Reading Through Pictures:  
*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*  
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ANAHTAR KELİMELER Aslan, Cadı ve Dolap, Yüzüklerin Efendisi, Yerdeniz Büyücü, Alice Harikalar Diyarında, fantastik kurgu, resim, çizim

ABSTRACT Pictures as the visual elements of the narrative have become one of the commonest features in fantastic fiction. Boundless imaginative landscapes offered by this genre are transferred into visual elements in varied forms and shape, complex or simple. Though the mere existence of such illustrations or pictures strengthen the idea that the fantastic is children’s literature, the obvious and intricate relationship between the pictures and the narration provides an interesting point that deserves analysis. As the use of illustrations has become traditionalized, inter-pictural relations can be established similar to intertextuality. Pictural traces among the texts may help to reveal fresh insights concerning the nature of the narration in the fantastic. C. S. Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as one of the most important fantastic novels of English literature serves as a well example to such enterprise. In this study, the inter-pictural relations in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, with regard to Caroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Le Guin’s *The Wizard of Earthsea* will be established and their contribution to the meaning and the narration will be discussed.

KEYWORDS The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, The Lord of the Rings, The Wizard of Earthsea, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, fantastic fiction, picture, illustration

This paper will deal with the narrative techniques of C. S. Lewis’s *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* regarding the illustrations placed within the text. These illustrations will be compared to the illustrations that are placed in other major fantastic texts. In order to provide a complete insight into the nature of illustrations and their functions, a group of picture taken from the novel will be compared to those taken from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in and *A Wizard of Earthsea*.
Before the analysis, the nature of illustrations should be mentioned and certain questions should be addressed concerning the function, the necessity or reliability of illustrations. As an additional question mark, it should also be examined whether they can be considered as paratextual elements in terms of Gerard Genette’s theory defining paratext as the material surrounding the text like the introduction part, dedication or preface. These paratextual elements inevitably influence the process of reading and interpretation. According to Genette “paratext has an influence on the public, an influence that—whether well or poorly understood and achieved— is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it.”1 Illustrations are influential in the process of interpretation; however, Genette explains that “by definition, something is not a paratext unless the author accepts responsibility for it.”2 This complicates the issue if posthumous publications and further editions are considered. However, Genette’s desire to embellish paratextual elements with authorial function can be opposed using Foucault’s argument in his article “What is an Author?”. Insisting on constraining paratextual elements within authorial intention has the danger of blocking multiple interpretations because “the author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses.”3 Freeing the text off the authorial function eventually frees the text and opens new ways for multiple interpretations.

In traditional sense, illustrations have played an important role in the fantastic fiction. For Schakel, “illustrations become a part of a text, vital to the meaning and feeling the words convey.”4 As is known, the expected audience or the implied reader of fairy tales is the children. Before their parents read these tales aloud to them, they overview the pictures. Schakel claims that:

“The imaginative experiencing of such a text is deeply affected by the illustrations, especially when children first encounter the books by hearing a parent or teacher read them aloud. These children “read” the illustrations before they read the words. The illustrations not only establish specific visual images, but also shape the way the entire story will be imaged.”5

Through these illustrations, they imagine the possible construction of the story and with their strong imaginative power and with the aid of these illustrations, they consume the tale. What is interesting is that while children are known to have unlimited imagination, these illustrations also force them to limit their imagination. Once they see Peter or Edmund or Alice in their illustrated form, these forms invade their imagined tales, and they imagine Alice or Edmund as they are drawn in the illustrations. Therefore, their imaginative experience is shaped by these pictures beforehand.

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is full of illustrations; there are maps and pictures to depict the scenes. The novel starts with a map which locates the land of Narnia. Like other maps of the majority of the fantastic fiction the land is coastal, an easy way to determine spatial limitation. As in the maps of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and other fantastic fictions, the boundaries are not drawn randomly but determined by geographical properties like mountains or rivers. The fact that the map is given at the very beginning is very important because it helps reader to situate this unknown land into a certain place. Furthermore, the presence of the map increases the credibility of that created universe.

