



# C.S. LEWIS'S *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA* AS CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: AN OVERVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

Literature portrays everything in the world. Even a minute thing of art describes the life cycle of every creature. Literature includes many genres with multiple-approaches. Everything is to educate the goodness of man. It teaches human beings to be good citizens. One of the genres is children's literature, produced mainly for children and young adults. This is to guide the man from the beginning stage to get a good future. General purpose of children's literature is to persuade, inform and entertain or describe the most. Lewis's heptalogy work, *The Chronicles of Narnia* as children's literature, focuses on its features and how these features lead the children to become global citizens in future.

**Keywords:** Children's Literature, young adult fiction, global citizens, voices of non-humans, human nature relationship, innocence.

Children's literature became popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this period is considered as the golden age of children's literature. Basically it originated from oral traditional stories like folktales, fairy tales, fables, those stories were told for children to mold them into good people. Children's literature or Juvenile fiction could teach religious messages, morals and duties of human life.

The development of children's literature became popular after the printing press was invented. Many children's tales were made for adults, so young adult literature came from children's literature finally. The books contain printed words accompanied with illustrations not only to entertain but to instruct young people.

Young adult fiction is for adolescence and young adults, is more mature in content and more complex in literary structure. It has been strongly explored in fantasy literature. It helps them to understand themselves, others, and their world and the aesthetic values of written languages.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many children's fiction came, writers clearly examined the minds of youngsters and created their world, usually it might be either fantasy or Adventures genres. Fantasy children's novels have a bunch of creative designs along with morals through talking animals, parallel universes, magics etc. For instance *Harry Potter*, *The Hobbit*, and *Narnia*. In adventure, mainly young adult fiction, the protagonist will go on a quest to get the precious things, for instance *Tom Sawyer*, *Treasure Island*, *Percy Jackson*.

The five main features of children's literature are fantasy, optimism: action, human-nature relationships, voices of non-human and helping children to become global citizens. The fiction definitely has at least one feature to direct the children and adults to live in society.

The paper focuses on children's literature along with its features through C.S.Lewis *The Chronicles of Narnia*, classics of children's literature and fantasy fiction. It's a clever fusion of classical elements with easy storytelling, magic and talking animals. It's a heptalogy novel. CS Lewis wrote a series comprising seven children's novels which are mostly set in Narnia where Aslan is a God, and children have adventures in that land, participating in many battles and quests, under the full guidance of Aslan, the lion.

The series depicts the adventures of various children who play central roles in the unfolding history of the Narnia world. The protagonists are all children from the real world, magically fetched to Narnia, where they are called upon by the lion Aslan to protect the land from bad hands and restore the throne to its rightful line. The books cover the whole history of Narnia, from its creation in the book *The Magician's Nephew* to its eventual destruction in *The Last Battle*.

Mostly, the first feature of children's literature is fantasy. Fantasy is a part of the literary genre. The story affects the strangeness of settings and of characters, and the plot which occurs in the imaginative or secondary world not in the real world. Lewis in his series uses the fantasy aids as he introduced various dimensions of Narnia, and other unnamed worlds. Mainly he focuses on the Narnia world parallel to the Earth. There, time went fast when compared to the world. In *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, Pevensie children went to

Narnia and spent many years as Kings and Queens. When they came back to the earth they were children again. Hence, the flow of time differs in Narnia compared to our world. Talking trees, dwarves, Centaurs, witches, river God, etc all fantasy characters are present in the series.

Human-nature relationships are important for good living. It explores the interaction between human and nature as depicted in the three books whether they are mutually beneficial or harmful for one party. It is relevant to today's environmental problems and how it conveys its moral message to young readers.

Mostly in literature, authors indirectly connect seasons in their literary works to enhance the mood of the story. Each season carries ingrained meanings. Autumn, winter, spring, and summer represent tiredness, unhappiness and death, birth, youth and possibilities and love, passion and freedom respectively.

Human- nature relationship in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, Lewis highlights two seasons. One was winter, from the beginning to the middle of the novel winter occupied a strong place because of the white witch. Another season was spring. When Father Christmas came to Narnia, the spring showed her strength which means unhappiness will fade soon and freedom will be gained. Through the character, Lucy, Lewis inserted the guidance of nature.

In *Prince Caspian*, Pevensie children were led and helped by nature. In the end, Aslan called River God for killing Miraz, the uncle of Prince Caspian and at the battle field, all trees walked and gave their hands to good and fought against the bad. Lewis insists that the protagonists and their supporters are guided by nature. It gives a signal to them during the bad situation earlier to keep them safe.

Optimism, innocence, and action are also one of the features in children's literature. Throughout the book, the children, Susan, Peter, Edmund and Lucy take the roles of heroes or saviors in the story. Specifically, Lucy represents the innocent and childlike goodness when compared with all the three. When Peter, Susan and Edmund did not believe Lucy in the second series. They blamed her young mind for making things up. Later in the book Lucy becomes the most kind and compassionate child and the real leader of their descent into Narnia. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Digory's uncle planned to use the two innocent children for his experiment, if this had not happened, there would have been no Narina.

Voices of non-human, generally in fantasy literature, have anthropomorphized talking animal characters with individual lives and voices, and trees. It expresses animal emotions, perspectives, and moralizing speech.

Animal's voices advocate for their rights, affirm animal subjectivity, explore the imagined lives of animals and the methods and benefits of communication between human and non-human animals.

Many of the characters in the series are non-human; they can still show a lot about human nature, for instance, talking trees, dwarves, Centaurs, witch, river God, animals. Narnia is full of talking animals. Why do the authors include these non-human voices mostly in children's novels? Narration goes with non-human point of view, from this readers can know about them.

Most of the fantasy authors included the voices for non-humans to show the views and pains of them to readers. Likewise Lewis also did it. All animals, faun, wolves, beavers, etc are included in all the seven series.

If children read Lewis's Narnia series, they are willing to take responsibility for their own actions, respect and value diversity, and see themselves as contributors to a more peaceful and sustainable world. The powerful tool to help even the youngest citizens become aware of the need to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future as global citizens. Children examine to identify, investigate, evaluate and undertake the action to maintain, protect and enhance the local and global environment. Overall, Lewis tries to prove that children's literature will help children to become Global citizens.

## References

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