political dystopia (in the limits of an imaginary found in fantasy). Caspian's journey of initiation is a metamorphosis that will release any form of Telmarine evil and thus enabling him to reach the status of Adam's Son. The young king is now worthy of his noble past, be part of the same line of the mythic kings of Narnia and be the real inheritor to Narnia's throne. By reaching this status, Caspian also reaches "other levels of being"[22] that exhibit Narnian features.

Conclusions

The novels written by C.S Lewis are complex religious narratives that shed light on the axiological and epistemic quest of the characters from the primary world, who enter Narnia through portals. The films directed by Andrew Adamson are an addition to the series, as they depict the miraculous realm with a tremendous imagistic power, staging original film scenes. Despite the fact that Lucy Pevensie (played by Georgie Henley) enters, through the wardrobe, a dystopian Narnia governed by the White Witch, the secondary world appears to the viewer in a fairy-like manner, while the atmosphere of this realm is one of joy fueled by the presence of Tumnus the Faun (played by James McAvoy). In other words, despite being turned into a negative and endangered space, Narnia in Andrew Adamson's movies is a sacred landscape that reflects the idea of the numinous. Moreover, the White Witch's castle, an essential evil space, is depicted as a glacial, crystal like beautiful scenery, proving that Adamson staged the sense of wonder found in dystopia, instead of portraying its classical, deathly and monstrous appearances. If C. S. Lewis created in Narnia an alternative cosmos, with religious traits and an universe containing both its

Genesis and Apocalypse, the Narnia found in movies is masterfully coined and put into carefully crafted images, as the director sought a proper design for creating the idea of a miraculous world, but also a possible world, that would be perceived by the viewer as real. In *Prince Caspian* we are dealing with a negative and demythified realm, all by the hands of King Miraz, but the director chose to depict, in detail, Narnia's resurrection through Dionysian rituals and Aslan's intervention. Probably the most cleverly depicted scene is the one in which Lucy enters Narnia through the wardrobe, a moment that is just as famous as Alice's fall through the rabbit's hole in Tim Burton's interpretation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* The manner in which Andrew Adamson orchestrates Lucy's transition through the portal was one of the starting points of my theory on the portals in fantasy literature, a topic I extensively discussed in my dissertation. As Lucy enters Narnia, the viewer not only senses an ontological rupture, but also suffers a transformation of identity, as the portal ignites the founding rite of passage that will be carried out through the initiation journey into the secondary world. Fantasy fictions and movies do not have such a large audience just because they offer an escape from reality, but mostly because they manage to build magical worlds with a complex design and religious language, altering, on a daily basis, our images and perception of what reality really is.

Filmography

Prince Caspian (2008), directed by Andrew Adamson, Walden Media & Walt Disney Pictures.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005), directed by Andrew Adamson, Walden Media & Walt Disney Pictures.

Bibliography

Attebery, Brian, *The Fantasy Tradition in American Literature*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1980.

Bloom, Harold (ed.), *C. S. Lewis*, New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 2006.

Doležel, Lubomír, *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible World*, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1998.

Fowkes, Katherine A., *The Fantasy Film*, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Hume, Kathryn, *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature*, New York, Methuen, 1984.

Manlove, C. N., *Modern Fantasy: Five Studies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Mendlesohn, Farah, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 2008.

Pavel, Thomas, *Fictional Worlds*, *Fictional Worlds*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1986.

Todorov, Tzvetan, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1970.

Walters, James, *Alternative Worlds in Hollywood Cinema*, Chicago, Intellect Books, 2008.

Wolf, Mark J. P., *Building Imaginary Worlds*, New York, Routledge, 2012.

Wolfe, Gary K., *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy*, New York, Greenwood Press, 1986.

Notes

[1] Katherine A. Fowkes, *The Fantasy Film*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, pp. 17-18.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 17.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 10.

[4] *Ibidem*, p. 8.

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 1.

[6] James Walters, *Alternative Worlds in Hollywood Cinema*, Chicago: Intellect Books, 2008, pp. 10-11.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 157.

[8] Katherine A. Fowkes, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[9] Lubomír Doležel, *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible World*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998.

[10] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

[11] Thomas Pavel, *Fictional Worlds*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 91.

[12] *Ibidem*, p. 91.

[13] Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970.

[14] Lubomír Doležel, *op. cit.*

[15] Thomas Pavel, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

[16] J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," Web: http://public.callutheran.edu/~brint/Arts/-Tolkien.pdf, last access: 17. 10. 2015.

[17] Starting from the distribution of narrative modes, I understand the term *semantic depth* as referring to the manner in which levels of dominant, subjacent and adjacent significance are overlaid in a fictional world.

[18] In *Heterocosmica*, Lubomír Doležel defines the epistemic and axiological quest by describing modal constraints found in a fictional world: alethic, deontic, axiological and epistemic.

[19] In portal-quest fictions, characters in the secondary world are identity versions of the same characters, bearing the same name, found in the primary world. I chose to introduce the term *identity version* following the concept of *transworld identity* (found in non-essentialist semantics), which describes the transition of the same name and character from one fictional world into another (see Lubomír Doležel, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18).

[20] In her study "The Fertility-Sterility Dialectics in *The Waste Land* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*" (published in *Caietele Echinox*, no. 27/2014, pp. 77-91), Ruxandra Cesereanu defines the term "vegetal Christianity" as it is encountered in the Narnian imaginary.

[21] See Katherine A. Fowkes, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-155.

[22] C. N. Manlove, "The 'Narnia' Books," in Harold Bloom (ed.), *C. S. Lewis*, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2006, p. 104.