![The map of Narnia](image)

**FIGURE 1**—The map of Narnia

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While locating the imagined or alternative universes into concrete maps increases the credibility in spatial dimension, through these maps, the reader follows the quest or the voyage that the heroes or heroines of the fantasy undertake. For instance, the reader of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy knows Frodo and Sam should pass through the Misty mountains to travel to Mordor. While reading, the reader can check the narrated land within the map and the reading experience is heightened with the aid of visual experience. Likewise, in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wadrobe*, the Peavensie siblings travel through the forest to reach Cair Paravel, and the reader observes the forest within the map.

Maps are not the single visual elements in the fantasy. There are also many illustrations which sometimes give the portrayal of the character or a brief summary of the event that will be narrated in the chapter. Generally speaking, the illustrations function in the same way. They are there to relate the events, though in a different manner. In this manner, the

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7. The map is reproduced in 1994 Harper Collins edition. The following illustrations taken from *The Fellowship of the Ring* is produced by Alan Lee. However, the map above is created by Pauline Baynes who was also the creator of the map and the illustrations in the Narnia series.
illustrations of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* are similar; they are plain and simple reflecting the dispute going on between the executioner, the King, and the Queen concerning the beheading of the Cheshire cat and in the second one, Edmund facing the White witch whose evil face is apparent.

The differences among the illustrations can easily be associated with the different styles of the artists. However, this would be a quick decision. It is known that authors have the right to choose who is going to prepare the illustrations of their novels. Therefore, the choice of illustrations is not a straightforward one but a deeply thought and therefore they deserve serious analysis. A picture taken from the novel may prove the point. The picture describes the beavers’ house in detail following a written depiction of the house:


“Lucy thought the Beavers had a very snug little home though it was not at all like Mr. Tumnus’s
cave. There were no books or pictures, and instead of beds there were bunks, like on board ship,
built into the wall. And there were hams and strings of onions hanging from the roof, and against
the walls were gum boots and oilskins and hatchets and pairs of shears and spades and trowels and
things for carrying mortar in and fishing-rods and fishing-nets and sacks. And the cloth on the table,
though very clean, was very rough. … Susan drained the potatoes and then put them all back in the
empty pot to dry on the side of the range while Lucy was helping Mrs. Beaver to dish up the trout,
so that in a very few minutes everyone was drawing up their stools (it was all three-legged stools
in the Beavers’ house except for Mrs. Beaver’s own special rocking chair beside the fire) and
preparing to enjoy themselves. There was a jug of creamy milk for the children (Mr. Beaver stuck
to beer) and a great big lump of deep yellow butter in the middle of the table from which everyone
took as much as he wanted to go with his potatoes, and all the children thought—and I agree with
them—that there’s nothing to beat good freshwater fish if you eat it when it has been alive half an
hour ago and has come out of the pan half a minute ago.”

Each object, described in the passage is carefully is transmitted into the illustration.
Bunks, onions, shears, rocking chair, even the stools are three legged. The illustration is
highly thought and well prepared, and it does not miss the slightest detail. For each illustration, the similar observation can be carried out in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Consider the second illustration in which Tumnus’ house is portrayed:

“As soon as they were inside she found herself blinking in the light of a wood fire. Then Mr. Tumnus stooped and took a flaming piece of wood out of the fire with a neat little pair of tongs, and lit a lamp. “Now we shan’t be long,” he said, and immediately put a kettle on. Lucy thought she had never been in a nicer place. It was a little, dry, clean cave of reddish stone with a carpet on the floor and two little chairs (“one for me and one for a friend,” said Mr. Tumnus) and a table and a dresser and a mantelpiece over the fire and above that a picture of an old Faun with a gray beard. In one corner there was a door which Lucy thought must lead to Mr. Tumnus’s bedroom, and on one wall was a shelf full of books. … There was a nice brown egg, lightly boiled, for each of them, and then sardines on toast, and then buttered toast, and then toast with honey, and then a sugar-topped cake.”

A carefully depicted setting comes to life in the illustration. The viewer of the illustration (probably those children who cannot read) has the visual experience, and they share what the reader visualizes in his own imagination. For Schakel, these detailed descriptions help the child get into the story:

“The abundant detail describing the Beavers’ home and the supper the children help prepare, for example, has no role in furthering their adventure. It is there to help convey what ordinary existence

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12. C. S. Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, p.16.
13. C. S. Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, pp.15-16. (emphasis added).
in Narnia is like—what it would be like to live there. That is one of the great appeals of the stories—the sort of thing that could induce a child to smash through the back of his parents’ wardrobe and hack away at the wall behind it, in an effort to get into Narnia himself.”

From this point, The Lion, the Witch and the Wadrobe is closer to Alice in Wonderland. Illustrations in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland in are also carefully drawn and fully suit to the narrated event. Illustrations are also important in Alice. In the following illustration the reader is introduced to a Gryphon. But what is a Gryphon?

![Illustration of a Gryphon]

FIGURE 6—Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

“They very soon came upon a Gryphon, lying fast asleep in the sun. (If you don’t know what a Gryphon is, look at the picture.) ‘Up, lazy thing!’ said the Queen, and take this young lady to see the Mock Turtle, and to hear his history. I must go back and see after some executions I have ordered.”

The narrator does not take pains to describe what a Gryphon is; he is so sure that the illustration will do the necessary job. In the third illustration, the narrator describes the emotional situation and physical difficulty of Alice and her failure in cricket:

15. Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, p.83.
16. Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, p.83.
“The chief difficulty Alice found at first was in managing her flamingo: she succeeded in getting its body tucked away, comfortably enough, under her arm, with its legs hanging down, but generally, just as she had got its neck nicely straightened out, and was going to give the hedgehog a blow with its head, it would twist itself round and look up in her face, with such a puzzled expression that she could not help bursting out laughing: and when she had got its head down, and was going to begin again, it was very provoking to find that the hedgehog had unrolled itself, and was in the act of crawling away.”

Emotions and real physical difficulties are given both in the passage and in the illustration. Alice faces the flamingo when she tries to shoot yet she cannot control the hedgehog either.

The illustrations also manifest the atmosphere of the events narrated. The simplicity of the illustrations of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in *is in parallel with the relatively lighter atmosphere of the text. The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is defined by its medieval atmosphere with all its battles, swords and armours. Therefore, the following illustration taken from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the first book of the trilogy, clearly depicts the gloomy atmosphere of the quest undertaken by the fellowship of the ring:

“Following his lead the Company passed under the northern arch. They found themselves in a wide corridor. As they went along it the glimmer grew stronger, and they saw that it came through a doorway on their right. It was high and flat-topped, and the stone door was still upon its hinges, standing half open. Beyond it was a large square chamber. It was dimly lit, but to their eyes, after so long a time in the dark, it seemed dazzlingly bright, and they blinked as they entered.”

The illustration which very well reflects the given description evokes the sense of medievalism by which the trilogy can be best described. In fact, the elements present in the trilogy (swords, battles etc) imply that these events are the events of the medieval times. Therefore, the illustrations should serve to stress this fact. However, they should also highlight the fantastic side of the novel as the next illustration performs which presents fantastic stone Trolls:

Hobbits are also placed among them to stress the hugeness of the trolls and smallness of hobbits. It is obvious that the illustrations are complex when compared to *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Similarly, in the following illustrations taken from *A Wizard of Earthsea*, the similar complexity is visible.

Though they are black and white, like those in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland in and the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, illustrations do not give as much detail as in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland in and the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It should also be noted that while the pictures in *A Wizard of Earthsea* is defined as “drawings”, in the rest they are presented as illustrations. Therefore, the drawings in *A Wizard of Earthsea* are not detailed as in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland in and the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. However, their complexity lies in the fact that they tell little comparatively. Then, it can be concluded that the implied reader of a text shapes the illustrations of the given text. While the implied reader of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland in and the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is obviously children, *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Wizard of Earthsea* are addressed to more grown-ups. While the illustrations in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland in and the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* clearly depicts the event and provides somehow a probable synopsis, those in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Wizard of Earthsea* do not give such satisfaction. They become more abstract when compared to those in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland in and the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

The illustrations, on the other hand, help the narrator (storyteller) as they provide a visual experience for the tiniest detail that is narrated by the voice of the narrator (storyteller). Moreover, as these illustrations tell much about the narrated event within simple lines, they help the implied audience (child listeners) visualize the event. Then,
while the tone of the narrator has an impact on the genre of the text, the illustrations with regard to their complexity or the simplicity help to locate the text within certain genre. Consequently, authoritative, knowing and controlling voice of the narrator and the simplicity and detailed nature of the illustrations make *the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* a fairy tale.

REFERENCES
